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Doing Development in Extraordinary Environments: Exploring the Impact of Development NGOs in Zimbabwe

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Doing Development in Extraordinary Environments: Exploring the Impact of Development NGOs in Zimbabwe

A Dissertation
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Doctor of Philosophy

by
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Advisor: Dr. Christina Foust
Abstract

In this study I provide accounts of the phenomenology of development within a state of exception in Zimbabwe. My main goal was to understand how the notion of development is conceived by development NGOs and beneficiaries of their services. To achieve this objective, I raised several ontological questions about the capabilities ordinary citizens have to develop within an extraordinary context of political, economic and social uncertainty. Moreover, I explored the creative strategies and tactics adopted by development NGOs to make their operations possible in a context of severely curtailed freedoms. A significant part of that investigation was to find the role dialogic communication plays in enabling participatory practices and the formation of triad relationships. From both sets of participants, development was understood as a process of creating durable, just and positive change through empowering the poor and distressed so they could become self-sustaining without having to rely on handouts.

Methodologically, the study operates within a critical theory paradigm which allows for a dialogic and dialectical space between investigator and participants of the inquiry. For a research method, I opted for a qualitative rather than a quantitative study. A qualitative inquiry is open to the exploration of complex interconnected concepts, assumptions, perspectives, methods and interpretations this study demands. Among various qualitative methods, I adopted an interpretive phenomenological approach which allows for an in-depth study of complex phenomena. I designed an open-ended questionnaire which I used for interviewing seven development Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and two groups of beneficiaries.

Several themes emerged from the study about four key issues. One category of themes emerging from my conversations with representatives of development NGOs was about critical elements of development. A second thematic category for both development NGOs and
beneficiaries was about the negative impact of the multiple crises generated by the state of exception. A third thematic category, addressed how the notion of development was perceived by both development NGOs and beneficiaries. From both sets of participants, development was understood as a process of creating durable, just and positive change through empowering the poor and distressed so they could become self-sustaining without having to rely on handouts. The fourth set of emergent themes was what I consider best practices. One of these best practices, which I discuss at length in Chapter 5, is the triad relationships which development NGOs have nurtured with beneficiaries and government. In my analysis of the results, I conclude that triad relationships have made possible the survival of development NGOs in a state of exception in which freedoms are severely curtailed.

The main contribution this study makes to scholarship is how an extraordinary political context can be antithetical to economic and human development. It provides salutary lessons about the critical importance on the part of development NGOs to fully comprehend the context in which they function. Survival in extraordinary contexts is predicated on how development NGOs respond to new and evolving challenges, as well as their creativity in identifying relevant strategies and tactics. Furthermore, the study provides a rare opportunity to interface a specific theory of development with reality. It presented a favorable juncture of circumstances in which Sen’s theorizing of development as freedom was put to use to critically think about the role of ideology, politics and culture in creating a hostile environment for development.
Acknowledgements

My advisor Christina Foust provided excellent guidance and the intellectual space to explore this topic and bring it to fruition. She pushed me to think critically about various elements of this dissertation. As members of my dissertation committee, Bernadette Calafell and Darrin Hicks offered invaluable insights for my project. My spouse and dear friend Edward Antonio believed in me and was confident that I could complete this project. Not only did he provide emotional support; Edward was and remains a conversation partner. Without his encouragement and inspiration, I would not have pulled it off. The lessons I learnt from my parents about hard work and the premium value of an education, proved extremely useful as I worked hard on this dissertation. I remain fully indebted to them for the way in which they brought me up and the values they imparted.
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Chapter One: Context for Studying Development NGOs in Zimbabwe

Introduction

The objective of this study is to explore the nature and status of development communication and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Zimbabwe. The critical question the study engages is this: what makes it possible for development NGOs to survive the extraordinary context in which they perform their work? What motivates these organizations to persist in circumstances that negate the very notion of development? The uniqueness of this dissertation lies in the fact that it focuses on the nexus between a ‘state of exception’ and the work of development NGOs. In other words, it concerns itself with the impact of an exceptional context on the goals and mission of development NGOs.

The present chapter seeks to create a solid foundation from which we can contextualize the extraordinary environment in which the work of development NGOs in Zimbabwe occurs. The uniqueness of this study depends very much on how well this context is understood. Because of the pivotal place context occupies in this study, I begin by providing a graphic picture of political, economic and social events in 2008, which for me constitutes what I call ‘a state of exception.’

An understanding of Zimbabwe’s history is central to the comprehension of how and why events unfolded in a particular manner. This is why I proffer a chronology of the Zimbabwe’s history of colonialism between 1890 and the country’s independence in 1980. A country’s independence brings with it challenges and certain expectations which can make or break a country. Beyond 1980, I discuss at length Zimbabwe’s transitional years from 1980 to 1991. I follow this up with a brief overview of the economic structural adjustment period from 1991 to 1997. To address the evolution of the country into a state of exception, I take the reader
through 1997 to 2008; a period of political and economic upheaval and crisis and the triggers thereof. The final piece of the chapter brings us to the events of the last few years (2008 - 2013). It chronicles the attempts of the Southern African Development Community in its capacity as a regional body to bring Zimbabwe back to a point of sanity. With this roadmap in place, here is a vivid portrayal of the country’s state of exception.

State of Exception (2008)

The year 2008 represents a historic point at which Zimbabwe hit rock bottom. International organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch and multiple journalistic sources such as New Zimbabwe, The Zimbabwe Independent, Mail and Guardian, the BBC and New York Times reported extensively on the gross violations of human rights in Zimbabwe. A few examples of such violations suffice for purposes of this chapter. The arrest of the leader of the political opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change’s (MDC) Morgan Tsvangirai and 49 other activists in March, 2007, was well documented and reported. During his incarceration, Tsvangirai suffered head injuries, blows to the body and lost large quantities of blood (BBC, 2007). A journalist, Edward Chikombo, who sent images of beatings of those arrested to foreign media was abducted and murdered thereafter. A second and well known case involves the abduction, torture and death threats of a human rights activist, Jestina Mukoko, in December 2008. For several weeks, Mukoko’s whereabouts were unknown as she was moved from police station to police station (CNN, 2008). For 3 months, the police ignored orders from the Zimbabwe High Court to find Mukoko until she was released on bail in March 2009.

A third and equally familiar case of gross violations of civil liberties is that of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), an organization that practices peaceful mobilization efforts meant to promote civil and human rights. Since its formation in 2003 to as recently as November 2013, WOZA’s leadership, Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu, have been arrested and beaten multiple times (SA Radio, Africa, 2013). Between 2001 and 2006, the Zimbabwe Human Rights
NGO Forum recorded over 1,200 cases of human rights violations by law enforcement agencies. There were 58 cases of death threats, 399 unlawful arrests, 451 cases of unlawful detentions, 516 cases of assault and 363 cases of torture (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2006).

Ordinary citizens have not been spared violations of their basic rights to shelter, food and freedom of assembly. In May, 2005, the government brought in bulldozers to demolish thousands of homes and informal businesses in poor neighborhoods all across the country. This was a program of forced eviction dubbed ‘Operation Murambatsvina,’ which saw 700,000 people losing their homes and livelihoods (Amnesty International). Anna Tibaijuba, the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issues, reported that a further 2.1 million people had been devastated by the Operation which violated the right to life, property and freedom of movement (World Socialist, 2005).

With the rule of law teetering on the verge of suspension, the influential Joint Operations Command—consisting of the police, defense forces and the Central Intelligence Office (CIO), the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the registrar general—became the ‘law’ which is only answerable to the President (Hills, 2007). The corruption that now characterizes Zimbabwe is staggering in terms of its nature, and pervasiveness. Rents, bribery for basic services and the abuse of national resources are everyday issues (Dawson & Kelsall, 2012). There is a cohort of Black elites who have acquired vast wealth through state sanctioned cronyism. Political and business elites own farms, banks, and mining concessions among many other sources of their wealth. The ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU- PF), runs a commercial empire consisting of a web of holdings and a byzantine network of individuals (Dawson & Kelsall, 2012). The political landscape has had disastrous consequences for both the country’s economy as well as social life.

The chaotic, violent, and corrupt acquisition of land from White commercial farmers set in motion the country’s near collapse (Matondi, 2012). Massive capital flight from Zimbabwe is estimated at USD10.1 billion between 1980 and 2005. This is an astounding figure given the size
of the country’s economy whose GDP was a mere USD7.366 billion by 2013 (Makochekanwa, 2007). As recently as October, 2013, there were reports of scores of big companies in mining, banking and the service sector closing down or retrenching thousands of employees (Zimbabwe Independent, 2014). The rate of migration of citizens to various destinations across the globe as economic refugees is estimated at 25% of the population. This has been accompanied by an excessive “brain drain” which has left all segments of the economy with an unenviable poverty of skills and leadership (Crush & Tevera, 2010).

In 2008, the unemployment rate stood at 90%, certainly one of the highest globally (World Factbook, 2014). Zimbabwe’s record of hyperinflation is unmatched in recent history. Between 2005 and 2008, the rate of inflation went from 164% to an unfathomable 417,823% (Coomer & Gstraunthaler, 2011). In the interval from 2003 to 2007, the Zimbabwe dollar had undergone multiple devaluations reaching a peak of 92% by 2007. The currency became so worthless that the cost of issuing notes and coins was greater than its face value (Noko, 2011). In 2008, the central bank, the Reserve Bank, no longer had foreign currency reserves and thus resorted to purchasing foreign currency on the black market for conducting its own business. There were dire social ramifications from these political and economic events.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) found in 2006, that approximately 80% of the Zimbabwean population lived on less than a dollar per day (Besada & Moyo, 2008). In 2008, close to 44% was undernourished, and the country was identified as one of seven famine hotspots on the globe. In the last couple of decades, Zimbabwe has had to contend with two main pandemics; HIV/AIDS and cholera. In 1989, the HIV incidence was at 5%, half a million people were infected, and 20,000 were dying each year (O’Brien & Broom, 2011). With a fast deteriorating economy, an extremely poor healthcare system both in terms of resources and skills, the HIV incidence rate rose to 22%. From 1990 to 2006, life expectancy of citizens declined from 58.6 to 37.3 years (Besada & Moyo, 2008). In 2006, Zimbabwe had one of the highest orphans-to-population ratio at 15%, an outcome of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In 2008, a collapsing
economy, deteriorating infrastructure, breakdown of basic municipal system services, shortages of water treatment chemicals, as well as overcrowded living conditions in high density suburbs, led to the cholera infection of 98,429 people, and left 4,276 people dead in Harare alone (Dodge, 2011).

Zimbabwe’s political, economic and social circumstances can best be described as phenomenal, incomprehensible and anomalous. I want to suggest that Zimbabwe is functioning as a ‘state of exception’. Quoting Agamben, Kisner (2007) describes a state of exception as devoid of law, and thus the potential for violence against citizens and foreigners is ever present. All juridical order is suspended leaving no normative criteria on the basis on which to decide the structure of an emergent political order (Kisner, 2007). There are no guarantees that citizens’ rights will be respected, because the constitution which protects individual liberties is suspended. With the suspension of the law, the distinction among legislative, executive and judicial powers is provisionally abolished. The police and the military act as sovereign and whether they commit atrocities or not depend on their civility and ethical sense, not the law.

A State which has suspended juridical order enjoys negative freedom. The notion of negative freedom refers to an absence of all restrictions (Kisner, 2007). Under these conditions, the State operates without the restrictions of the law. Citizens do not have political or social rights. The State acquires a transcendental status because it has sovereign power over the life and death of its citizens. What is particularly frightful about a state of exception is that it can be indefinitely extended, and the new order that might replace it cannot be predetermined.

Because Zimbabwe approximates a ‘state of exception’, we cannot begin to appreciate the work of development NGOs until we have a full comprehension of its context. This chapter on context is vital as it functions as bedrock for the rest of my project. Thus, there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of the term ‘context’. As a concept, context is an enormously complex phenomenon. Broadly speaking, it refers to the site, location, environment,
or milieu for a given evaluand (Green, 2005). In the case of this study, the evaluand is development NGOs.

Context often has multiple strands and dimensions which intertwine in crucial ways. Moreover, context is not a static container; it is a dynamic process that regulates communicative processes among different constituencies. Some of the more obvious dimensions of context include economic features, institutions, demographics, politics, social issues, and culture (Fitzpatrick, 2012). How these dimensions combine and interact has consequences for the outcomes of the event, program or object of study. In other words, context acts as a force which can limit or enable an event, or specific activities. Thus a thorough grasp of context is critical to understanding the object of our assessment.

The similarities between Zimbabwe’s political arena and those of a ‘state of exception’ are staggering: citizens’ rights are grossly abused; the distinction between legislative and judicial powers is absent; the police and military are answerable to the State, and it is on its behalf the security institutions commit violence and atrocities. The State acquires a transcendental status with the power to decide which of its citizens live or die.

To fully comprehend the repercussions of a state of exception, we also need to characterize Zimbabwe as a fragile state which has lost any meaningful capacity with which to meet citizens’ basic needs (Brinkerhoff, 2007). Such a state exhibits high levels of corruption with elites engaging in self-serving activities. Because of its weak rule of law, authoritarian tendencies, risk of domestic conflict, and a fragmented civil society, the state loses legitimacy among its people. A fragile state lacks five core capabilities which enhance capacity. These are the capability to self-organize and act; generate development results; establish supportive relationships; adapt and self-renew; as well the capability to achieve coherence (Brinkerhoff, 2007). In his writings on capacity development in fragile states, Brinkerhoff identifies Zimbabwe as prototypical of a fragile state. I am not only inclined to agree with this observation, but would go so far as to say Zimbabwe is moving quickly in the direction of total collapse. To substantiate
my observation, I provide the reader with a quick update on recent events in the country (See Appendix A). At this juncture we are compelled to ask how these anomalous conditions shape and form the agendas, goals and objectives of development NGOs and this is where this study comes into play.

Along with the incredible exigencies facing the people of Zimbabwe, as I describe in the next section, the country’s colonialist past has created multiple needs to which development NGOs respond. The damaging effects of the colonial project come to light soon after independence as a Black government tries to undo the injustices of the past. As a postcolonial State, the new government is faced with multiple governance challenges and limited resources in its efforts to reconstruct the country and creating a more equitable society. As the corrosive effects of power set in, the Black government abdicates its basic duties to citizens forcing millions into abject poverty. It is in this context that the country finds itself relying heavily on NGOs of all stripes for the delivery of basic services and food supplies.

The ‘state of exception’ renders the present study of development NGOs unique. Zimbabwe’s context acts as a force which can shape as well as limit the work of development NGOs. This dissertation explores development communication within a state of exception. For example, it engages such questions as: In this ‘state of exception’ how is the concept of development understood and experienced by both development NGOs and beneficiaries of their services? In a context in which their work has been thoroughly politicized, what strategies and tactics have development NGOs developed for survival? Is human and economic development occurring, and if it is what is its nature? Prior to searching for answers, I invite us to explore what brought the country down to rock bottom in 2008. Some of the extraordinary events precipitating the economic, political, and social condition in which Zimbabwe now finds itself in, have their roots in colonial times.
Rhodesia the Settler State (1890-1980)

The history of the White Settler State of Rhodesia begins in 1890 and ends with the attainment of independence in 1980. Historians often split this timeframe into four major periods as follows: (i) the early years from 1890 to 1922; (ii) 1923 to 1945; (iii) 1945 to 1965; and (iv) 1965 to 1980 (Herbst, 1990; Worby, 2001; Raftopolous & Mlambo, 2009). My goal is not to provide a comprehensive history; I merely proffer a synopsis of key events. From this history we learn how the British White Settler State created an objectionably unjust society. These gross injustices were embryonic to some of the major problems encountered by the Black government immediately after independence.

In 1890, Cecil Rhodes led the Pioneer column from South Africa north into the territory that would eventually become Zimbabwe (Herbst, 1990). The mission of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) established by Rhodes was to find large deposits of gold. Three years later it was clear that there were insufficient gold deposits to sustain a meaningful investment in the colony. For survival, the column had to engage in farming activities. Blacks were pushed away from the best farming land to newly created tribal Reserves. White European settlers were given the most fertile land for crop production. One of the most notable events in the history of Rhodesia was the creation and legalization of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, a blatantly discriminatory piece of legislation. Through this Act, Africans were driven onto 30% of the land, while 50% of it was secured by Europeans (Worby, 2001).

In 1896, the indigenous peoples waged Chimurenga, a revolutionary struggle against colonial rule which was quickly quashed by the BSAC (Herbst, 1990). The European settler government created various programs to support a new class of White capitalist farmers. To create a pool of local labor for the farms, Whites established taxes and rents on the diminished lands on which Blacks were relocated (Raftopolous & Mlambo, 2009). Unable to make these payments, Blacks were forced to migrate to nearby farms to sell their labor. This is how land was stolen from indigenous peoples and how they became subjugated by Whites. To date, land
remains the most critical issue for Zimbabwe’s people. It has played a pivotal role in bringing the country to the verge of collapse.

There is consensus among historians, that the years 1945 to 1965 represent the growth and consolidation of Rhodesia as a settler colony. From 1953 to 1963, Rhodesia was part of the Federation of Nyasaland and Rhodesia comprising of three countries: Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) (Herbst, 1990). The crisis point for the State came with the dissolution of the federation when Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland attained independence. In brief, this is how the federation disintegrated.

During the Second World War, Northern Rhodesia was plagued by strikes. Mineworkers were demanding higher wages for copper production (Phiri, 2005). In addition, Africans were insisting on greater participation in government. This led to a two-stage election in October and December of 1962, resulting in an African majority in the legislative council. In 1963, the latter called for secession from the federation and full internal self-government. On 31 December, 1963, the federation dissolved. On 24 October, 1964, Northern Rhodesia became the Republic of Zambia.

In Nyasaland, the uprisings and revolts which began in 1915 against British Rule, had gathered momentum. This led to the formation of a powerful political party, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). In elections for a new legislative Council in 1961, the MCP won overwhelmingly and begun ruling Nyasaland in the same year (Page, 2001). In 1963, the British agreed to give Nyasaland self-governing status, an event coinciding with the dissolution of the federation.

At the time of the dissolution of the federation in 1963, the British government was unwilling to grant Southern Rhodesia independence unless it was prepared to grant majority rule (Herbst, 1990). Majority rule would allow Black indigenous people to elect their own government. Opposition to White minority rule and its racial practices had been visible since the 1950s among Blacks. Nationalist leaders Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe represented this opposition through their respective political parties, the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) and the
Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). The White minority settlers led by Ian Smith were not prepared to grant majority rule. Instead, they promulgated the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965.

Unilateral Declaration of Independence (1965-1980)

The UDI period covering 1965 to 1980 marks the beginning of the end of the Settler State. In response to UDI, western countries led by the British, imposed international sanctions on Rhodesia (Worby, 2001). In the meantime, Black nationalists organized strong opposition against White settlers. By 1975, ZAPU and ZANU had developed two major armies; the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) (Raftopolous & Mlambo, 2009). This was the start of the second Chimurenga. At its height, the second Chimurenga against the Rhodesian Front caused terror, havoc and dislocation among Whites and Blacks. Economic problems and “White flight” forced the Smith regime to seek a negotiated settlement in the 1979 talks at Lancaster House in Britain. In the elections of 1980, Mugabe won a landslide victory ushering the country into an era of independence as Zimbabwe. This marked a significant turning point of hope for Zimbabweans who had struggled and fought for the right to self-determination.

Land was a critical item for discussion at the Lancaster House talks of 1979. The return of land to Blacks was the most important promise both ZAPU and ZANU made to the people for their support of Chimurenga. At independence in 1980, population densities in the Native Reserves were three times greater than in the rich lands Whites owned (Palmer, 1990). Approximately 6,000 commercial White farmers occupied 42% of the productive land, making the urgent need for equitable land redistribution a matter of justice (Palmer, 1990). The terms of the land agreement at the Lancaster House talks of 1979 contained critical clauses which were to be observed for 10 years beyond 1980. The new Black government could purchase land on a willing seller, willing buyer basis; there was to be no expropriation (Palmer, 1990). Existing property
rights for White farmers including their ownership of land were to be guaranteed for a minimum of 10 years.

Transitioning to Zimbabwe (1980-1991)

On April 18, 1980, Zimbabwe became independent. Robert Mugabe as leader of the ZANU-PF became Prime Minister of the country. This marked a time of great expectations for liberty, justice and equity for Blacks on the one hand; and on the other, one of fear and trepidation for Whites (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006). The task of delivering justice and equity was arduous considering the immense inequities in education, land ownership, housing, healthcare, and jobs for the majority of Blacks brought about by 90 years of colonial rule. Delivering on the promises of liberation required taking seriously the power which the minority Whites had in every aspect of the economy (Dashwood, 2000). The Black government lacked the requisite experience and skills for running a country; civil service jobs at most levels of government had always been the purview of Whites. Redistributing and creating wealth without ruining the economy was a daunting task.

The new Black government faced a broad range of challenges and constraints making the immediate fulfillment of some of the war promises impossible. First, due to the exclusion of Blacks from senior administrative positions in the previous White government, the new administration was forced to rely on White experience including in critical areas of government such as the military and agriculture (Jenkins, 1997). The new Black government’s inexperience made dealing with authoritative settler dominated pressure groups difficult. Second, Whites owned and controlled virtually all sectors of the economy. Without experience in running the economy, and given the provisions of the Lancaster constitution on property ownership, the hands of the new government were tied. Besides, the potential for White flight was a serious consideration behind Mugabe’s policy of reconciliation with the White settlers (Jenkins, 1997). The policy of reconciliation was an extension of the hand to the white Rhodesian Front, a former enemy in exchange for peace and the promise of external foreign aid badly needed for the reconstruction of the country (Machakanja, 2010).
Third, White industrialists, mining companies run by foreign entities, and farmers used their respective lobby groups to exert pressure on the new government so they could retain the private benefits they had enjoyed under the previous regime (Jenkins, 1997). There was pressure from foreign owned companies for the freedom to repatriate profits. The new government had to be seen to be maintaining economic stability which was critical not only for attracting foreign investments but for creating badly needed jobs. Fourth, the dependence of the prior regime on South Africa for economic development was a headache for the new government. The regime in Pretoria was still under apartheid and was therefore hostile and likely to destabilize the newly independent Zimbabwe. As daunting as the challenges were, the new government made first steps towards securing equity for the majority of Blacks.

At the close of the first decade of independence, there were several notable economic issues for ordinary Zimbabweans. Chief among these were high rates of unemployment, low wages, lack of adequate modes of transportation and cost of social services (Sylvester, 1991). Young people constituted 47% of the population; in an economy that was growing at 3.8%; resulting in a high unemployment rate of 30%. Wages did not keep pace with inflation and the cost of living tripled in the 9 years following independence. The public bus system on which most people relied was falling apart. Already, it was becoming clear that delivering on promises of the liberation war was a very complex task.

In the light of the many challenges and problems of the first decade of independence, the relatively new government had to change course. The welfarist policies and the socialist rhetoric of the 1980s were now replaced by tighter fiscal policies which pushed the majority of the country’s citizens into deeper poverty. The consensus among scholars, economists and policy makers, is that this is time when government changed course, giving rise to the ‘state of exception’ now faced by Zimbabweans. For instance economist and policy thinker, John Roberts (2011) identifies the 1990s as a time when the government lacked clarity in its economic policies. Kanyenze and Chitambara (2011) point to the same timeframe as a period marked by policy
inconsistencies, contradictions and reversals along with institutional overlap and decay, all of which contributed to the present woes the country now faces. This timeframe (1991-1997) is widely labeled as the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) era. It marks a flashpoint at which the country’s need for NGOs and the multiple services they render became highly visible.

ESAP (1991-1997)

Some scholars of political economies such as Dashwood (2000) view the years 1991 to 1997 as a period of the decline of social welfarism. Economists such as Bracking and Sachikonye (2009), denote this as the moment of economic stagnation during which structural reforms were necessary. A third view (Bourne, 2011), encompasses every aspect of the country’s context, and paints this timeframe as when signs of an impending crisis begun to show. As the situation is examined closely in subsequent sections, it becomes clear that each of these characterizations of the ESAP era is appropriate.

The pledges for reconstruction made in 1981 were not all honored forcing the government to borrow large sums of money at commercial rates on foreign markets (Dashwood, 2000). Thus, most of the social programs were funded through debt adding to the burden of sizable colonial debts inherited at independence (Bracking & Sachikonye, 2009; Jenkins, 1997). One of the country’s most severe droughts in 1992 drove Zimbabwe into its worst recession. With depressed foreign investment, insufficient jobs and balance of payments deficits, the government, at the recommendation of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), adopted ESAP in 1991 (Bracking & Sachikonye, 2009). This represented a paradigm shift from State led economic development to a market driven development strategy.

As the government removed price controls and cut subsidies, the poor found themselves shouldering a disproportionate burden of the shocks. Instead of positively impacting the economy, ESAP had a stagflationary effect; economic growth declined, annual inflation rose rapidly, as did unemployment (Chitambara, 2011). By 1995, Zimbabwe had sustained a large deficit, and its
foreign debt had risen from 45 to 75% of GDP within a 4 year period. As the country failed to service large debts, the IMF and the European Union suspended their balance of payment support.

Under these circumstances, the government failed to attend to the needs of the poor, and failed to address structural causes of poverty. The viability of rural households was at stake. Most families were not able to produce adequate food supplies due to land shortages, and lack of access to credit. At this juncture rural development was at stake. Because close to 70% of the population was rural, there were significant consequences for this neglect, as we shall witness later.

After six years of ESAP it was evident that the program was not delivering the envisaged economic reforms, which would lead to development; in 1995 it was phased out. However, no serious thought had been given to what development program would replace it. (Masiiwa & Chizema, 2011). Eventually, the government adopted the Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST). There was a two year gap between the lapsing of ESAP and the implementation of ZIMPREST which begun in 1998 and lasted only for a couple of years. The ZIMPREST era was marred by inconsistent policies, poor economic performance and declining manufacturing output and exports (Masiiwa & Chizema, 2011). All these events characterize lack of clarity by the government on the appropriate path to growing the economy.

Although the events of the ESAP and ZIMPREST eras were not directly culpable for wrecking the economy, they were symptomatic of a deepening crisis. In my view, there were four main triggers of the country’s collapse: (i) chaotic land reform; (ii) massive corruption among political and business elites; (iii) massive gratuities and lifetime pensions paid out to war veterans; and (iv) the government’s intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo’s war. I want to argue for HIV/AIDS and migration as two additional triggers for Zimbabwe’s extraordinary status. These triggers characterize the late 1990s through 2008.
Upheaval and Crisis (1997-2008)

I began this chapter’s narrative of Zimbabwe at its “rock bottom” juncture in 2008. I highlighted exceptional political, economic and social events which justified my apt description of the country as operating in a ‘state of exception’. We have since explored the colonial history of the country, as well as the first 15 years beyond independence. The question remains, what went so wrong? What pushed Zimbabwe to the brink of catastrophe to create conditions that are not conducive to human development, necessitating a reliance on the development NGOs that form the heart of the present study?

Land

The land redistribution issue has been called the most pernicious trigger of the collapse of a country which used to be the breadbasket of Southern Africa (Besada & Moyo, 2008). From the history of Rhodesia, we found out how land was stolen from Blacks. We also learnt about the sinister land Apportionment Act of 1930. The theft of land from indigenous peoples had always been an emotive issue. It was the basis of mass support of the second Chimurenga of the early 1970s. Expectations for the rectification of this grave injustice were extremely high after independence.

In the discussion of how Zimbabwe attained independence, I outlined the terms of agreement on the land issue at the Lancaster House talks of 1979. I also noted the disastrous consequences of those terms. In order to grasp the centrality of the land issue in Zimbabwean politics, economy and social life, I want to take us through its background, and how it became a trigger for catastrophe. Let me begin by examining why the terms of land issue at Lancaster House proved extremely difficult to live with.

For a start, the duration of the terms at 10 years was long. There was little or no under-utilized fertile land available for purchasing. Thus, there was a wide gap between supply and demand, making land very pricey (Palmer, 1990). Moreover, expecting the government to pay for
land in foreign currency in an economy that generated little of it was impractical. After all, this was a government facing multiple financial demands.

Using some of the funds raised at the international donor conference in 1981, the new government embarked on land purchasing. Land acquisition reached its peak in 1983 with the purchase of a million hectares (Dashwood, 2000). The resettlement of landless peasants started in earnest, and the goal was to resettle 162,000 families in a 3 year period. Meeting this ambitious goal was simply impossible. The land resettlement program was complex in terms of the various schemes it assumed, the infrastructure and training needs, the lack of ownership title to land and inadequate finances. As a result, only 52,000 families had been resettled by 1989 (Sylvester, 1991).

Land shortage therefore became a perennial issue among the rural population. Without land, peasants were not able to make substantive contributions to the national food supplies, nor were they able to generate higher incomes from what they produced (Sylvester, 1991). White commercial farmers continued to provide the bulk of the nation’s basic food requirements (Sylvester, 1991). The curtailment of land redistribution and the limited number of beneficiaries of rural development programs was frustrating to millions of peasants. Land redistribution among ordinary people became a festering issue with the potential to erupt.

By 1997 the British government recognized how toxic the land issue had become (Bourne, 2011). In the same year, Mugabe had ordered some of his government ministers to identify 1,500 commercial farms for immediate takeover. Next, the government lobbied the UNDP to get involved both financially and in terms of its expertise. In 1998, Zimbabwe participated in a donor conference organized by the UNDP at which ground rules for legal, transparent and orderly redistribution of land were established (Bourne, 2011). The international community emphasized that the land reform needed to be conducted on a willing seller/willing buyer basis, and that the rural poor had to be provided with access to capital, training and support if this was to lead toward meaningful development of the country.
The burden of paying for land became a point of ideological contestation between the Zimbabwean and British governments. The Zimbabwean government felt that the British were obligated to pay for the land purchases because the White commercial farmers were its responsibility (Bourne, 2011). After all, historically land had been stolen from indigenous peoples, and thus they should not be required to pay for it. In the midst of these arguments, Zimbabwe did not have clear policies on how land was to be redistributed. In the meantime, there were several incidences around the country where peasants had taken over land without government permission. Government response was often ambiguous, creating questions about the security of property rights. By 1999 it was obvious to the international donor community that Mugabe’s government was not keen on transparency or compliance with the requirements of the 1998 donor conference (Bourne, 2011). Especially exasperating to the donor community was the fact that several government ministers had received farms out of the first eighty three which were acquired compulsorily in 1993.

Land grabbing became prominent in 1998 when 15 prime farms in Mashonaland province were occupied illegally by peasants. At the beginning of 2000, the government amended a clause in the constitution allowing compulsory land acquisition without compensation (Matondi, 2011). With political pressure mounting, the State assumed a fast track land reform program without adequate resources, personnel, or a clear plan. When it became obvious to the donor community that the land reform agreement had been trashed, all support for the process was withdrawn. By mid-2000, the Ministry of Lands had been given the political framework to confiscate 70% of the best farming land owned by Whites for redistribution to landless Blacks (Matondi, 2011). Concurrently, ruling elites continued grabbing some of the best farms where they sent gangs of youngsters to forcibly and violently move White farmers out. Even when courts ruled these occupations illegal, the seizures continued.

With extensive damage to commercial farming and the loss of income from farming activities, the economy fell into a tailspin. The World Bank and Western donor nations halted
loans, economic aid and investment to Zimbabwe (Besada & Moyo, 2008). The chaotic and violent land grab policy effectively crippled Zimbabwe’s economy. Many of the new land owners, among them peasants and the political elite, had no experience in farming. What were once fertile farms became bush and grassland. Farm buildings were trashed, farming equipment and tools were sold or left to rust. Thousands of farm hands and their employees were beaten up and driven off the farms where they had spent most of their lives. The depressed economy led to worsening unemployment, food shortages and drove millions into absolute poverty (Besada & Moyo, 2008).

The land grabbing activities that became prevalent from 2000 marked the collapse of the rule of law in Zimbabwe. Property rights were completely disregarded when the government embarked on a course of forcibly taking over White owned commercial farms (Richardson, 2005). Despite rulings from the Zimbabwe Supreme Court that the taking over of commercial farms was illegal, the regime did not halt its activities. The complete disregard of property rights under the guise of land reforms proved to be the primary driver of Zimbabwe’s sudden collapse. The damage to property rights destroyed three fundamental elements of the marketplace, namely investor trust, land equity and the incentives to be entrepreneurial among the country’s citizens.

Newly resettled Zimbabweans were not spared the negative effects of the loss of property rights. The pieces of land which were assigned did not come with titles; instead individuals were forced to lease the land annually from government (Richardson, 2005). Without the means to borrow against the land, the new farmers had no access to loans for seed and farming equipment. Even the remaining commercial farmers found it increasingly difficult to obtain credit given the uncertainty surrounding the future of their farms. There was no way for banks to foreclose on the land considering that the government was the sole owner. As a result of farm seizures, not only did billions of dollars vanish from the agricultural sector; any meaningful farming activity was frustrated (Richardson, 2005). With several banks holding worthless titles on farms that had now been forcibly taken over, by 2004, out of 41 banks 13 were in financial crisis.
There was a 60% contraction in the production of staple food items between 2000 and 2003. The commercial farmers, who were forcibly thrown off their land, took with them their technical knowledge (Richardson, 2005). The country lost a significant amount of foreign currency as a result of the termination of meaningful farming activities. Farming equipment left behind by commercial farmers was appropriated violently, set on fire or stolen by pillaging groups of individuals. Most of those replacing commercial farmers lacked skills in farming, thereby leaving most of the productive land fallow.

The Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE) was not spared the tumultuous impact of the land grabbing mess. By 1995, Zimbabwe’s equity market had surged to become one of the top performers of the world’s emerging markets. Due to the resultant loss of confidence in the country’s future, stocks listed on the ZSE began losing value in 1998 (Richardson, 2005). Investors became nervous when the government displayed a willful disregard of the law even when the Supreme Court ruled land grabbing activities unconstitutional. Foreign investment took flight and dropped by 99% between 1998 and 2001.

The detrimental effect of the collapse of the agricultural sector was felt by the relatively sophisticated manufacturing sector of the country. A significant portion of industry had an interdependent relationship with agriculture. As agriculture collapsed so did parts of industry. Toward the end of 2001, about 700 companies closely linked to agriculture had closed shop (Richardson, 2005). The severe damage to the economy meant less access to foreign currency for government, forcing it to lag behind in its debt repayments to the World Bank.

The central bank, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) tried numerous props for foreign reserves and the national currency (Coomer & Gstraunthaler, 2011). Needless to say, none of the props worked to arrest the declining level of investments, severe shortages of essential and basic inputs, the collapse of interest rates and the weakening financial position of banks, pension funds and insurance companies.
By 2003, Zimbabwe had lost all foreign aid sources; a shortage of local banknotes developed, because the RBZ no longer had the hard currency for importing paper and ink for printing money. According to Coomer and Gstraunthaler (2011) these are the events that unfolded bringing the Zimbabwean dollar to its demise. A bank run ensued as individuals scrambled to retrieve their funds from banks. The RBZ got itself involved in quasi-fiscal activities which firmly set the country on the road to hyperinflation. By 2005, the year on year inflation was at 164%, exceeding 1,000% in May of 2006. Zimbabwe formally entered hyperinflation in March 2007 when year on year inflation rose to 2,200%. By March 2008, it was clear that the hyperinflation afflicting the country could not be contained as it reached an incomprehensible 417,823%. The peak came in September 2008 (the moment with which I begin the dissertation) when inflation was estimated to be 500 billion percent. Most businesses were already pricing their goods and services in foreign currency units, as the local currency disappeared from circulation. At the start of 2009, the Minister of Finance gave legal tender to the South African Rand and the US dollar, thus ushering the country into an era of “dollarization”.

The term dollarization refers to the adoption by one country of a currency of another for official business. Although Zimbabwe adopted multiple currencies such as the South African Rand, the Botswana Pula and the British Pound; the US dollar became the official currency for the day to day running of the country. The decision to adopt a multicurrency regime meant that the central bank could no longer exercise an independent monetary stance since the country had adopted currencies which were not its own. For several months beginning January 2009, inflation turned negative (Noko, 2011). Bank failures, which had troubled the country and cost it money, were halted as banks were required to adopt more transparent practices which brought some stability to the banking system. Although the public benefitted the most from “dollarization” with food and other goods becoming more readily available, businesses suffered adversely.
Corruption

The plundering of the country's resources by business and political elites has reached a new height in Zimbabwe. Not only has it corrupted the fabric of society; it has made doing meaningful business in Zimbabwe impossible, thus driving investments and potential jobs away. The cases of corruption I describe here are merely the tip of an iceberg.

One marker of the ESAP era was the emergence of a speculative entrepreneurial class of indigenous individuals, particularly in the financial sector following its liberalization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006). Several indigenous banks started by individuals with political connections to the ruling party (ZANU-PF) mushroomed. ESAP created an enabling environment for the Black middle class professionals, as well as liberation war veteran nationalists, to use their political connections to advance their economic interests (Magure, 2012). This marked the beginning of a cancerous culture of corruption in Zimbabwean society.

Corruptive tendencies within the ruling elite had been in the making since the mid-1980s. A classic case from the 1980s was dubbed the 'Willowgate' affair (Dashwood, 2000) in which top government officials used their influence to enrich themselves. Political elites purchased vehicles from Willowvale, a State owned car assembly plant; they would then turn around and resell the vehicles at a tremendous profit. A report from a commission of enquiry following the scandal provided clear evidence of corruption among powerful government individuals. Another excellent example of political power exploitation was that of Leo Mugabe, the president's nephew. In the 1990s, he was given preferential treatment to win a tender for the expansion of Harare International airport (Bourne, 2011). Leo Mugabe paid thousands of dollars in bribes to government Ministers in return for multiple government contracts.

A third highly visible case of corruption occurred in 1997. A former top ZANU-PF official exposed the looting of 450 billion Zimbabwean Dollars (Z$450b when the country still had a currency of its own) from a war veterans' compensation fund by several senior government ministers and top ranking military officials (Dashwood, 2000). Ex-combatants of the war of
liberation were so enraged by this pillaging that they staged mass demonstrations. The exposure of massive looting by his own ministers and the attendant rage of the war veterans forced Mugabe into paying each of the latter a large lump sum of money plus a monthly allowance for the foreseeable future. The massive gratuities and lifetime pensions were paid to approximately 50,000 war veterans in 1997. The State had not budgeted for these payouts, thus creating a financial burden for which there were no resources. Instead of being fiscally responsible, the State used these payouts as an occasion to buy political support for upcoming elections (Besada & Moyo, 2008; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006).

Immediately following the ill-thought and bankrupting massive payouts to war veterans in August 1997, the government made the decision to militarily intervene in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) war in mid-1998. The war lasted for 4 years from 1998 to 2002. The decision to involve close to 20,000 troops was made without consideration of financial costs. Although national coffers were running low, Mugabe and his cronies spent millions of unbudgeted dollars in the DRC war (Besada & Moyo, 2008). Some estimates put the cost of the war at US$1 million a day, an extremely large amount considering the size of Zimbabwe’s economy. The government’s motive for entering the war was getting access to DRC’s massive mineral resources by ZANU-PF politicians and top military officials for personal enrichment. The war was unconstitutional, costly, and unpopular with ordinary citizens who were already struggling with high unemployment and an escalating cost of living.

The year 1997 marks a watershed moment when Zimbabwe begun a long process of economic, political and social collapse. Within the next eleven years everything that could go wrong with a country did. Scholars, politicians, policymakers, and ordinary citizens are all agreed that 2008 marks the darkest moment in the history of Zimbabwe. Various economic, political and social problems which had been developing coalesced and erupted into a massive crisis. The worsening poverty, loss of social support, food shortages, lack of adequate health facilities and the corruption, land grabbing activities created a political and social storm. The HIV/AIDS
pandemic, cholera and mass migration were natural disasters of the tempest. All of these problems created a disproportionate need for humanitarian aid. Non-profit organizations of various persuasions including development NGOs had to engage these materializing challenges. As I have focused, heretofore, on the political, economic, and social events, I turn here to the complex relationship between HIV/AIDS pandemic and migration on the one hand and economic and social disintegration on the other as final triggers for the state of exception that characterizes contemporary Zimbabwe.

**HIV/AIDS**

The first HIV/AIDS cases were diagnosed in the mid-1980s. Over the next few years, through a mix of economic and cultural factors, more disposable income, changes in social attitudes and gender relations, all facilitated the spread of HIV. By 1989, Zimbabwe had one of the worst HIV epidemics in the world (O’Brien & Broom, 2011). Half a million citizens were already infected; each year 20,000 people were dying; the rate of incidence stood at 5% with one out of every 20 adults getting infected each year.

With the introduction of ESAP in 1991, expenditure was shifted away from the health sector, weakening the state’s capacity to deal with the epidemic. Most rural hospitals were closed, and the government established a policy that required the discharge of HIV patients from hospitals that were still functioning (O’Brien & Broom, 2011). The burden of caring for sick and terminally ill persons fell on family members who were already facing financial challenges. In most cases, those who fell victim to the HIV/AIDS pandemic were economically productive members of society, with young families and extended family members to support. Although too numerous to elaborate here, the ripple effects of the pandemic were far reaching.

There are four main consequences to which the literature on the pandemic points. First, the most critical impact of the pandemic on households was the loss of income and a burden on financial resources (Kwaramba, 1997). When an individual family member died, the temporary loss of income became permanent, seriously undermining the viability of households. Second,
AIDS deaths reduced the number of workers and skills available to various sectors of the economy, and particularly on subsistence agricultural activities in the countryside. Third, the burden on the healthcare system was massive in a country where resources were already severely limited; the situation was exacerbated by the loss of doctors, nurses and administrators to the disease. Fourth, the education system experienced a decline in the number of students as some were forced to give up school to become care givers to dying parents; moreover the sector lost experienced teachers to the pandemic. Clearly the HIV/AIDS pandemic had an all-encompassing detrimental effect both socially and economically.

Migration

An additional, related trigger for the state of exception, and challenge for development NGOs, is migration. With the social, political and economic unraveling of the country, millions fled for the exits as economic and political refugees to all corners of the globe. Some estimates put the numbers of migrants at more than a quarter of the country’s population (Crush & Tevera, 2010). The majority of the immigrants are found within the Southern Africa region in Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia and South Africa.

In the last two decades of Zimbabwe’s decline, the country has become one of exclusively out-migration leading to crippling skill losses in the public and private sectors of the economy. An excellent example of the attenuating effects of migration of professionals is that of the massive exodus of doctors and nurses to the United Kingdom and South Africa. By 2003, Zimbabwe had become the fourth largest supplier of doctors and nurses to the United Kingdom leaving hospitals and clinics in Zimbabwe with a 55% shortage (Crush & Tevera, 2010). One inevitable question is: what is the impact of this massive loss of skills and knowledge on the potential of the country to develop?

Yet another question to ask is about the nexus between migration, remittances, poverty and development. With close to 80% of migrants transmitting remittances regularly, the potential for Zimbabwe’s economic development has been frequently raised. In 2008, Zimbabweans living
in diaspora sent an estimated US$361 million to Zimbabwe, a figure which was expected to double in 2009 (IRIN, 2009). International bodies such as the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have high hopes for the developmental potential of remittances. The depth of poverty, lack of employment opportunities and the chronic shortages of basic necessities make remittances a source of funds for meeting very basic needs rather than for investment in income generating projects (Crush & Tevera, 2010).

The events leading up to 2008 and the multiple crises it generated were negatively impacting its neighbors in ways that left them with no choice but to intervene. The question was whether there was any possibility of salvaging the country; whose role it might be to assume this task; and the potential strategies for appropriating it. In a bid to rescue Zimbabwe from further self-destruction Southern African regional countries pushed for some form of reconciliation between the main political factions, ZANU-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). It is these efforts at some form of reconciliation which gave birth to a new era in the history of Zimbabwe.

Government of National Unity (2008-2013)

For several years leading up to 2008, citizens had lost faith in the ZANU-PF led government. This culminated in the formation of a new political party in 1999, the MDC, which was led by a former trade unionist, Morgan Tsvangirai. The MDC was a coalition of various interests groups including labor, farmers and civil society (Bourne, 2011). Harassment, violence and incarceration of members of the newly formed MDC including its leader, Tsvangirai, by ZANU-PF characterized the years leading up to the 2002 presidential election. In the same year, nineteen MDC activists were murdered.

Given the magnitude of political violence, rigging, fraud and intimidation against political opposition by the ZANU-PF led government; there was no guarantee that the presidential elections of 2008 would be free and fair. It was therefore incumbent on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to intervene in 2007 (Hansohm et al., 2002). SADC is a
regional body of 15 countries whose goal is to further socio-economic integration as well as political and security cooperation. Zimbabwe’s collapse was impacting the region negatively. Neighboring countries were forced to carry the cost of economic refugees fleeing the country. These countries were also experiencing a negative impact on their foreign direct investment, tourism and currencies. The goal of mediating in Zimbabwe was to ensure voter freedom, and transparency on the part of the ruling party, ZANU-PF.

The results of the 2008 presidential elections were highly contested with speculations that MDC had won. A mediation process by Thabo Mbeki, the President of South Africa, ensued, resulting in the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009 (Hansohm et al., 2002). The GNU consists of two major political parties, namely ZANU-PF, the MDC-T and a third but smaller MDC-M faction (Kanyenze, et al., 2011). In 2012, the GNU remained a marriage of convenience in which all parties were frustrated by multiple outstanding issues. The most significant outcome of this marriage has been some measure of stability of the economy and the arresting of hyperinflation through dollarization. A couple of notable events in the period between 2009 and 2012 worth exploring, are the rhetoric about indigenization of the economy, and the adoption of a “look east” policy. The value of these two issues lies in the impact they have on the subject of this dissertation; human and economic development. How does the rhetoric of indigenization impact developmental prospects? Is China a genuine partner vested in human development in Zimbabwe?

Indigenization

A major theme of political discourse, the indigenization debate began in 1990. During the ESAP era, a small group of Black middle class individuals lobbied the government to remove some of the settler induced obstacles to their meaningful participation in the economy (Magure, 2012). In contemporary times, the indigenization debate has nothing much to do with rectifying the injustices of the past; it has become an instrument of the powerful Black elite with political connections to acquire massive wealth overnight. It has become a tool for cementing corruption in
the psyche and culture of the country. The current empowerment and indigenization law requires foreign-owned businesses to give locals a shareholding stake of more than 50% at no cost. There are vigorous debates about this law which is largely seen by critics as having the potential to lead to total economic collapse.

The banking sector has already been issued an ultimatum to comply with the Black empowerment laws or risk losing licenses. This comes at a time when the banks are making an effort to emerge from decades of economic malaise (Magure, 2012). For the manufacturing sector, the indigenization requirement comes at a time when the industry is suffering from underutilization of capacity of close to 56% (Magure, 2012). Without fresh capital injection, the sector will stagnate without the potential to create jobs. The mining sector, which is extensively foreign owned, is the largest target for indigenization. The high risk political environment and threats of cancelling mining and prospecting licenses deters potential investment, which is desperately needed to generate economic growth (Magure, 2012). The patronage politics of the country are proving economically and financially unsustainable, and run counter to the basic notion of economic and human development. As the economic prospects of country continue fading, the government has found a new business partner in the Chinese government.

Look East Policy

The look East policy was adopted by the Zimbabwe government in 2004 after top government officials and State companies were slapped with sanctions by western governments (IPS News, 2012). In Zimbabwe, Chinese development assistance has been in the form of concessional loans, export credit and grants (Dubosse, 2010). It also comes as complete projects, goods and materials, technical cooperation, human resources development cooperation, medical teams, emergency humanitarian aid, and debt relief. The Zimbabwe-Sino relationship is opaque on both sides. There is a lack of information about the resources China receives in exchange for its aid and grants. Equally, there is lack of clarity on how Zimbabwe benefits from dealings with China. However, there are unsubstantiated claims of members of the ruling elite
profiting from Chinese largesse (Dubosse, 2010). Ordinary men and women have not benefitted materially from this look east policy.

There are concerns about China’s intentions to exploit the massive resources in Africa including diamonds in Zimbabwe (Edoho, 2011). There are also concerns about China’s motives as the new colonizer in Africa. There are reports of gross labor laws violations by Chinese employers in Zimbabwe (Mail and Guardian, 2012). For most Zimbabweans, China does not provide a viable answer for the economic challenges of the country and its future prospects. China is not interested in democracy, human rights and making poverty a thing of the past; its focus is on procuring natural resources. Whether China will prove to be a plausible alternative for Zimbabwe’s economic and human development remains to be seen.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a complex portrait of key historical, political, economic and social events which have defined and brought Zimbabwe into a ‘state of exception’. We learnt a great deal about its existence as a colonial state, its transition to independence, the initial efforts the new government made to rectify injustices of the past. In all of this there is nothing unique about Zimbabwe. Many other Southern African countries have travelled through similar trajectories from colonialism to independence and beyond. There is nothing remotely distinct about the nature of economic, political and social challenges with which Zimbabwe had to grapple beyond its independence. What sets Zimbabwe apart, is the path the country took to address socio-economic and political problems. The terms of land redistribution at Lancaster House in 1979, and the rhetoric and activities surrounding rectifying land inequity that the Black government engaged, combined to create an unstoppable volcano. A combination of power, politics and money created what can only be called ‘corruption of the first order.’ The calamitous events described in this chapter precipitated a crisis of a magnitude not seen too many times before.

Although NGOs had always had a presence, the gravity of the situation in Zimbabwe compelled many more NGOs to respond to what had become a humanitarian crisis. If, as Sen
(1999) argues, development is freedom, is it even possible to imagine human and economic development? What does development look like in this context? How deeply have development NGOs’ initiatives been impacted by political, economic and social events that have brought Zimbabwe to the brink of total collapse? Is it possible to put development theory into practice in such an environment? What role can development NGOs play to contribute to processes of democratization and the growth of a civil society?

The present chapter has laid a solid foundation from which we can contextualize the many challenges, obstacles and impossible odds with which development NGOs have to contend. As part of the process of finding out potential answers to the fundamental questions I raised at the start of the chapter, here is a quick trajectory the dissertation will navigate.

The next chapter provides a critical conceptual framework for the study by exploring the notions of development, development communication and Non-Governmental Organizations. A good comprehension of the various theories associated with these three concepts will be vital for the discussion and analysis of the results in the final chapter. Chapter 3 consists of a discussion of the methodological choices I made and the justification thereof. It encompasses my research method, the sampling process for the study and data collection. I provide a comprehensive description of participating NGOs in terms of their mission, vision, goals, objectives, sectors of work and financial resources. The final dimensions of the chapter consist of my choices for data analysis and evaluation of the research.

The fourth chapter is a presentation of findings of the study from participants of the study. The results from representatives of development NGOs and two groups of beneficiaries are tabulated into various categories consisting of significant statements and their associated formulated meanings. From these tables, I generate several themes on various aspects of the findings. I add my own interpretation of the themes on the basis of my indigenous membership of the group. In the fifth and final chapter I discuss and analyze results of the study. I seek answers to several questions as follows. What makes the survival of development NGOs possible in such
an extraordinary context? What is their motivation for persisting? How does the state of exception shape and define their goals and objectives? What theoretical frames if any guide the work of development NGOs? I close the final chapter and the dissertation by reflecting on the future of Zimbabwe.
Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework

Introduction

There are three notions which constitute critical dimensions of the conceptual framework of this study. These are development, development communication and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In the previous chapter I characterized Zimbabwe as a state of exception without expanding on the meaning of that descriptor. In addition to discussing the three notions for the framework, in this chapter, I offer a brief portrayal of a fragile state. Understanding the latter will serve us well in the analysis of the results of this study.

All three concepts work in an intertwined manner to form a foundation for my study. The concept of NGOs and more specifically those in the development sector is invaluable to this dissertation. The relevance of this conceptual foundation is apparent considering the in-depth knowledge we have at this juncture of the state of exception. The repercussions of the state of exception on the government’s capacity to meet its basic obligations towards citizens are very familiar from the previous chapter. These conditions have clearly created a vacuum which NGOs of various stripes, including those focused on development, must now try and fill. With this in mind, I discuss the notion of development next.

Development

The theorizing of development is considered a meeting point of ideology, politics and explanation (Nederveen, 2009). Due to its status as an applied science, development thinking necessarily derives from several frameworks within different academic disciplines. The concept of development and how it is defined is hotly contested among scholars and practitioners. What
makes defining development treacherous is that different countries present varied and very complex contexts. Furthermore, defining development is not an innocent exercise. How development is defined has major implications for development policies initiatives and outcomes. My aim is not to provide an unambiguous definition of development; it is to highlight its more salient characteristics.

In this chapter, I present the predominant theories of development out of which various meanings of the concept can be derived. Development theories typifying most scholarly work (Peet & Hartwick, 2009; Cypher & Dietz, 2009; Larrain, 1989; Blomstrom & Hettne, 1984; Nederveen, 2009) are classified as ‘conventional’ and ‘non-conventional.’ Beyond the dominant theories of development, Sen’s notion of development as freedom (1999) is highly regarded and influential among developmentalists and world bodies. The actual practice of development among NGOs who embrace non-conventional theoretical frameworks is shaped and informed extensively by participatory approaches. For this reason, I am compelled to include a brief discussion of participatory approaches alongside theories of development. Without diminishing the value of the theories of development I discuss, I want to argue upfront for the exceptional relevance Sen’s theory of development has for this study. I shall expand on this later.

Different theories of development are easily identifiable with specific communicative processes. Conventional theories of development are regarded as a modernization paradigm in which development is a linear, cumulative and evolutionary process (Servaes, 1991). Communication and media are the primary instruments necessary to achieve and strengthen modernity. In this paradigm, communication is a one-way process in which messages to promote the adoption and expansion of modernization practices are passed on in a vertical top-down fashion to a mass audience.

On the other hand, non-conventional theories are identifiable with dialogic modes of communication. Dialogue is viewed as pivotal to beneficiaries’ participation. A defining characteristic of participatory approaches is communication or dialogue and a horizontal flow of
information (Mefalopulos, 2003). Communication becomes a tool of empowerment. Mass media messages are expected to originate from communities and not development experts. In fact, the term used to describe these processes is participatory communication in which a user and bottom-up approach to communication is adopted (Jacobson & Servaes, 1999; Melkote, 1991). In this model, there is no pre-determined sender or receiver, universal messages, and channels, but a search for the most appropriate communication for a specific situation and culture.

Conventional Theories of Development

The distinguishing characteristic of conventional theories of development is their acceptance of a capitalist structure as the best there is, and their definition of development as economic growth (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). Conventional theories assume that the accumulation of wealth by a few is acceptable, while poverty is an unfortunate consequence of growth. Poverty is rectifiable in the long term through growth and in the meantime through charity and aid. Generally speaking, the scholarly discipline driving conventional theories is economics. The broad definition of development here is the production of a better life through economic growth (Peet & Hartwick, 2009).

Conventional theories represent the history of development, a concept rooted in classical economics, beginning with the British Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries. Proponents of classical economics such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo and John Stuart Mills in the mid-1700 to mid-1800s, argued for economic growth on the basis of capital accumulation (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). These were novel ideas during the industrial revolution when a new class of industrialists challenged the dominance of landowners in society. In the last half of the 19th century, Alfred Marshall, Friedrich von Wieser, and J. B. Clark developed economics into a specialized scientific discipline. Neoclassical economic theory asserted that under conditions of perfect competition, markets balance supply and demand (Larrain, 1989). Capitalism was deemed the best of all possible economic worlds due to its efficiency and the ability to satisfy wants. Although there is
contestation about the sufficiency of economic growth to generate development, capitalist thinking continues to dominate development thinking and practice.

A new generation of economists, among them John Maynard Keynes, challenged the neoclassical economic framework in the mid-1990s. Keynes' economic theory argues that free markets do not spontaneously maximize human well-being (Cypher & Dietz, 2009). The state has to intervene by changing the aggregate level of demand through monetary and fiscal policies. Keynes pointed to the chaos and uncertainty capitalism generates, exemplified by cycles of economic depression. Keynesian economics became a basis for growth theories as well as government economic policies directed at maintaining full employment.

As Keynesian theory was taking root in the West, there were schools of thought in Two Thirds World countries which were critical of certain aspects of neoclassical economic doctrine. Critics targeted post-second world war modernization theories in the capitalistic world. Such theories assumed that developing countries must repeat experiences of developed societies to transition to modernity (Larrain, 1989). Against this intellectual background, emerged the Latin American School of thought in the United Nations. It was called the Economic Commission on Latin America (ECLA). The central thesis of ECLA was that conventional classical and neoclassical theories were inadequate for understanding underdeveloped countries.

The ECLA theory of the 1950s emphasized the structural imbalance between the center, made up of Northern and developed countries, and the periphery consisting of Southern and developing countries (Blomstrom & Hettne, 1984). ECLA raised questions about the theory of trade and strategy of industrialization, and argued that industrialized countries benefitted more from technical advances by selling products at high prices and buying raw materials from the periphery at very low cost. Given these inequities, ECLA argued for Latin America to industrialize and lessen its dependency on exporting raw materials (Larrain, 1989). Regional integration was crucial because of its potential to provide a more expansive market for trade among the various Latin American countries.
The Latin American school of thought is of great relevance to the present dissertation. My study assesses the status and nature of development in Zimbabwe which is a Southern developing country. Rhodesia's (now Zimbabwe's) economy was built on exporting minerals and agricultural produce to developed countries. Zimbabwe's economy continues to rely heavily on exporting raw goods and minerals. Multinational corporations such as Anglo American, Falcon Mines, and Lonrho PLC, continue exporting unprocessed minerals for refining to export zones elsewhere. In this regard, Zimbabwe operates on the periphery of meaningful industrial activities.

I mentioned earlier that ECLA was encouraging regional integration for the benefit of Latin American countries. A similar logic among Southern African countries led to the formation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Zimbabwe is one of 15 member states of SADC. Among the many objectives of SADC is achieving development, economic growth, peace and security (SADC, 2014). The Latin American school's criticisms of conventional theories of development lead to the second and prevailing category: non-conventional theories of development.

Non-Conventional, Critical Theories of Development

The term non-conventional used with regard to theories of development points to a refusal to buy into the capitalistic view that perceives development as referencing economic growth and nothing else. In this regard, non-conventional theories present a partial response to the concerns of ECLA theories. The central thesis of ECLA was that conventional classical and neo-classical theories were insufficient for understanding underdeveloped countries. Thus, ECLA has similar strands with non-conventional theories, whose basic thrust is their critique of capitalism as fundamentally flawed, ethically challenged, morally wrong and dangerous to people and the planet (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). Capitalism is viewed as inherently unequal, unjust and unsustainable. All non-conventional theories emphasize well-conceived development, centering human well-being rather than simply more economic growth. Dependency theory, culturalist
development theory and post-colonialism are some of the more prominent non-conventional theories of development.

**Dependency Theory**

Dependency theory was founded on a Marxist philosophical and theoretical basis; although contact with Europe might bring modernization to some Two Thirds World countries or the Global South, such contact also brings exploitation (Larrain, 1989). As a theory, it emphasizes a dialectical integration of sociological and political aspects of economic development.

Dependency approaches are credited with three intellectual tendencies (Larrain, 1989). The first seeks to construct a ‘theory of underdevelopment’ which argues that dependency by the periphery on central economies of the industrialized north is the direct cause of underdevelopment. The second tendency emphasizes the external factors obstructing national development. For example, foreign companies can have an inordinate amount of control over natural resources of a country and more often than not repatriate the profits they make. The third tendency is the desire to study concrete situations of dependency, and internal processes of class struggle mediating the influence of external factors (Larrain, 1989).

Although dependency theory was widely criticized, it enjoyed broad support from radical development practitioners in Latin America, India and sub–Sahara Africa. In contemporary times, dependency theory is viewed as dated because there are peripheral countries enjoying high economic growth among them Brazil, Chile and Argentina. A second and equally prominent non-conventional theory considers culture a serious determinant of development.

**Culturalist Development Theory**

In the last decade, economists have started taking culture seriously as one of the many determinants of economic growth (Cuesta, 2004). Culture in this context is understood as a system of values, beliefs and behaviors in a society. There is a variety of culturalist development theories some of which are characterized as ‘over grand’ cultural theories (Sen, 2001). One such theory is Huntington’s thesis of the clash of civilizations, in which individuals no longer identify
themselves along ideological lines but as part of cultural groups (Cuesta, 2004). A second example offered by Cuesta is Weber’s thesis that the hegemony of capitalism is a cultural phenomenon associated with religion. Culturalist development theories do not necessarily define development; rather, they center culture as a determinant of whether a society develops in the Western sense or not.

Both Huntington and Weber consider culture the most crucial determinant of a society’s economic development. The strongest criticism directed at these extreme forms of culturalist development theories is their myopic view of the role of culture. Sen warns that these over grand theories explain contrasts in major economic, political and social performances mainly in terms of cultural differences. These theories, according to Sen, pay inadequate attention to variability in culture over time, the contingency of behavior on events, and the particularity of cultural relationships that might be specific to groups within a culture but not generalizable to the larger society.

In my view, Sen (2001) makes very convincing arguments about the role of culture in development. For a start, culture is integral to our lives; it shapes behaviors including the economic, social and political choices we make. Yet, culture is not a direct, causal determinant of behavior. The correspondences between culture and development can be quite complex. Cultural connections require paying attention to variability, contingency and particularity. The complexity of the role of culture in development is clearly illustrated by Sen, who points to the conflict between tradition or culture, religion and modernity with regard to the education of girls (Sen, 1999). This is an issue that afflicts many Two Thirds World countries, where the education of boys supersedes that of girls. Personally, Nigeria offers a powerful example of the conflicts among religious values, tradition and modernity. Northern Nigeria is mainly Islamic, while the southern part of the country is mostly Christian. In the north, Boko Haram justifies the kidnapping girls on the grounds that by attending school they are violating Islamic religious values. Although the south is mainly Christian, local traditional values often disadvantage girls with respect to
education. As is the case in most parts of Africa, Zimbabwe included, girls are often considered a “poor return on investment,” because they will get married and will not financially support their parents in the future. Clearly, the link between development, culture and religion is significant, but not always lucid. A third leading non-conventional theory of development is postcolonialism.

Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is a complex area of scholarship which critiques key Western concepts of progress and development (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). Postcolonial criticism compels a radical rethinking of knowledge and social identities authored and authorized by colonialism and Western domination. An outspoken post-colonial critic of the development project is Arturo Escobar (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). Escobar questions the basis on which Two Thirds World countries are defined as underdeveloped. Two Thirds World countries were defined by the prevalence of poverty, population growth, levels of illiteracy, and malnourishment. Such definitions illustrate that the notion of development is premised on what rich societies have achieved, and for as long as Two Thirds World countries have not attained similar economic and technical progress, they remain “underdeveloped.”

Each of the three critical theories of development is relevant to my project. Dependency theory can be viewed through the lenses of Zimbabwe’s colonial history, with particular attention to its impact on how political and economic events unfolded in the years following independence. The applicability of the culturalist and postcolonial theories will be apparent in the findings of the study and their discussion with regard to girls and women. I defer that discussion for later.

At this juncture, I have explored three varieties of non-conventional theories. Next, I investigate a fourth non-conventional theory, Sen’s theory of development as freedom. I feature this theory because of its germinal nature in the literature on development and its influence on policy making by world bodies. What distinguishes Sen’s theory from the other three non-conventional theories is that it considers freedom as a critical driver of development. I justify highlighting Sen’s theory on the basis of Zimbabwe’s unique context in which various freedoms
have been severely restricted. Because of this reality, Sen’s notion of development as freedom gives us unique tools with which to critique human development.

**Sen’s Notion of Development as Freedom**

Although the last three theories—dependency, culturalist and postcolonial theories—each have a different emphasis, they share with Sen the centering of human well-being in development. A significant dimension of centering people in development initiatives with which non-conventional theories are concerned, is their participation—hence, communication (particularly as a constitutive or dialogic practice) is integral to development itself. Because Sen’s theory of development is complex and multidimensional, I discuss four of its most critical elements.

First, I discuss its critical orientation, how it is defined and the notion of capabilities with which it is intertwined. Second, due to the instrumental and constitutive role it plays in development, I visit Sen’s views on communication. A third critical dimension of Sen’s theory of development for exploration is constituted by the notion of freedoms. The latter are interwoven with the absence of agency women experience in many Two Thirds World countries. Sen’s is particularly concerned as we shall see, with the multiple inequalities women suffer which are detrimental to the potential for development. A significant element of the inequalities women endure is the absence of freedom to fully participate in economic and political processes. Sen is a passionate advocate for women’s full participation in these arenas. Thus, the fourth dimension for exploration will be participatory practices.

Sen’s notion of development is a holistic view of development which places people, not just structures, institutions, rules and processes, at the center. Sen contrasts his notion with the popular conception of development as growth of personal incomes, gross national products (GNP), industrialization, technological advances and social modernization. Development, he argues is the expansion of real freedoms that people enjoy (Sen, 1999).
The notion of freedom in Sen’s theory of development is intertwined with the concept of capabilities. The latter references what real opportunities one has regarding the life one may lead. Capabilities are the substance of both Sen’s notion of development and his idea of freedom. The emphasis on freedom and capabilities means that Sen’s view of development is not utilitarian. It is focused on persons, their capacities, abilities, and agency. Development (economic or otherwise) empowers persons to realize their capabilities. It is most fundamentally about human well-being. For Sen this is both the starting as well as end-point of development.

The basic tenets of human development are socio-economic development, emancipative cultural change and democratization (Welzel, Inglehart & Klingemann, 2003). All three are focused on broadening human choice. It is these very choices which Sen and Anand (2000) refer to as capabilities. This simply means that individuals have a range of opportunities from which to make choices in order to create the kind of life they want to lead. Beyond these basic tenets, and more critically of relevance to my project as we shall see in chapters 4 and 5, the concept of capabilities ought to be considered in broader terms. I am referring to basic indicators of human well-being that Sen (1999) and other scholars of development engage (Gustav, Stewart & Samman, 2006). These include mental well-being; empowerment; political freedom; social relations; community well-being; inequalities; availability of meaningful work; political security; and economic security.

The capability approach takes each person as an end; it is focused on choice or freedom. Moreover, it ascribes an urgent task to government and public policy to improve the quality of life for all people. The capabilities in question are not only those residing within an individual, but how personal abilities are enabled by the political, social and economic environment (Nussbaum, 2011). The actualization of internal capabilities of individuals results in what both Sen and Nussbaum call functionings or being and doings. For Nussbaum, a decent political order must secure certain central capabilities. Among these are life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses,
imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; play; and control over one’s environment, including the political and material aspects.

The relationship between capabilities and communication is readily visible in the constitutive and instrumental role the latter plays in development. I find Garnham’s (1999) analysis of Sen’s capabilities approach as it applies to communication very insightful. In the field of communication, as Garnham argues, it is the real availability of opportunities and achievement of functionings that matters. For example, levels of literacy determine the modes of communication individuals can use and benefit from. The media can serve as an enabler of a range of functionings. Full citizenship is predicated on access and use of information and communicative processes which are the currency of daily life.

An informational program on politics can contribute to the functioning of political participation. An informational program on the job market, education or healthcare can contribute to functionings in terms of work and income, education and health. The lack of access to a telephone narrows the capability set for an individual across a wide range of possible functionings such as employment, participation in social life, and access to healthcare all of which are critical for human well-being. All in all, communication is central to both economic and human development processes.

The notion of freedoms in Sen’s theory of development is its pivotal tenet. Freedoms are dependent on certain social and economic arrangements, as well as political and civil rights. Development necessitates the removal of unfreedoms such as poverty, lack of economic opportunities, neglect of public facilities, intolerance and repressive behaviors. The lack of substantive freedoms have a direct relationship to poverty which robs individuals of the ability to meet basic needs such as adequate nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter, clean water, and education.

Freedom as a principal means of development and in its instrumental role, contributes to the general capability a person has to live and participate in political processes freely. The five
distinct freedoms instrumental in advancing capabilities are: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective securities (Sen, 1999). All of these are interrelated and advance freedoms of other types. These freedoms are instrumental because they work as a tool for securing the capabilities examined earlier.

In his theory of development as freedom, Sen (1999) specifically addresses the agency or freedom women need to fully participate socially, economically and politically. Sen addresses the sex bias that plagues poor families, resulting in capability deprivation among women and girls. In India (from which Sen draws many examples) and in most Two Thirds World countries, women suffer disproportionately from mortality, morbidity, undernourishment, and medical neglect. Although women play a crucial role in society and developmental initiatives, their contributions are often marginalized. Very often, as we shall encounter in the results of this study, women do not have property rights, access to financing, information and education, all of which hinder prospects for development.

In response to the inequalities women endure, Sen and practitioners of international development have long embraced and practiced participation. The popularity of participatory approaches is particularly apparent as a key theme from the results of this study. Although a complex concept, the notion of participation is a rights based approach to human and economic development (Cleaver, 1999; Stiglitz, 2002). In some development circles, a highly useful working definition of participation is “the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control” (Goulet, 1989, p. 165). Participation is also used in the broadest sense to encompass transparency, openness and voice in public places (Stiglitz, 2002). As the latter points out, “from a comprehensive development perspective, participation does not refer simply to voting,” (Stiglitz, 2002, p. 165). Participatory processes must entail open dialog and broadly active civic engagement, and it requires that individuals have a voice in the decisions that affect them. Participation is often viewed as a means of incorporating a wider representation of
stakeholders into project organizational forms. Participation can mean the production of local knowledge from the beneficiaries of development initiatives (Green, 2010).

The theorizing of participation has often been categorized into means or ends. The distinction made is one of efficiency on the one hand, and that of equity and empowerment on the other. The efficiency argument views participation as a tool for achieving better project outcomes; the equity and empowerment argument sees participation as a process which enhances individuals’ capacity to improve their lives (Cleaver, 1999). The normative justification propounded by Sen (1999) in his agency-oriented view of development, is that individuals ought to participate in decisions that affect their lives. This is what he calls the ‘process aspect’ of freedom, which is integral to development itself.

Some make a distinction between the instrumental orientation of participatory approaches, and the specific practices that comprise it (Green, 2010). The instrumental claims are made in the light of perceived effects of the utilization of participatory approaches. There are a couple of strands to this argument. First, participation has liberatory value given its potential to transform the subjectivities of those engaged in it through learning and reflection. Second, participatory approaches can be used as an instrument for mobilizing and including those who are likely to benefit the most from development initiatives.

The popularity and adoption of participatory practices is attributable to five basic reasons: (i) the potential to lower the cost of providing services; (ii) intrinsic value for participants such as alleviating alienation and powerlessness; (iii) as a catalyst for further development efforts; (iv) providing a sense of responsibility and ownership of the project; and (v) ensuring the use of indigenous knowledge and expertise (Mefalopulos, 2008). Participation often arises from one of three sources: some authority or expert, non-expert populace, and some external third agent (Goulet, 1989, Crocker, 2007). When initiated by an expert, participants are not given control over the process. However, when participation is spontaneously generated by non-expert populace, it is mostly in response to a crisis, or threat to a community’s identity, survival and values. Where it
originates from an external third agent, participation becomes a tool for expressing ideological views, which might include fighting injustice or protecting cultural or religious values.

So far, I have explored the major categories of theories of development. I discussed the main tenets of conventional and non-conventional development theories. Because of its influential nature on practitioners of development and policy making world bodies, I highlighted Sen’s notion of development as freedom. Because of their widespread adoption and popularity within the non-conventional category of development theories, I briefly discussed the concept of participation as well as why it is compatible with centering people in development initiatives.

With each of the categories of development theories, I described the basic, associated modes of communication. As we learnt conventional theories of development are identifiable with one-way monologic communication through various mass media. On the other hand, non-conventional development theories are associated with dialogical communication with beneficiaries. Development communication has taken center stage in development due to its compatibility with the idea of centering and empowering beneficiaries through participation. Thus, the idea of development communication warrants its own review in this chapter.

Development Communication

The work of development presupposes communicative action among stakeholders such as development NGOs, beneficiaries, governments and donors. Although there are varieties of communicative practices, development communication is tied specifically to the field of development. In the present study, NGOs are the forum in which development communication is practiced.

Emerging from non-conventional theories of development, Mefalopulos (2008) defines development communication as a genuine two-way communication among stakeholders, which facilitates the sharing of knowledge to achieve positive change in development initiatives. It is a social process based on dialog in which change is sought at different levels. The foundation of development communication is listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building
policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change. For Mefalopulos, the
successes and failures of most development projects are often determined by two crucial factors:
communication and people’s participation.

Development Communication Theories

The first set of development communication theories derive from the dominant paradigm
of modernization theory of development. Although the modernization theory of development has
long fallen out of favor with both development and communication specialists because of its
economic focus and ethnocentric views, it has not been entirely discarded (Melkote, 2003). The
four development communication theories obtaining from the modernization theory of
development are: (i) communication and modernization theory; (ii) the diffusion of innovations
theory; (iii) social marketing approach; and (iv) entertainment education strategy. Because of their
monologic nature, they depend on a linear transmission of information.

According to the modernization paradigm, Two Thirds World countries can only develop if
they adopt values and principles of a free market approach to bring about economic growth
(Mefalopulos, 2008). Culturally, the poor have to abandon traditional beliefs by embracing
attitudes and behaviors favorable to innovation and modernity. Scientific methods rooted in the
principles of the enlightenment, are the only way forward. Liberalism premised on political
freedom and a democratic system is critical for the operations of free markets. The dominant
paradigm of modernization theory of development associates communication with a top-down,
linear, mass media mode in which messages are transmitted from one point to the next.
Development communication means the use of mass media to serve as agents and indices of
modernization in Two Thirds World countries (Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote, 2003). Mass media
believed capable of changing mindsets, serve as the vehicle transferring new ideas from the
West to the Two Thirds World, and from urban to rural countryside.

A second member of the family of development communication theory deriving from
modernization theory of development is the diffusion of innovations theory. The emphasis of
communication is at a local level (Melkote, 2003) where instrumental communication is adopted. The primary goal is to ‘transmit’ an intended meaning accurately and effectively to accomplish the task at hand (Oxford Index, 2014). In the case of modernization theory of development, the goal is to move a community from a traditional to a more modern way of life as dictated by capitalism. Such traditional communities tend to have individuals who are the first to adopt innovations from developed countries. These individuals tend to be younger, with a higher social status and a greater use of mass media. In turn, early adopters influence the rest of society to adopt new innovations from the West through interpersonal communication and local mass media.

Interpersonal communication and the use of local mass media is likely to be effective if it appeals subtly to societal and relational identities. For example, the mass media message used might be based on a cultural identity theory. This is a theory in which cultural identifications are conceptualized as shared orientations evidenced in a variety of communication forms including commodities and products (Ting-Toomey, 2009). The message conveyed through instrumental communication might imply that in order to continue belonging to the group, one must own the latest products and goods. A good example of a sense of belongingness brought about by the ownership of a product is the widespread ownership of cell phones among individuals of all ages and classes in contemporary Zimbabwe. A growth consultant firm, Froth and Sullivan, puts mobile phone subscribers in Zimbabwe at 6.9 million out of a population of 13 million at the end of 2010 (Biriwasha, 2011).

This many cell phones have made frequent communication among friends and family possible. In my opinion, this is an affirmation of Ting-Toomey’s cultural identity theory as shared orientations. Outside of any theoretical framework, the widespread ownership of cell phones is born of necessity; it is therefore both instrumental and a capability (similar to the capacities Sen describes in his theory of development as freedom). Due to the extraordinary context, landline telephones are no longer an option for communication. The Zimbabwe postal service died many years ago rendering any form of long distance communication impossible. Moreover, many
families have a member who lives in diaspora and on whom they rely financially. Frequent communication is vital for financial support. The cell phone example compels us to acknowledge that instrumental and dialogic forms of communication are not necessarily bifurcated.

The social marketing approach constitutes the third family member of the development communication theories associated with the modernization theory of development. This approach uses commercial marketing strategies to promote social causes as well as behavioral changes (Melkote, 2003). Practitioners persuade audiences instrumentally through specific messages aimed at achieving specific goals. The primary focus is on explicit content and effects. It is also on foregrounding clarity of meaning, while back grounding ambiguity and connotation (Oxford Index, 2014). Examples of instrumental communication are campaigns for safe sex, adult literacy, HIV/AIDS prevention and control. For example in Botswana a road billboard sign promoting the ABC approach reads, “Avoiding AIDS is as easy as ABC. Abstain, Be faithful and Condomize” (Avert website). New concepts coming out of social marketing include market segmentation, market research, and product development. The market research might include the use of focus groups, and audience surveys.

Entertainment education is the fourth member of approaches associated with the modernization theory of development. The strategy is to embed educational content in entertainment programs on television, radio, videos and folk theatre (Melkote, 2003). In Zimbabwe and South Africa, there has been an extensive use of this approach on radio, television, and local theatre in efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic, cultural and gender issues. Entertainment education can directly or indirectly influence social change through generating awareness, attention and behavioral changes. It also creates topics of discussion among community members, and the interpersonal exchanges are far more likely to sway individuals towards positive change.

Within the last couple of decades, donors, scholars and practitioners have been questioning the success of development initiatives which are purely focused on economic growth.
Clearly the modernization theory of development has failed to produce desirable results. For this reason, newer approaches to development have emerged. There is recognition that human wellbeing, sustainability, native cultures, and protection of the environment are essential ingredients for achieving economic growth. One of the newer paradigms embraced by development scholars, practitioners, and world bodies such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Bank is the participatory approach which I discussed earlier.

The shift from modernization to participatory approaches in development theory has catalyzed changes in development communication. There is a lot more focus on dialogic modes of communication which are aimed at engagement and discovery as opposed to monologic communication. The notion of participatory development requires genuine engagement between recipients and development experts which can only happen through interpersonal communication. According to Nobuya (2007), communication approaches espousing participatory development models valorize some of these themes: (i) participation of beneficiaries in some or all of project stages; (ii) cultivation of trust and mutual understanding; (iii) local level actions based on local knowledge; (iv) role of development specialist as facilitator and equal participant and not decision maker; and (v) use of communication to articulate deep seated social relations. The effectiveness of participation is dependent on the adoption of development communication which is guided by the following nine main principles.

The Nine Principles of Development Communication

Although there is controversy among scholars and professionals on how best to conceive development communication, there is wide consensus about at least nine basic guiding principles. For a brief exploration of the nine guiding principles, I rely on Mefalopulos (2008), and Mefalopulos and Kamlongera (2004). There is unanimity among scholars and practitioners that dialog is the heart of the new communication paradigm and that it should be the foundation of any development initiative. A dialogic approach guarantees that all stakeholders are heard and that
the priorities of the project are aligned with those of the people. Dialog serves as an invaluable research tool which is critical for building trust, optimizing knowledge, minimizing risks and reconciling different positions. Second, a development communication initiative must be inclusive of all relevant stakeholders if problems are to be averted in latter stages of a project. Third, communication must be used as a heuristic investigative tool to discover and solve problems during the initial phases of a project. The notion of a heuristic as referenced here simply means that communication should be used dialogically to understand a whole range of ideas and possible solutions to a problem from relevant stakeholders. Through dialog, communication can be used to narrow down the range of possible solutions. The central intent of the communicative process is the sharing of information and listening with the goal of converging toward mutual understanding, agreement and collective action.

Fourth, participation of relevant stakeholders cannot be overemphasized. All participatory and dialogic processes must be contextualized by rooting them in the cultural and socioeconomic context of specific countries. The fifth point of agreement by scholars is that the body of knowledge of development communication is interdisciplinary because of its use of several principles borrowed from other disciplines. Specialists in the field of development communication are required to be familiar with disciplines such as sociology, political economy, ethnography, adult education and marketing.

A sixth point of agreement among scholars is that development communication specialists need to be strategic in their application of communication techniques and methods. Being strategic in this sense does not merely reference a plan for achieving specific objectives; the objectives must be specific, feasible, and clearly stated. However, there must be sufficient financial, material and “people power” resources, as well as an established timeline within which to achieve the objectives.

Professionalism and timeliness are the seventh and eighth principles of consensus, and these two are critical for the success of these techniques. Professionalism entails operating within
a set of values, integrity, and altruism that generates trust from all stakeholders. A communication development expert must be accountable; be dedicated to continuous improvement and strive for excellence. Strategy design should only come after technically sound objectives have been set, and every effort has been made to ensure that they are well understood and relevant to most stakeholders. *Persuasiveness* is the ninth principle of communication development about which scholars are in accord. It refers to the process of inducing voluntary change on the basis of accurate information and within a two-way communicative process. Each party should be allowed to present its point of view with the intent of achieving the most appropriate change. Two way persuasive approaches stand an excellent chance of selecting the best available option among many which offers the potential for sustainable change.

Development communication can go hand in hand with participatory approaches to development (as described earlier), and often results in the reduction of political risks, improvement of project design and performance, increased transparency of activities and the enhancement of people’s voices through their participation (Melkote, 2003). Stakeholders become partners in processes of problem analysis and solving, thus making development projects more sustainable. Development communication includes probing socioeconomic and political factors, identifying priorities, assessing risks and opportunities, empowering people, strengthening communities, and promoting social change within complex cultural and political environments. However, development communication derives from a set of theories, which fall into monologic or dialogic modes of communication.

The dialogic mode of communication is based on a horizontal, two-way model of communication which creates a constructive environment for stakeholders to participate in the definition of problems and solutions. In its assessment role, dialogic communication, acts as a research and analytical tool for investigating an issue (Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote 2003). Stakeholders engage in uncovering problems, assessing issues, identifying opportunities and risks of a technical and political nature. Active listening is as important as talking in sharing
perceptions and creating new knowledge, with the intention of inquiring, exploring and
discovering. In its role as an empowerment tool, it facilitates the active engagement of
stakeholders, with the goal of fully involving the most marginalized. Through voices of the poor
and marginalized, relevant problems can be explored, and pertinent solutions devised. The
overall goal of dialogic communication is four pronged: (i) ensuring mutual understanding; (ii)
making the best use of all possible knowledge in assessing a situation; (iii) building consensus;
and (iv) identifying appropriate solutions.

So far, I have explored a set of four development communication theories which obtain
from the modernization theory of development alongside dialogic modes of communication which
have been catalyzed by participatory approaches in development theory. There are two key
differences between monologic and dialogic development communication theories. Monological
communication theories adopt unidirectional messaging and have no interest in involving local
participants in conversation. On the other hand dialogical communication theories engage in a
two way exchange of messages with participants who they think of as partners with a vested
interest in the outcomes of development projects.

Although development communication seems fairly straightforward to grasp, its practice
is not always simple or easy. We often circumvent dialogue because it is demanding. It is always
easier to broadcast messages based on the assumption that the message is clear. When the
message makes no clear or immediate impact on recipients’ behavior, it is often attributed to the
lack of understanding on the participants’ part. One of the contributing factors to the marginalized
status of development communication among practitioners is the lack of in-depth knowledge of
the concept, underlying theories, strategic value as well as how best to apply it in various
contexts.

Often, communication is not based on firm theoretical underpinnings. Invariably it is only
given an implicit role without associating it with specific mandates on contents, channels, forms,
actors, and timing (Nobuya, 2007). In any case, most international aid and development
programs find themselves perennially strained by limited budgets and human resources. Thus the adoption of a dialogic development communication strategy with all the steps it entails becomes an impractical proposition. However, there are rudimentary avenues for practicing a more dialogic development communication. For example, in the late 1990s, the World Bank broadened its development focus to include broadcast media development, including community broadcasting, particularly radio (Mefalopulos, 2008). The support of community radio in places like Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Nigeria was meant to be a contribution to participatory approaches, fostering two-way communications and amplifying the voices of the poor.

We now have a fair grasp of the concept of development communication. I have described what is, its main principles and theories as well as its interconnections with some of the theories of development and approaches. Earlier, I identified development NGOs as the site at which both the concepts of development and development communication are practiced. It is therefore crucial at this point to obtain a firm comprehension of what NGOs are. As we shall find out NGOs are complex entities. My goal is not so much to simplify their complexity; my aim is to provide a basic conceptual frame.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Over the years there have been fierce scholarly debates, contestations and disagreements on how best to define Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Complicating matters further is the fact that not all NGOs are Non-Governmental in the strict sense of the word; there are NGOs which are created by governments. The mutating nature of NGOs in terms of activities, scope, and the theoretical frames with which they function does not make the task of defining them easier. There is a plethora of terms used to describe NGOs (Vakil, 1997), a quandary arising from three main sources.

First, NGOs are multidimensional in nature, making agreement among scholars on what dimensions of these organizations are critical for labeling impossible. Second, the literature on NGOs is intrinsically interdisciplinary: it spans pure and applied social sciences. Each of the
disciplines lends specific theoretical and technical perspectives to the discourse. Third, individual NGOs are multifaceted and keep evolving over time as they find different donors, assume varying projects in different sectors, thus making it hard to identify a particular NGO with specific characteristics let alone sector.

The complexity of the notion of NGOs is embodied in the various descriptive labels often used to describe these entities. According to Fisher (1997), the various monikers range from community based organizations (CBOs); grassroots organizations (GROs); peoples’ organizations (POs); government organized groups (GONGOs); quasi-autonomous NGOs (QUANGOs); Southern based NGOs (SNGOs); and international NGOs (INGOs). These monikers reflect attempts to reduce the complex phenomena of NGOs to something simple. The issue for Fisher is not so much reifying what NGOs are; the focus ought to be on what happens in specific places and times, varying economic, social, cultural and political contexts. This kind of focus underscores the critical place context occupies in how well NGOs can meet their goals and objectives. It is therefore crucial for NGOs to understand and adapt to the environments in which they work if they are to deliver their services effectively.

In the section that follows, I conceptualize NGOs through three different lenses or perspectives. First, I consider NGOs on the basis of two essential descriptors, orientation and level of operation. This references the types of activities NGOs engage and whether they are local, regional or international respectively. Second, NGOs can be understood as organizations with six identifiable dimensions constituting their lives. Third, as entities it is critical to appreciate the challenges and issues NGOs confront in terms of their environments of operation as well as in their principal—agent donor relationships.

Although the concept of an NGO is complex, I consider Vakil’s (1997, p. 2060) tentative definition of NGOs as “self—governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared to improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people” rather useful. A functional platform from which to begin managing the tangled nature of NGOs is to work with a couple of essential
descriptors. The first essential descriptor is orientation which refers to the type of activities an NGO engages in, such as welfare, development, advocacy, development education, networking and research (Brunt & McCourt, 2012). For example one participant of this study in Zimbabwe, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) works in several sectors including advocacy, agriculture, children and youth, democracy and good governance, disabled persons, food security, gender, HIV/AIDS, orphan programs, education, poverty alleviation, women as well as water and sanitation.

Welfare activities refer to the delivery of basic services, while those of development have as their ultimate goal providing communities with skills to generate an adequate amount of income for their own needs (Fisher, 1997). Advocacy activities have as their intent, influencing policy on specific issues and building strong support networks among similarly minded organizations. Development education for the most part occurs in northern countries where the goal is to sensitize citizens to pressing global issues such as poverty and debt. Networking activities are carried out by NGOs whose focus is the provision of information and technical assistance to other NGOs and individuals. Finally, research NGOs engage in gathering an assortment of data and analyzing it for use by other organizations, such as governments, policy institutes, universities and world bodies.

A second essential descriptor is level of operation which refers to whether an NGO is community based, national, regional or international. An example is that of the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) both participants of this study. PRFT is a national and homegrown entity, while ADRA is an international humanitarian organization with a presence in over 120 countries worldwide. The level of operation is critical because it influences the structure, operating procedures, resource requirements and management strategies of an NGO (Brunt & McCourt, 2012). It also has implications for the constituencies to which an NGO is accountable. It raises questions as to whether an NGO should be more accountable to the constituencies it serves or mainly to its funders. The level of
operation has repercussions on the nature of its relationship to local governments. An international NGO with extensive resources is likely to have more clout and influence when compared to a grassroots entity working in a similar sector. Beyond essential descriptors, there are additional ways of conceptualizing NGOs for a fuller comprehension of their nature.

NGOs as Organizations

Some scholars of NGOs argue that development NGOs should be simply viewed as organizations. There are six identifiable dimensions which constitute the organizational life of NGOs (Nelson, 2006). First is the technical dimension which refers to an NGO’s expertise in any one field, its capacity to make things happen as well as the methods it applies in accomplishing tasks. Second, an NGO has a resource dimension which is all the financial and material goods at its disposal. Values and mission constitute the third dimension of an NGO, and comprise the features which distinguish one NGO from the next. Invariably overlooked as an organizational dimension, is an NGO’s interpersonal relationships. This category is made up of the friendships among individuals working for different NGOs, and the movement of individuals between organizations.

The fifth organizational category is the political life of an NGO. Whether submerged or prominent, NGOs form both formal and informal ties with other organizations through networks, alliances and affiliations. Some NGOs have explicit political dimensions such as carrying out campaigns and advocacy work for policy changes. The legal aspect of an NGO forms the sixth dimension. Regardless of the sector in which an NGO operates it has statutory, regulatory, and contractual arrangements it has to comply with. These legal requirements emanate from a variety of sources such as the State in which an NGO is domiciled, professional bodies and international organizations such as the UN. How these six dimensions interact shapes the relationship of an NGO with a State and donors.

As organizations, NGOs encounter an intense contradiction between global visions of transformation on the one hand, and complicated social, economic, cultural and political realities
on the other. The lofty goals these development NGOs envision do not always match the narrow aspirations of the diverse individuals they encounter in the communities they serve—let alone broader political contexts, like Zimbabwe’s state of exception. Thus, it is important to appreciate NGOs not only as organizations, but according to the challenges and issues they face. As established earlier, NGOs are mutative (Watkins, Swidler & Hannan, 2012; Fisher, 1997). There are constant deaths of NGOs when they lose funding, just as there are constant births of new ones. In order to fully appreciate the results of the study of development NGOs in this dissertation, I outline some of the challenges with which NGOs have to contend especially in their relationship to donors.

Challenges and Issues

For Watkins et al. (2012), NGOs face a range of uncertainties within their work environments. In order to succeed, their goals, the social and material technologies they employ must match the realities on the ground. Similarly, development NGOs in Zimbabwe must set goals and deploy social and material technologies which correspond with the extraordinary social, economic, political and cultural conditions of the country. One of the major issues NGOs confront is reconciling the expectations of donors with the challenges of their environments of operation. Often donors have little or no understanding of these environments and realities. Because of the gap in knowledge of the environment between donors and NGOs, effective responses by donors to problems encountered by NGOs are a rarity. After all, donors depend on second hand information provided by NGOs about the specificity of the context. In any case, NGOs have their own agendas and interest which do not always match those of donors.

Addressing the gaps in knowledge of work contexts between donors and NGOs is a daunting task for several reasons. To begin with communication between the two camps is not simply about getting donors to fully appreciate the challenges of the environment of operation, it is often circumscribed by funding and accountability issues (Jordan & Tuijl, 2007). Moreover, NGO-donor communication is mediated by power relations. More often than not, donor agencies
and individuals are in a position of power because they hold the purse strings and are therefore in a position to withdraw funding (Rauh, 2010). Funders often set the agenda, conditions and terms of implementation. Because of the power imbalance between funders and NGOs, the latter might not be very transparent about context, thus enlarging the gap in knowledge between the two.

The communicative processes at work between donors and NGOs are also mediated by a clash of organizational and communication cultures (Tracy, 1999). The two camps might not share similar assumptions, values, beliefs and goals. Donors are very likely to operate on the basis of a power culture which is often intertwined with having lots of money. Such a culture might produce individuals who make quick and dramatic changes based on intuition rather than knowledge of the facts on the ground where NGOs are doing development work.

A pertinent question to ask is: considering the unpredictability of the environments in which development NGOs perform their functions what are some of the best ways of managing uncertainty? For Watkins et al. (2012) it is important to recognize that the uncertainty development NGOs confront operates at four levels: (i) continuous availability of financial and material resources; (ii) potential misunderstandings between principal and agent (iii) stability of the political environment in the country of operation; and (iv) how best to monitor and evaluate projects for donor reports. Let me briefly address the first two uncertainties; the last two deserve comprehensive attention, and thus remain a topic for a different conversation.

Funding is a perennial issue for most development NGOs. Its availability cannot be guaranteed nor can potential donors from which funds can be secured (Watkins et al., 2012; Nelson, 2006). The terms of funding by prospective donors are equally impossible to forecast. Funding might come in the form of short term contracts making it impossible for development NGOs to assume long term, meaningful and sustainable projects. Uncertainty is exacerbated by the possibility of a major funder withdrawing, thus abruptly ending employment of several staff. In some cases, donors might end funding for political reasons, security risks, corruption and issues of democracy. These funding issues have significant impact on the nature and duration of
projects development NGOs undertake. For Watkins et al. (2012), development NGOs resort to a variety of strategies in an effort to minimize funding vagaries.

Among some of the commonly adopted strategies are: (i) diversifying funding sources and products which diminish dependency on a single donor; (ii) reinventing the organization to match donor fashions and what they are willing to fund; (iii) establishing multiple collaborations with donors; and (iv) cultivating relationships at international meetings thus creating opportunities to be the first to know what products donors are offering. All of these strategies come with a price which a development NGO must be willing to pay. For example, an NGO sourcing funds from multiple sources must be prepared to deal with a complex web of expectations from different donors. The funding issue is accompanied by sometimes excessive demands for accountability. For example, ActionAid in Uganda is embedded in the kind of thinking which limits development activity and stifles creativity. Its reporting system is taxing, as it demands lists, logical frameworks, quantitative analysis and reporting boxes, compartments and tables (Jordan & Tuijl, 2006).

Presenting another uncertainty for development NGOs is the principal-agent relationship. Because the principal is far removed from the environment in which development work occurs, there is potential for clashing expectations (Nelson, 2006, Watkins et al., 2012). In any case donors do not have direct control over what NGOs do on the ground. Not only does the principal lack knowledge about the environment of operation; the agent is faced with an unfamiliar cultural and institutional terrain. For example the agent might face opaque systems of registration, inscrutable local politics, and a different work ethic for local employees, volunteers and beneficiaries.

Moreover the organizational culture of the NGO might be at odds with the culture of the environment of operation. The willingness of an NGO to understand aspects of the context with a bearing on its work and success is critical. How an NGO marries its own ideologies and practices with the imperatives of the context, is key for effectiveness. However, this is not an uncertainty that applies equally to NGOs. The example offered by Watkins et al. (2012) is that of global
advocacy NGOs who operate in highly predictable environments of world capitals. The view of NGOs as organizations facing multiple uncertainties is a powerful lens through which to enhance our understanding of NGOs.

The conceptualization of NGOs has not exactly been simplified by this discussion; its complexity has been magnified. I presented a limited range of the approaches employed by scholars in their efforts to shed light on what NGOs are. Conceptualizing NGOs based on their monikers, as organizations or based upon the challenges they typically face, are a few of the multiple ways of comprehending these entities. It is clear at this point that there are very strong views and debates among scholars and a diverse range of interested parties about the nature, work and impact of NGOs. These views are not harmless; they play a political role and are influential in terms of the funding NGOs receive, the projects they assume, the relationships they form with world bodies, governments and beneficiaries of their services.

The concept of NGOs and more specifically those in the development sector is invaluable to this dissertation. I see development NGOs as bridging the gap between theory and the praxis of delivering ‘development.’ Thus, they act as the agent responsible for actualizing what various theories of development perceive as meaningful improvement in the lives of the poor. For development NGOs to be effective agents of positive change, they also need to be the principle site at which dialogic communication is enacted and nourished for it to reach its full potential. However, it is the responsibility of NGOs to comprehend the often complex realities of the contexts in which they operate. Oftentimes, theories of development are inadequate for the realities on the ground. It remains to be seen whether and how well development NGOs in Zimbabwe serve as a critical link between theory, praxis and results. How well they understand and practice development communication in their work also remains a question. However, the value of this dissertation lies in the means and ways development NGOs survive the extraordinary context in Zimbabwe. In order to appreciate the data analyzed in the following
chapters, I conclude the discussion of development, NGOs, and communication within the context of Zimbabwe as a fragile state.

Conclusion: Development Communication and State Capacity

Capacity with regard to the state refers to the aptitudes, resources, and relationships, which facilitate conditions necessary to act effectively to achieve specific goals (Brinkerhoff, 2007; Torres & Anderson, 2004). Capacity pertains to the core features which influence a state’s ability to mobilize and use resources for providing basic services to citizens. It also pertains to basic competence in economic management of resources and having sufficient administrative capacity for implementation. Capacity combines attributes, capabilities, and relationships that enable a system to exist, adapt and perform.

State capacity manifests itself in multiple ways including structurally, economically, politically, militarily, iteratively and instrumentally (Antonio, 2009). Structural capacity references the institutions, organizations, functions, and procedures of government. Economic capacity is the effective and sustainable use and management of resources at the state’s disposal. The political and military encompass the judiciary, police, and military as instruments of exercising power. Iterative capacity denotes the state’s ability to produce and reproduce itself in delivering services to citizens. Instrumental capacity circumscribes the state’s ability to deliver basic services, in order to meet citizens’ fundamental needs. When fundamental needs are met, citizens are equipped with capabilities as well as the capacity for self-actualization (Antonio, 2009).

Unfortunately, building upon the first chapter, Zimbabwe is best characterized as a fragile state. The government’s inability to meet the basic needs of development has created a situation in which NGOs emerge and do development work. But how is development, and more specifically, development communication, practiced in such an extraordinary context? Through phenomenological interview data, I consider this question in Chapters Four and Five.

In sum, this chapter provides a much needed conceptual framework which is critical for giving coherence to the present study. The three concepts about development, development
communication and NGOs I reviewed act as building blocks for this dissertation. Although each of these concepts is complex, I explored the major themes for each. As I worked at highlighting the more salient features of each of the concepts, I continuously centered the role of communication in development. Furthermore, I provided a brief portrayal of the characteristics of a fragile state.

I presented four main theoretical frames which define the notion of development. The conventional theories of development have their historical roots in economics and capitalism which focuses on development as economic growth. Non-conventional theories on the other hand are much more focused on the human aspect rather than just economic growth. I featured Sen’s notion of development as freedom due to its relevance to the extraordinary circumstances in Zimbabwe. We already know from the previous chapter the severe extent to which all freedoms have been curtailed. Furthermore, the results reveal the critical value all participants of the study place on freedoms. Sen’s key argument is that freedoms are central to development. Freedoms are not primary ends but the principal means to development.

Although not a theory, participatory approaches are a necessary component of my conceptual framework. Participation as an approach is widely embraced by participants of this study. Moreover, participatory approaches work hand in hand with non-conventional theories of development which function within a dialogical mode of communication. We learnt from this chapter that participatory approaches are human centered, rights based, and focused on empowering communities to ensure the sustainability of income generating projects.

The work of development is predicated on various communicative practices. As a second pillar of the conceptual framework, I analyzed development communication which is specific to the work of development. I offered what are widely accepted as guiding principles of development communication. I outlined the major development communication theories and demonstrated their relationship to theories of development. For example I discussed the communicative modes associated with modernization theory of development. The shifts in development theories have often been matched by equal shifts in development communication practices. The widely
embraced participatory approaches to development have generated a shift from monologic to dialogic modes of development communication.

The final concept I explored was that of NGOs. Development NGOs in this study are the site of the praxis of development and various modes of communicative practices. I highlighted the complexities of NGOs as evidenced by the plethora of terms and monikers used to describe them. A part of this intricacy obtains from their multidimensional nature, the variations in size, resources, and their mutating characteristic. I discussed a few scholarly about NGOs which might serve to help us grasp their essential characteristics. One scholarly idea suggests using essential descriptors such as orientation and level of operation. A second manner of comprehension is to think of NGOs as organizations with identifiable dimensions of organizational life such as technical expertise, resources, and values and mission and so on and so forth.

Furthermore I addressed some of the challenges and issues confronting NGOs. As we discovered one of the main challenges arises out of the agent (NGO) principal (donor) relationship. Often there is a considerable gap in knowledge of the work environments between donor and NGO. Then there are perennial issues of funding which are often circumscribed by accountability expectations. There might be differences in organizational culture between the two entities which make operating from the same page rather difficult. Overall, the relationship between agent and principal is defined by power issues which are often tricky to negotiate.

This chapter provides some level of clarity about theories, assumptions, ideologies and practices for the concepts of development, development communication and NGOs. What remains to be seen is how the theoretical framework informs the praxis of development among participants of the study. Here are some of the questions we must constantly bear in mind as anchors for the goals of the study: Given what we now know about development, what theoretical frames if any guide the work of development NGOs in Zimbabwe? Is it fair to say participants of this study understand and practice development communication, particularly in its participatory, dialogic variants? How do these entities survive the precarious political, economic and social
conditions of their work environment in Zimbabwe? In the absence of substantive freedoms and the extraordinary context what is the impact of development NGOs on peoples' lives. Prior to tackling these complex questions, I need to describe the methodology I used for the study first.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

Having established the contextual reality of Zimbabwe as a state of exception (Chapter 1); and the conceptual context of my study through notions of development, development communication, and NGOs (Chapter 2); I turn in Chapter Three to the methodology and data collection that permitted me the results presented in Chapter Four. Broadly, my study operates within what the Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods (2008) calls social ontology. This study seeks to provide accounts of a social reality. There are several ontological questions to ask. How is the notion of economic and human development understood by practitioners and participants "on the ground" in Zimbabwe? What capabilities do ordinary citizens have to develop within an extraordinary context of political, economic and social uncertainty? What creative strategies and tactics are adopted by development NGOs to make their operations possible in a context of severely curtailed freedoms? In other words, how do these entities make their survival possible? And how does communication constitute their efforts?

I find critical theory's insistence that thought must respond to new problems and possibilities for liberation arising from changing historical circumstances instructive for my choice of methodology. The methodology dictated by a critical theory paradigm is dialogic and dialectical between the investigator and the participants in the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, the more critical objective of the inquiry is the transformation of the social, political, economic, and ethnic and gender structures which constrain people’s lives. My study is concerned not only with the status of human and economic development in Zimbabwe, but how things might be. It is for
these reasons that I find a critical theory paradigm to be the most compelling mode of inquiry for my study.

For a research method, I opted for a qualitative over a quantitative study. A qualitative inquiry is not amenable to a simple description because it is made up of a complex interconnected family of concepts, assumptions, perspectives and methods related to cultural and interpretive studies. Overall, qualitative research involves studying phenomena in its natural settings with the goal of making sense and generating meaning of the phenomena from the people in those settings.

Considering the nature of my study, the adoption of a phenomenological approach can easily be justified as the most suitable for many reasons. It works effectively in a study of complex phenomena. It works efficaciously in a study where there are a small number of participants because it allows for an in-depth study of those cases. This means that the complex phenomena can then be described in rich detail due to its embeddedness in a local context. A phenomenological study presents an opportunity to capture an insider view and interpretation of a phenomenon from participants. Because the data is collected within the setting where the phenomenon occurs, as a researcher I can identify contextual factors as they relate to the phenomenon.

In the remaining chapter, I introduce readers to the NGOs participating in my study. I then describe the data collection method I elected (interviewing). This is quickly followed by a brief presentation and justification of my data analysis method. The final piece of this chapter is about how I propose to evaluate the research.

Research Participants

As a starting point, I did an online search for development NGOs in Zimbabwe and in the process came across a website called ‘The Kubatana Trust and the NGO Network Alliance Project.’ This is an electronic network of over 320 NGOs and Civil Society Organizations in Zimbabwe, with an archive of thousands of documents related to civic activities in the country.
The site has a directory of NGOs, each with a fact sheet which provides contact information, objectives of the organization, mission statement and the sectors in which each operates. The Kubatana website served as a good resource for the study; I located six out of the seven participating development NGOs there. I found the seventh participating development NGO from a member of the Denver Rotary Club who is significantly involved with the NGO (as a resource person with oversight responsibilities for both funding and training).

Based on the communication information on the fact sheets on the Kubatana website about each of the potential participants, I made contact with various development NGOs via e-mail. After months of communicating back and forth about the nature and goals of my study, I secured adequate participants. Out of the many potential participants, I selected NGOs with which I was already familiar during my residence in the country.

The development NGOs I interviewed are Plan International (Plan), Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT), Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Zimbabwe (ADRA), Swedish Cooperative Centre (Swedish Coop) and World Vision International (WVI). I also worked with a member of the Africa Task Force of the Rotary Club of Denver who oversees the Communities of Mufakose project. This project is jointly sponsored by Rotary clubs in Zimbabwe, Colorado and in the Rochester Area in New York. The project is run in partnership with the Institute of Cultural Affairs in Zimbabwe and the Communities of Mufakose in Harare, Zimbabwe.

I visited Zimbabwe towards the end of 2011 to conduct the study. While conducting interviews, I immersed myself into the local culture: I watched local news, read local papers and articles on various aspects of the environment. Because of my own background as a Zimbabwean in diaspora, I am familiar with the country and its culture. I am also familiar with certain aspects of development work due to my previous work experience with a development NGO in Zimbabwe. I know the history of the country and have kept abreast of economic, political and social events. Over the years I have made and continue to make frequent visits to Zimbabwe.
Although all 7 NGOs are involved in development projects, each one is unique in several respects. They each have different ideologies, motives, resources and organizational cultures. Out of a sample of seven, Plan International, CAFOD, ADRA, Swedish Coop and WVI are well established and funded, and with a lengthy history in Zimbabwe. These five have witnessed political, economic and social events as they unfolded over the years since independence and are thus familiar with the extraordinary context I investigated in the first chapter of this dissertation. The Communities of Mufakose and PRFT have a much shorter history and less access to meaningful financial resources. A brief synopsis of each organization ensues.

Plan International (hereafter Plan) is one of the largest international children’s development organizations with operations in fifty countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas (Plan International website). As an NGO, Plan is independent; it has no religious, political or governmental affiliations (Zimbabwe Bulletin, 2011). Since 1986, Plan has been operating in ten districts within Zimbabwe. Plan’s mission is to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children, as well as help them realize their full potential. One way of achieving this mission is to help families and communities meet their basic needs, and in the process provide for their own children. In order to meet its goals, Plan’s development programs are informed by a rights-based approach called ‘child centered community development’. The multiple sectors in which Plan operates within various communities are adult education; advocacy, children and youth; family planning; food security; gender issues; health; HIV/AIDS; micro finance; orphans; poverty alleviation; rural development; vocational training; water and sanitation; and women.

Most of Plan’s funding comes from child sponsorship by individuals across the globe. However, Plan has developed a variety of other funding sources, notably, grants from governmental agencies and trusts (Plan International website). Plan has partnered with governmental agencies of Spain, Australia, Canada, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Korea, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States. It has also partnered with the European Commission, UNICEF, the World Bank, the World Food Program, and the
Global Fund. Various corporations form a considerable source of funds and material resources. To date, Plan has strategic partnerships with more than a hundred corporations which provide monetary and material resources, knowledge and expertise, innovative ideas for some of the development issues, direct project investments, skills transfer and employee engagement driven partnerships.

In 2011, Plan celebrated 25 years of service in Zimbabwe. During the celebrations, there were several testimonies from young men and women about how they had benefitted from Plan’s child sponsorship program. All were young people from challenging circumstances of deep poverty. One young man from a rural village received sponsorship from a German medical doctor. The young man was curious about what it took to become a physician. Through various communications with his German sponsor, he found out what subjects he needed to take to become a physician. He went on to become a medical doctor and now serves the community he came from as a physician. However, his relationship with the German sponsor continues although the young man now has his own family. There were several more stories from young people who had gone on to become professionals, including teachers, and journalists. One young woman was in the process of earning a masters’ degree in development studies at the Erasmus University in the Netherlands.

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) is the official overseas development and relief agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales (CAFOD’s website). CAFOD is part of the Caritas international federation with a secretariat in Rome. Caritas only comes second to the Red Cross as a humanitarian actor across the globe. At the time of writing, CAFOD has a presence in 37 countries and has been in Zimbabwe for more than 30 years. Unlike six of the other participants in the study, CAFOD does not work directly with beneficiaries; it is a partnership organization. It executes its mission by funding operations of the Catholic Church and those of its partnerships with Diocesan Caritas branches, Justice and Peace Commissions and other organizations which are part of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop’s
conference. Beyond funding activities and operations, CAFOD provides its expertise to its partners in the form of lawyers, agriculturalists, economists and engineers.

The main objectives of CAFOD are to promote sustainable development as well as achieve peace, security and recovery. CAFOD is a faith-based organization whose vision, mission and values draw directly from Catholic social teachings. Although “Catholic social teachings” has a theological connotation, this doctrine is basically a human rights-based approach to social relationships. These teachings require society to stand up for justice, work to relieve poverty, work with the poorest, empower women and secure children’s rights. In Zimbabwe, CAFOD funds and provides expertise to partnership organizations operating several sectors including advocacy for women, democracy and good governance, agriculture, children and youth, assistance for disabled persons, food security, gender, HIV/AIDS prevention/treatment, orphan programs, education, poverty alleviation, as well as water and sanitation.

Similar to Plan, CAFOD sources funds from a range of actors. Its most reliable funder is the Catholic Church of England and Wales. CAFOD lobbies the British government directly for funding through the Department for International Development (DFID). CAFOD accesses DFID funds through the British Embassy in Zimbabwe. A third source of funding is the program partnership agreement or PPA in the United Kingdom with the British government which provides funding to a range of NGOs. Other donors include the European Commission Aid, USAID and Comic Relief, a UK consortium of comedians, film stars and actors. Back in the UK, CAFOD campaigns through teaching the public about global issues such as poverty, and education. CAFOD is able to generate additional funding from such campaigns.

Although CAFOD does not directly implement development projects, it provides funding and expertise to local NGOs. A good example is the series of training programs it has been providing to small NGOs on how to fundraise. Because of their size, lack of expertise, and accountability issues, very few donors are interested in funding their work. In some cases,
CAFOD raises the funding on behalf of the small NGOs, as well as take responsibility for accounting for use of the funds. In 2011, CAFOD was funding small local film producers. Most of the films were about women and children's rights, and HIV and AIDS. Because of the importance of these films in the light of the extraordinary context, CAFOD was also funding the translation of the films into several indigenous languages.

The third organizational participant in my study is the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT). In 1996, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Public Service, together with the University of Zimbabwe, collaborated with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to form a Poverty Reduction Forum (PRFT website). At the request of the UNDP, this forum was charged with the task of producing human development reports. The main objective of the Forum was to analyze the impact of several factors on human development such as poverty, globalization, governance, HIV/AIDS and gender. The goal was to capture specific details about poverty in various parts of Zimbabwe. This information was invaluable as a tool for structuring programs for poverty reduction by government, civil society and NGOs. All of this was funded solely by UNDP until 2007 when the funding ran out.

Instead of closing its doors, the Poverty Reduction Forum decided to continue its work and renamed itself the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT) in 2008. As a civic and advocacy organization, the forum brings together NGOs, government, the private sector and academics to debate poverty issues and advocate for the poor. PRFT envisages a Zimbabwe free from poverty with every person living a dignified, secure and decent life (PRFT website). PRFT has four main objectives: (i) conduct research on poverty issues whose outcome can be used to influence the formulation and implementation of socio-economic policies; (ii) mobilize and enhance the capacity of civil society to participate actively in the formulation of policies favorable to the poor; (iii) facilitate dialogue and debate among civil society actors, communities, businesses, relevant government entities and development partners; and (iv) speak out in support of policies directed at mitigating poverty. In order to meet these objectives, PRFT conducts research on poverty
related issues within communities on the basis of which it generates policy alternatives for poverty reduction. Armed with this data, PRFT approaches policy makers in government and influential businesspeople to consider ways of creating and funding policies which can help alleviate poverty. PRFT has been strategic in forming strong alliances and partnerships with other civic organizations, NGOs, and academics in order to create lasting solutions to questions of poverty.

Funding is a critical issue for this home-grown advocacy NGO. Unlike Plan and CAFOD, PRFT struggles for resources; it relies heavily on a handful of donors. Given its very limited resources, PRFT works with academic institutions on a voluntary basis to perform most of its research. PRFT continues searching for new and innovative ways of broadening its funding sources.

As an advocacy entity, PRFT cannot always take direct credit for some of its work. However, one example highlights the important advocacy work PRFT does. In 2008, it conducted a human development study for the University of Zimbabwe. The university was experiencing intense financial difficulties and proceeded to cut out housing and meals for students. Because the students were equally impacted by the exceptional economic conditions, they were engaging in risky sex behaviors as a way of raising money for fees, food, housing and transport. PRFT indicated to the university in its report how the college was complicit in exposing students to HIV/AIDS. Soon after the report came out, the University reversed its decision and raised funds with which to help the most vulnerable students.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is an international humanitarian organization with a presence in over 120 countries. It is the fourth participant in the study. ADRA, a religious-based organization, came to Zimbabwe in 1980. ADRA’s distinguishing feature among participants of the study is its extensive involvement with Zimbabwe’s education system. At the time of writing in 2014, ADRA had built 19 primary and secondary schools across Zimbabwe, as well as Solusi University in Bulawayo, the country’s second largest city. As one of the leading
non-governmental relief organization in the world, it was granted general consultative status by the United Nations in 1997 (ADRA website). The mission of ADRA is to identify and address social injustice and deprivation in communities of need. In order to improve the quality of lives of those involved, ADRA invests in community development initiatives which target food security, economic development, primary health and education. The overarching goal for ADRA is to create just and positive change through empowering partnerships and responsible action. The guiding principles and values for ADRA’s work are based on human rights and a religious ethos. In Zimbabwe, ADRA operates in several provinces (mostly in rural areas) in four sectors: food security, disaster mitigation, education and health and HIV/AIDS.

A significant portion of ADRA’s funding comes from the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The other main donors include USAID, and the European Commission. For the food programs, ADRA works closely with the World Food Program of the United Nations. The rest of the funding comes from individual donations, gifts and bequests from individuals across the globe.

In the 1980s after Zimbabwe attained independence, ADRA was actively involved in building schools and hospitals. Solusi University in Bulawayo is an illustration of its school building activities in the country. Lately, due to the health crises with cholera and HIV/AIDS, most of ADRA’s work is focused on water, sanitation and hygiene. In 2011 when I conducted the interviews, ADRA had constructed 30 boreholes for water exploration in Makoni district, and another 30 in Manicaland. ADRA is also involved in providing food, water and soap to deported migrants at the Zimbabwean Beit Bridge border post with South Africa.

The Swedish Cooperative Centre (SCC), the fifth organization in the study, stems from the cooperative movement in Sweden which began in 1958. SCC, with headquarters in Sweden, identifies itself as having no political or religious affiliation. There are more than 60 Swedish cooperative organizations and companies in 25 countries across Asia, Europe, Latin America and Africa of which SCC is a member. Similar to Plan, SCC is guided by the principle of self-help (Swedish Coop website). In other words, development has to be done by the people and not for
the people. As an organization, SCC believes that poverty is not simply about lack of resources; it is also about lack of power. In order to become empowered, individuals must participate in the work of improving both their living conditions as well as their ability to influence society. In this regard, SCC works very much out of the non-conventional, critical theories of development. Like CAFOD and ADRA, SCC has a rights based approach, focused on access to six goods as human rights: food, economic justice, land, adequate housing, a safe healthy environment, and equality. The vision of SCC is that of a world free from poverty and injustice, through three main working areas: rural development, housing and land. Further, gender issues are central to SCC’s development work. The majority of people living in extreme poverty are women who have little influence over their lives, as well as minimal access to and control over resources. All of this jeopardizes their participation in society, with negative consequences for the development of communities. The mission of the organization is to strengthen the capacity of member-based, democratic organizations to enable people in poverty to improve their living conditions, defend their rights and contribute to a just society.

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency is the largest funder of SCC. Other bilateral donors include the Norwegian, Danish, and Dutch governments. The 60-plus members of SCC mentioned earlier are a significant source of funding which is generated from a range of activities. In Sweden, SCC engages in various activities to generate awareness and appreciation of poverty issues around the globe. As a result of these consciousness-building activities, SCC is able to solicit for funds from the public for its development work across four continents.

As an example of its work with small scale farmers, SCC is currently helping resuscitate a small dairy project in Chikomba district. The original system collapsed after a government parastatal (an entity owned by the government) abandoned the farmers. In Chiredzi district, SCC works with small grains farmers by implementing training in farming methods and linking farmers to markets for their produce. In Chiredzi, SCC has linked farmers to two breweries, Delta and
Chibuku. However, SCC’s work with farmers is constantly challenged by the lack of water for irrigating crops. Due to the economic woes of Zimbabwe, small scale farmers lack meaningful access to credit from local banks. With companies closing in various sectors of the economy, the market for small scale farmers keeps dwindling.

The sixth organizational participant of the study, World Vision International (WVI), is a Christian humanitarian organization started in 1950. Headquartered in the United States (World Vision International website), it is one of the largest humanitarian organizations with a presence in a 100 countries across many communities around the globe. As its mission, WVI is dedicated to working with children, families and their communities to help them reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision (WV) came to Zimbabwe in 1973.

Since its inception it has served millions of children, families and communities. It operates in what it calls 26 area development programs in virtually all regions of the country. The mission of WV in Zimbabwe is to work with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation and seek justice. The core principles of the organization are to value people, commit to the poor, be responsible stewards of resources, partner with the poor and donors and be responsive to crisis and to those in need. WV operates in multiple sectors encompassing agriculture, education, food security, gender, HIV/AIDS, micro finance, orphan programs, poverty alleviation, research and documentation, rural development, urban development, water and sanitation and emergency relief.

For funding, WV Zimbabwe benefits from a large network of more than 3 million donors, supporters, more than half a million individual child sponsors, thousands of churches, hundreds of corporations, government agencies in the United States and around the world. Here are some of the organizations WV counts as its partners: government agencies of Australia, Canada, United States, United Kingdom and the Netherlands; the World Food Program; various United Nations Bodies; The European Union and the World Bank.
Similar to Plan, youth in particular testify to the benefits of WV’s child sponsorship programs. In addition, WV currently has 26 programs in various parts of Matabeleland region providing food, water, and shelter for the many children who were orphaned by the HIV/AIDS crisis. In Bumbi Unkosikazi, WV provided funding to a group of women for small scale livestock farming. The women were doing reasonably well generating income for their families. However because of the exceptional economic conditions, they face challenges similar to those faced by the SCC small scale farmers.

The seventh and final participant of this study is the Zimbabwe Community Empowerment Project (ZCE). This is a project which is jointly sponsored by Rotary Clubs of Denver, The Rochester area in New York and Zimbabwe (Assessment Report, 2010). The project runs in partnership with the Institute of Cultural Affairs in Zimbabwe, and the Communities of Mufakose in Zimbabwe. There is a division of labor among these three Rotary clubs. The two Rotary Clubs in Denver and Rochester provide funding and, from time to time, trainers for various aspects of the program. The Institute of Cultural Affairs in Zimbabwe provides training, while the Rotary club of Zimbabwe carries out oversight responsibilities.

I identify ZCE as a quasi-grassroots organization. Although funding is externally generated, most of the training and oversight of daily activities is locally provided. The project coordinator works with Harare Rotarians in managing daily affairs. The project relies on women who have done well in training sessions to train new groups of women. The funding for the project has a four-year span, during which time the women are expected to reinvest the income they generate as a way of expanding their projects. However, they continue receiving progressive training in an assortment of areas. As with the other local development NGO in the study (PRFT), ZCE has very limited funding. Sustaining these women’s projects on the basis of the skills they have so far without further training due to lack of funding, might prove tenuous in a few years.

In October 2009, ZCE project was launched in the high-density suburb of Mufakose in Harare. The Project consists of three main components: Self Help Groups (SHGs), Youth
Friendly Corners (YFCs), and a Living Well with AIDS (LWA) program. The SHGs are informal, non-political, and non-religious and are managed through rotating leadership. Groups of women are trained in small-business skills and group dynamics. The 12 to 13 women in each group run small and informal income generating projects, such as buying and selling second hand clothing, small scale livestock and vegetable vending. The women in each group come from the same communities and tend to be homogenous in terms of socio economic status. For the groups to function well there has to be mutual trust, respect and support for each other.

Training participants with the goal of imparting small-business skills occurs in stages, which get progressively more sophisticated. Participants share ideas and insights as they start their own small businesses and grapple with issues and problems. Project officers act as mentors through the learning process. Although the groups are initially funded by Rotarians in order to get the small businesses off the ground, the former are expected to save a sizable portion of the income generated for growing, expanding and diversify their small businesses. The basic idea is to ensure that the small businesses are sustainable as sources of a steady stream of income which can be used to improve lives. The program emphasizes pooling savings together to create a source of funding for expanding these small businesses.

The YFCs are meant to help youth become future leaders, be actively involved in strategies for reducing HIV/AIDS, as well as create a safe environment for youth. At their best, YFCs are expected to become vibrant economic and social support systems for youths in disadvantaged communities. Each youth corner is managed by young volunteers who have already been trained and acquired leadership skills and have a good grasp of HIV/AIDS prevention. After training in small business management, the youth brainstorm small business ideas which are initially funded by the Rotarians. Similar to the women SHGs, initial funding is seed money to start them off on their various income generating projects. Depending on their needs they might also receive equipment for their small businesses. The goal is to provide an
The third and final component of the ZCE project is the LWA program. In communities deeply ravaged by HIV/AIDS, there are few resources for education about the disease and how to live with it. The communities working with ZCE have significant numbers of women and children, some living with HIV/AIDS, others who are care givers to family members with the disease, or supporting orphans who have lost parents to the illness. The goal of the LWA program is to provide extensive education about the illness. Training is provided in hygiene, eating well, and finding resources for Anti-Retroviral medications. An important aspect of the program is the support participants lend each other. Other members of the group become a resource for information with whom to share experiences. Considering the stigmatization of HIV/AIDS, LWA plays a vital role in the lives of those affected. Because LWA members come from deep poverty, ZCE encourages them to become participants in SHGs, to generate income for self-sustenance and for those in their care.

Data Collection

I used unstructured interviews for purposes of collecting data from participants. Prior to the data collection process, I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects at the University of Denver (see attached appendices A and B for informed consent to participate in English and Shona). As part of the certification process with the IRB and for use in interviewing, I created a list with a variety of open ended questions. I created one list for development NGOs and a second for beneficiaries, with the latter in both English and Shona, an indigenous language (See attached appendices C, D and E for interview questions in English and Shona).

Although the instrument is made up of specific questions, I used them merely as guides and prompts for participants to speak on specific issues. I let respondents speak at length and freely about their experiences of development. I wanted them to speak as “experts” on the topic.
My approach was conversational and dialogic. Each instrument was made up of primary and secondary questions, to help manage time constraints for me and the participants during interviews.

My approach in creating questions and conducting the interviews is consistent with my choice of a critical theory paradigm. The goal is to raise ontological questions which address the form and nature of the phenomenon of human development as it is shaped by the political, economic, social and cultural factors in Zimbabwe. A critical theory paradigm dictates the dialogic and conversational approach I took in interviewing participants.

My interest in Sen’s notion of development as freedom in which various freedoms play a constitutive role in enabling capabilities was also instrumental in the dialogic approach I adopted with participants. In an earlier chapter, I discussed Garnham’s analysis of the role of communication in Sen’s notion of development as freedom. Information and communicative capabilities for citizens are critical for various functionings for citizens. This is also part of the impetus for how I conducted interviews.

The areas and issues critical for the study (primary questions) are as follows: organizational background, including vision, mission, objectives, and ideology; how the notion of development is understood; stakeholders and level of participation; communication with all stakeholders; funding; challenges and context; role of women; conceptualization of poverty and potential solutions; advocacy and collaboration; achievements and challenges; impact made in communities through development projects; views about the prospects of economic and human development in Zimbabwe. From beneficiaries I solicited information on these issues: how the notion of development is understood; why and how they were participating in a development project; how well the NGO they were working with understood their needs; consultative processes in project selection; communicative relationships with the NGO; skills acquired through participation in a project and their uses; what their image of NGOs was; views on the impact of
development projects on their lives and those of the community; thoughts about the future and the sustainability of their income generating projects.

Among development NGOs there was broad range of participants in terms of gender, nationality and roles individuals played within each of the organizations. I interviewed project coordinators, an executive director, an impact assessment officer, communication managers, and a couple of regional directors. Among them was a British national and a Swiss citizen, and the rest were indigenous Zimbabweans. I also met with two groups of indigenous female beneficiaries, each with a dozen women.

Since I was meeting all participants for the first time, I introduced myself and expressed my thanks for their willingness to participate. I proceeded to talk a little about myself, the purpose of the study and why I was conducting it. I followed the protocol guidelines set by the IRB. I produced consent forms in both English and Shona wherever necessary and requested signatures after each participant had read the form and indicated they understood what the process entailed. In the instance in which I interviewed two groups of a dozen women each, some of the participants were not literate, and so I had to read the consent form out loud. In all cases I requested signatures for the forms and offered participants a chance to stop the interviews at any point if they felt uncomfortable.

I requested for permission to use an audio recording device, and in all instances it was granted. Without relying solely on the audio tape, I had a notepad on which I wrote abbreviated notes as the interviews progressed. I travelled to meet participants at locations of their choice which ranged from offices to community centers. Over several days and many hours, I talked, listened, and asked open ended questions. Because of my understanding of the Zimbabwean culture, I easily created rapport with participants. All participants were eager and excited at the opportunity to share their experiences, views and unique perspectives on the phenomenon of development. In most cases I was able to secure published documents from participants in the form of reports and literature on the activities of their respective organizations. I was also directed
to organizational websites with extensive information on the global operations of the various entities. Overall, the interviews provided a rare chance for participants to speak as experts on the issues pertaining to the question of development.

Once I had collected all the data, the process of transcribing the taped interviews began. I created files for each of the organizations I interviewed. I spent many hours over several weeks transcribing all the taped conversations. The task of transcribing proved quite demanding in many ways. There was the challenge of getting acquainted with different voices and accents. English is not a first language for most of the participants with accents varying from one person to the next. Typing conversations word for word at the same time that I was listening to the audio tape at its slowest pace was not a simple task. With all the interviews, I went back and forth, listening and writing and rewriting to ensure that I had captured every single word correctly. I paid attention to punctuation and tone in order to grasp points of emphasis and so on.

The toughest challenge was transcribing the Shona interviews which I conducted with the two groups of women. Because I interviewed these women as a group in one interview per group, there were several voices, accents and responses to each of the questions I raised. Becoming familiar with several voices on tape and creating text which captured word for word everything each woman said was quite taxing. In all cases, I listened to each conversation several times over until I was satisfied that I had captured conversations from beginning to end. With data collected and transcribed, the next step was to select a data analysis method which was most compatible with the paradigm of inquiry (critical theory paradigm) and approach (existential phenomenology).

Data Analysis

An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is the most logical choice for my data analysis. At the core of a phenomenological study are the lived experiences and understanding of specific phenomena, like “development.” An IPA focuses on exploring in detail those lived experiences and how participants make sense of them (Creswell, 2007; Smith, 2004; Larkin,
Watts & Clifton, 2006). As an analytic method, IPA functions at three levels. The first level occurs in two stages: a textual description of the participants’ experience with the phenomenon; and then a structural description of how the experience occurred. The researcher completes this task with a composite description of both the textual and structural description, reflecting on the setting and context where the phenomenon occurred. The researcher focuses upon a particular person in a particular context and how s/he experiences and makes sense of a particular phenomenon.

The exploration of participants’ lived experience of the phenomenon at the center of the study, and the sense they make out of it must be done in depth. It is important to recognize that access to experience is both partial and complex (Larkin et al., 2006). It is nearly impossible to achieve a genuine first person account; there is significant co-construction by both participant and researcher. Thus at this initial stage, the goal is to produce a coherent, third person descriptive account. At the second level, the task of the researcher becomes more complex because this is where the interpretation occurs. At this juncture, the initial description is positioned in relation to a wider social, cultural and theoretical context. The aim of this second order account is the provision of a critical and conceptual commentary on the participants’ sense making activities. The researcher needs to be attentive to how participants understand the phenomenon and the basis on which it is predicated. The third and final task for the researcher is to engage relevant theoretical constructs in the light of the descriptions and sense making activities at levels one and two.

The conventional aspects of qualitative analysis used in IPA occur in several stages akin to thematic analysis (Larkin et al., 2006). The researcher focuses on individual transcripts in order to find patterns of meaning from which cumulative codes are generated. The researcher then focuses on finding patterns across all transcripts in order to develop integrative codes. Integrative codes are grouped in a way that gives shape to plausible themes. Once clarity has been attained on the nature of these themes, the researcher’s job is to elucidate these themes in the light of prior experiences, knowledge, and theoretical concepts relevant to the phenomenon. This
analytic task necessitates the adoption of interpretive strategies which are compatible with the research questions and findings, in order to produce coherent and compelling insights into the phenomenon. Chapter Four materializes the interpretive labor that I performed in this dissertation.

Rigor and Ethics: Evaluating the Research

All research, whether quantitative or qualitative, is carried out with the intent of contributing to knowledge. While quantitative paradigms rely upon validity and reliability, a more relevant concept for evaluating qualitative research is that of rigor. Davies and Dodd (2002) suggest that qualitative research should be reliable not because it is replicable; but due to the fact that it was carried out with consistence and care in its application of research practices. The analysis and conclusions must reflect an openness which is mindful of the limits and partiality of findings. Intertwined with rigor is ethics which can be understood as guiding principles in how research is conducted. Ethics references trustfulness, openness, honesty, carefulness and respectfulness in asking and responding to questions in the conduct of the research as well as to reflecting carefully on the data gathered. Being ethical is compatible with Sen’s notion of capabilities which focus on persons, their capacities, abilities and agency. It is equally compatible with Sen’s view of development as being generally about empowering persons to realize their capabilities. The process of asking and responding to questions in an open and honesty manner is a reflection of the dialogic communicative approach I adopted during the interviews.

Davies and Dodd reconceive rigor in terms of subjectivity, reflexivity and social interaction during the process of collecting materials. Eliminating subjectivity from one’s research might be detrimental to ethical research practices. More often than not, researchers study issues they identify with and are passionate about, implying some connection with the phenomena under investigation and with the participants. Creating distance from participants is not the best way to create rapport and a shared understanding, as Davies and Dodd assert: “Our own research is based on a blatant sharing of identities and a common social positioning with our research participants; at least on the topics we are researching” (2002, p. 283). A great deal of subjectivity
is implicated in gaining the trust of participants so they speak openly and in depth thus providing rich materials. Interviewing by its nature is dialogic and involves shared communication. Rigor requires a sense of responsibility, accountability, critical partiality and subjectivity within the research process. Reflexivity requires self-reflection, an examination of our own ideas, and creating spaces for participants to articulate their stories in ways they see fit. For Davies and Dodd, “Reflexivity is not simply a change in research plans as a reaction to poor results or ambiguous findings; rather it involves a reflective self-examination of our own ideas and an open discussion and comparison of our research experiences” (2002, p. 286). Qualitative research occurs in social contexts, and therefore constitutes social interaction. As such, the researcher must allow room for paradoxes and dissonances which must disrupt the assumptions of the researcher.

For my own phenomenological research, I want to embrace Davies and Dodd’s (2002) conception of rigor and ethics. The manner in which I conducted my research already reflects how much I paid attention to ethical demands. I was honest with all participants about the nature of the project and the ends to which data would be used. In presenting my findings, I keep the identity of participants private. In interviewing participants I was respectful, open and attentive. I demonstrate through my analysis that I am accountable to the voices of those I interviewed by presenting meaningful accounts of their narrations. I present an understanding and meaning of the concept of development as it comes directly from participants who have lived experiences in a tumultuous political, economic and social context.

I want to be faithful to Rashotte and Jensen’s (2007) suggestion that hermeneutic inquiry pays particular attention to the stories of others because such narratives are the vehicle through which meaning is shared. I am both subjective and self-reflective. I am subjective because I have personal experience of deep poverty and can therefore relate in powerful ways to the experiences of participants. I am also subjective because these participants are my fellow country people, and Zimbabwe is a country in which I have a vested interest. I balance this subjectivity with a self-
reflexivity that creates spaces for different experiences of poverty and development. I want to hear, listen and learn from others. I have an ethical obligation to enter into this kind of conversation, not only to record and analyze data but in the words of Rashotte and Jensen, to become part of others’ ongoing struggles. I do not want my analysis to become simply my voice, organizing, choosing and interpreting the voices of those I interviewed; it must reflect what I learnt from them. I want to take these experiences and explore whether and how best they can be connected to theories of development. Considering the uniqueness of Zimbabwe’s experiences, is there a theory of development that works, or is there a need for new thinking grounded in the realities of the country?

As I analyze and interpret findings, I want to center these activities on three key relationships. Rashotte and Jensen suggest scrutinizing the relationship between researcher and participants. I need to raise ethical questions about my influence as researcher on the process of social interaction, including how participants perceived me. When I scrutinized my own relationship with participants of this study, this is what emerged. There were clearly power differentials between participants and myself as the interviewer. For example when I interviewed the SHG women, initially they were not too keen to speak. Even as I spoke in Shona (an indigenous language) they assumed I was an American because of where I said I had come from. On recognizing what was happening, I shared a part of my story growing up in Mutare, a city in the eastern highlands. I related my experiences of growing up in deep poverty and helping my mother grow and sell vegetables to raise money for my school fees. My brief narrative helped the women see me as one of them or at least like one of their own daughters. From that point on, the discussion became animated with the women sharing their experiences, fears and hopes.

I want to be particularly attentive to four issues associated with ethics, namely: contextuality, communication style, disclosure and awareness of identity and power differentials (Rashotte & Jensen, 2007). How I describe and analyze the narratives of development I collected will be attentive to the structural conditions and contexts under which they were formed, shaped
and understood. Already, the chapter on context is testimony to how pivotal it is to the conceptualization of development. The experiences of human and economic development of participants in my study are inextricably bound up with the political, economic and social context of Zimbabwe. Conducting this research in a culture and language I share, served me well in terms of the ethical issues surrounding communication. Understanding communicative styles, dialects and symbols within the culture, was an asset for my comprehension of the stories of development I collected.

In conducting all interviews, I made it eminently clear to participants that I was there to learn from them; they were the experts on experiences of development in Zimbabwe between 1995 and 2010. In any case, interviewees who represented development NGOs are indeed experts in development issues in Zimbabwe and the region. This, however, does not imply that I played no role in the co-construction of what human and economic development means in Zimbabwe during the period under study. The very act of asking questions and guiding the conversation implicates me in the production of knowledge about the status of development in Zimbabwe. To meet the requirements of disclosure, I want to provide authentic accounts of what I learnt from participants. This can only happen if I disclose that there was a meaningful level of trust I experienced from participants. The depth and specificity of the information I will share through the narratives I retell, will bear witness to elements of trust. In my own relationship with readers, I want to disclose meanings and understandings of myself and others. Hopefully, all of these elements will make for a credible study which reflects rigor and ethical reflection on my part as a researcher.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I proffered a comprehensive description of the methodology I deployed for this study. I began by elucidating the paradigm of inquiry which best provides an interpretive framework for the study. I maintained that epistemologically, the critical theory paradigm made for the best fit with my project because it enables a space for a dialogical and dialectical relationship
between investigator and subject of inquiry, replicating the principles of development as freedom described in Chapter Two. Ontologically, the critical theory paradigm provides an excellent opportunity to raise crucial questions which address the nature and form of reality as it is shaped by political, economic, social, cultural and gender factors. The relevance of this approach to the exceptional context of Zimbabwe cannot be over-emphasized. We now know how the exceptional political, economic and social factors have significantly diminished opportunities for human and economic development.

The rest of the chapter was dedicated to explaining the approach I assumed in this study. I addressed the how, where and whom of the project, focusing on introducing readers to the 7 NGOs as participants. I ended this chapter, by attending to the evaluation of the research. Rather than rely on validity and reliability, I opted for rigor and ethics as the standard by which to gauge this project. In the next chapter, I present results of the study from both representatives of development NGOs and two groups of beneficiaries. In conformity with interpretive phenomenological analysis, the chapter reviews emergent themes in 3 categories resulting from interviews with representatives of development NGOs: critical elements for development; contextual challenges hampering development and best practices adopted by development NGOs for survival. It also reports emergent themes in 3 categories from interviews with beneficiaries: impetus for participation; contextual challenges; and conception of the notion of development. Within each of the categories there are several themes I found which are best left for Chapter Four. As I explore in depth next, the dialogical ideal of development is particularly hard to approach within a fragile state. It is made even more complex by the fact that the freedoms at the center of Sen’s theory of development have been severely curtailed rendering the idea of meaningful dialogue impossible.
Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

As has been established, the objective of the study is to explore the nature and status of development in an extraordinary political, economic and social context. In other words, through this study, I explore the phenomenological experience of development in contemporary Zimbabwe—a fragile state. How is the notion of development perceived by development NGOs and beneficiaries of their services in such a context? Furthermore, how are these entities able to survive the exceptional challenges of the environment of their work? What makes this study distinct is that it centers context as a critical determinant of the experience of development communication and development NGOs.

My assessment of the nature and status of development was predicated on asking participants a series of salient questions including the following: How do development NGOs experience and define development in the complex context of Zimbabwe? Do beneficiaries of development share similar definitions of development and if not what are the major differences? What narratives of development can be learnt from beneficiaries? Is human and economic development occurring in Zimbabwe; and if it is what does it look like? What relationship if any is there between theories of development and its practice on the ground? What theory of development might provide the requisite elements for meaningful development to occur? I refer the reader to Appendix C, Chapter 3 for a comprehensive set of the interview questions I used to guide my conversations with participants.

Prior to presenting the outcomes of my interviews, I want to briefly remind the reader of the participants of the study (as per Chapter Three). The development NGOs in question were
Plan International (Plan), Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Swedish Cooperative Centre (Swedish Coop) and World Vision International (WVI), and the Communities of Mufakose.

In relating what I found, I remain faithful to Smith (2004) and Creswell’s (2007) version of an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). I structure the presentation of results on the basis of Collaizzi’s format of an IPA study (Creswell, 2007). This version of IPA requires the provision of extensive significant statements as support for various themes emerging from participants’ transcripts. The results derive from 8 verbatim transcripts generated from interviews with the seven development NGOs and two groups of women who are beneficiaries of Communities of Mufakose.

This chapter represents the heart of the study of development NGOs and their experiences of doing development within the state of exception in Zimbabwe. I begin by discussing emergent themes from representatives of development NGOs followed by those from beneficiaries of Communities of Mufakose. Within each category, I use direct quotes where relevant to support the themes. Overall, the themes reveal the pivotal role of context in development initiatives. The results stress development communication and participation for both development NGOs and beneficiaries, as critical to the work of development within the constraints imposed by extraordinary circumstances.

Themes

In what follows, I present findings of the study in Tables 1-7 (at the end of the chapter). Tables 1-4 provide significant statements and their formulated meanings from representatives of development NGOs, while tables 5-7 contain the same from beneficiaries of the Communities of Mufakose. Although the terrain I covered in the interviews has many overlaps, there are differences in terms of how I conducted the interviews, some of the questions I raised and the responses I received. I did a couple of group interviews, each with 10 women for the
beneficiaries. For the representatives of the NGOs, I conducted individual interviews. My questions took into account the fact the women were speaking for themselves and not as representatives of an organization. A further difference is the fact that I used the local indigenous language and not English (as I did with NGO representatives) to interview the women’s groups.

The rest of the chapter consists of two main sections: emergent themes from representatives of development NGOs and themes generated from my interviews with beneficiaries of Communities of Mufakose.

In order to establish patterns of meaning across all transcripts, I organized significant statements and their associated meanings from tables 1-7 into clusters. From these patterned clusters emerged several themes. To make the discussion of these themes manageable, I created 3 large categories each for the themes materializing from my interviews with NGO representatives, and from those with beneficiaries of the Communities of Mufakose.

I organized the outcomes of my conversations with NGO representatives into three categories from which various themes surfaced as follows: (i) critical elements for development; (ii) the impact of the extraordinary context; and (iii) best practices. Subsequent to this discussion, I present themes derived from significant statements made by beneficiaries classified as follows: (i) impetus for participation; (ii) contextual challenges; and (iii) conception of the notion of development. Where relevant, I integrate my interpretive claims of the themes with paraphrases and verbatim quotes provided by participants.

Critical Elements for Development

I clustered formulated meanings in tables 1 and 2 because they are closely related. The themes emerging within this category address two sides of the same coin; critical factors of development on the one side, and how development is understood by representatives of development NGOs on the other. The conventional and non-conventional approaches to development can be found in the lived experiences of the state of exception. A total of five themes representing critical elements of development emerged from the results. The five were (i)
sustainability and vested interest; (ii) social opportunities; (iii) instrumental freedoms; (iv) empowerment of women; and (v) funding.

The notion of sustainability was understood in a nuanced manner which is not necessarily covered in the development literature. Sustainability was invariably described by participants as a long-term commitment to communities in which development NGOs worked. Along with describing sustainability in a time period, participants expressed sustainability as nurturing and prolonging material and financial support for a development project. In this context, sustainability did not connote the ecological or environmental guardianship of resources. It did not reference the idea of ethical consumption, nor was it a critique of overconsumption. Ecological and environmental guardianship is taken for granted as it is already embedded in traditional agricultural practices. Sustaining or nurturing a project for a length period, was also necessitated by the multiple shortages brought about by the state of exception including certain skills, technology and resources.

My remarks are well captured in these direct quotes: “We stay between 5-10 years because we believe that no meaningful impact can be made in less than 3 years due to the many variables which require a long time to work through.” A second affirmed this sentiment: “A lot of our projects are long-term. We are committed to local partners and continue funding long-time. With some of our partners we have been together for 10 years.” A third added: “Ideally we should be in a project area for 15 years in order to do meaningful work. We need to be able to strengthen structure and systems in an area before we move on.”\footnote{Personal interviews with representatives of PLAN, CAFOD and WV.}

Lengthy commitment to communities is driven by further complicated considerations. First, the culture is relational in every realm of people’s lives. Development NGOs are not the exception if they want to make a meaningful impact. Building relationships of mutual trust requires long-term commitment. Second, development entails interfacing tradition and modernity. The skills emanating from modernity through development are not merely transferred to communities:
they are received within a framework of existing traditional skills. For example a representative of SCC described finding individuals in a community who already knew the traditional ways of keeping bees and harvesting honey. Instead of starting from scratch, SCC was building on existing skills by introducing newer bee keeping equipment made from local materials by local people. The representative learnt a lot in the process which they adopted for use in other honey making communities in different parts of the country.

Indeed, in my experience of the culture, there is a back and forth between modernity and tradition. In the process of development, local traditional practices are colonized on the one hand, and on the other colonial practices are indigenized through communicative processes. These processes are both complex and demanding in terms of time and resources. Such long-term commitments are the ideal. Realistically because funding and time are in short supply, development NGOs are not always able to make such lengthy commitments to the communities in which they work.

Across all interviews, participants mentioned basic facilities which are critical for good health and effective participation in economic and political activities such as education, information, health facilities and nutritious food. The government was named as a crucial player in facilitating access to social opportunities. Several statements referencing social opportunities were made by participants, and a couple suffice to make the point: “People need to be provided with skills they can use to generate an income instead of relying on handouts;” and “It is important for people to access basic technology and healthcare: all of this requires education, information and training.” The government had a pivotal role to play in creating an environment that made the acquisition of basic capabilities such as education, information, training and access to health facilities possible for its citizens. As one respondent noted, “you also expect government to have an interest in my development as a person and in providing the most basic needs to its people and doing things which are in the interest of its people.”

2 Personal interview with representatives of CAFOD, PRFT and Swedish.
The government was widely viewed as neglecting its responsibilities towards citizens. This is consistent with Sen’s theory of development and his argument that government has a pivotal role to play: it creates an environment that facilitates access to capabilities and development. The relevance of Sen’s theory of development in broadening choices and capabilities which can be actualized into functionings is obvious. The government is criticized not for its inability to handout basic goods, but for its failure to create an environment which enables access to education, healthcare, and information. If one considers my explication of sustainability in the context of the culture, and the history of disadvantage among Blacks (from Chapter 1) in terms of education and basic capabilities, then the government’s commitment cannot be short term. The state has a duty to strengthen and build structures that make accessing education, information, health, skills, and jobs and so on possible. In other words, it has obligations towards strengthening good governance, the rule of law, making available all forms of freedom and building capacity. All of these dimensions are what makes development possible and sustainable.

Because of its failures, the government has pushed millions into destitution in which they have to rely on aid (handouts which takes away their sense of dignity). This void is filled by NGOs of various stripes including development NGOs. However, the politics of Zimbabwe are so ugly so much that the government sees NGOs as ‘interfering.’ Food becomes a politicking tool which only politicians can use selectively to reward their ‘supporters’. If NGOs handout food and basic supplies to everyone in need, the state is exposed to its own failures.

An emerging theme closely aligned with that of social opportunities, was that of instrumental freedoms. The latter references various rights, opportunities and entitlements available to citizens (Sen, 1999). It also encompasses political freedoms, transparency guarantees and protective securities. For example, the failure of Millenium Development Goals was attributed to the lack of good governance, as well as an environment that was inimical to development. The disputes surrounding land ownership, the lack of freedom of movement, lack of
transparency, high levels of corruption in virtually every government sector were key factors responsible for pushing Zimbabwe to a state of exception. The absence of security guarantees had driven several partners of CAFOD into hiding in South Africa because they were being politically targeted in the communities in which they worked. June 2008 marked the height of the severe curtailment of freedom of movement. Its representative had this to say: “There was an enclosure on all NGOs; they could not move in this country, they were not allowed to work. There was a ban.”

Both themes on social opportunities and instrumental freedoms demonstrate participants’ in-depth knowledge and grasp of the extraordinary context and the magnitude of its negative consequences on their work. These two themes represent an excellent critique of governance, leadership and institutions in Zimbabwe. They also serve as an affirmation of the portrayal of Zimbabwe as one of a state of exception that has lost most of its capacity to serve the people. The theme on instrumental freedoms puts on center stage the value of Sen’s notion of development as freedom.

The question of women’s lack of empowerment is intractable, as the third emergent theme from development NGOs reveals. A patriarchal culture is deeply ingrained in the psyche of the nation: it is everywhere in politics, workplaces, communities and homes, as it is among the poor, rich, educated and uneducated people. In politics the power of patriarchy is highly visible: female politicians are often relegated to overseeing women’s and children’s affairs. It is also highly visible among female academics who invariably fail to criticize patriarchal practices fully and directly in their academic work, possibly for fear of retribution at work and home.

Each participant believed that empowerment and women were crucial for development. The main culprit cited as an obstacle for women’s empowerment was patriarchal culture and certain traditional practices. Education was cited as the most powerful tool for women and girls' empowerment, a point powerfully captured by one participant: “The key to development is
investment in girls and women’s education, without that development is flawed absolutely.⁴ Providing skills, access to information about their rights, health facilities, financial and material resources were equally vital for empowering women.

The rationale for empowering women was clear in several participants’ comments. First, women and children were disproportionately affected by poverty and health issues. Second, because they constituted 70 percent of the rural population where they worked the land, providing them with skills and resources necessary for greater productivity was essential. Third, women were credited with positive characteristics which made their potential to participate in development work crucial. In the words of one participant, “For a project to work and succeed it has to have women in it because they follow through. Women are big on participation.”⁵ Women were also credited with the ability to work as a team and to resolve conflict. Fourth, as mothers, women knew more about the needs of their families.

Although widely recognized for their positive characteristics, hard work and value to development, traditional culture remains an impediment to women’s empowerment. In Chapter 1, I remarked on the gendered nature of Zimbabwean culture and communicative practices. The traditional practices that keep women disempowered are deeply ingrained and wide-ranging and too large a topic for the present conversation. Development NGOs are deeply frustrated by the manner in which tradition acts as an impediment to women’s empowerment, as one participant reflected: “There are traditions and cultural issues which are not healthy and helpful for the empowerment of women.”⁵ The patriarchal mindset is visible when it comes to female reproductive health. A significant number of men especially in the countryside remain opposed to contraceptives. Customary and constitutional laws operate in conflict with regard to land rights in

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⁴ Personal interviews with representatives of WV, Swedish and ADRA

⁵ Personal interview with representative of WV
ways that disadvantage women. In traditional communities women do not have a voice in family and communal matters.

Although funding was a perennial issue for all participants, it was much more urgent and desperate for local NGOs. Development NGOs based in the North have better access to meaningful funding. For example, SCC is funded by several Nordic governments like the Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Dutch. CAFOD is equally well funded; it has a presence in most global capitals, in countries such as the US, UK and Canada. Its biggest funders are the Catholic Church in England and Wales and UKAID. Additional donors for CAFOD consist of the EU, USAID and Comic Relief. ADRA sourced funds from sister offices across the globe in Canada, Norway, Denmark and Germany whose task is limited to fundraising. Outside of ADRA the other main funders were USAID and the European Union.6

In contrast, the two grassroots NGOs, PRFT and Mufakose Women were struggling rather badly with funding. One participant attributed the demise of local NGOs in terms of lack of funding from the government as well as poor access to donors. The few global donors funding PRFT did not commit long term, thus raising sustainability issues for the organization. The frustration over funding was fully expressed by Mufakose Women’s representative: “To be honest, the people who came up with this idea were limited in their vision and funding. The area to be targeted here in Mufakose and outlying areas is extensive and the needs are so large. The funding is like a grain of salt in a sea of need. We have tried fundraising among some of the local influential people and nothing much has come of it. We really need stable and additional donor funds. These are the real challenges we face and it is difficult for us to find donors.”7

The large gap in funding between northern based and local development NGOs is almost self-explanatory from these statements. Northern based participants are extremely well established in terms of longevity. Over the years they have developed strong relationships with a

6 Personal interviews with representatives of Swedish, CAFOD and ADRA.

7 Personal interviews with representatives of PRFT and Communities of Mufakose.
wide range of players and communities of philanthropists in the West. A few are financially supported by foreign well-resourced governments. Faith based entities such as ADRA and CAFOD receive a significant amount of financial support from their respective church organizations which are financially well off. All of these funding dimensions contrast deeply with those of local development NGOs. First, local organizations are relatively young and lack exposure to potential funders. Second, as entities, they lack concrete ideas in terms of where they might look for funding. They also do not have the means to conduct meaningful fundraising campaigns. Third, the culture in which they work is not philanthropically predisposed. The few overseas potential funders to whom they might look, struggle with issues of trust, transparency and accountability. Local NGOs are generally not viewed favorably, and are therefore exposed to higher rates of failure.

The relationship between funding and development is very complex here and needs to be well thought out. The complexity derives from the fact that accessing funding for local NGOs has been made rather impossible by the state of exception and this is how. The state has severely curtailed the freedoms at the center of Sen’s theory of development; it has an uneasy and suspicious relationship with development NGOs; it is always confrontational towards businesses and so on. The state of exception is one of hostility and high political risk and very unattractive to donors. This creates a vicious cycle for local NGOs because without funding, they are unable to continue doing business leading to the worsening of the very state of exception whose consequences they are trying to mitigate.

Contextual Challenges

Questions about context elicited emotive responses from all participants. I attribute this to the severe impact context has had on the operations of development NGOs. Table 3 (at the end of the chapter) proffers a synopsis of some of the significant statements about the extreme demands exerted by the political, economic and social environment I described in-depth in
Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The theme on contextual challenges, focused on the economic, political and social turmoil generated by the state of exception.

All participants of the study characterized Zimbabwe as a place of turmoil. In many ways, this is a theme that merely validates my description of Zimbabwe in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. This being the case, I will merely highlight a few of the dimensions of the political, economic and social environment as presented by participants. Representatives of PRFT and WV, spoke of the cancerous culture of corruption and the extensive damage it had caused. The ever-widening gap between extreme wealth and extreme poverty was a cause for great concern.

The shortages of food, water, money and jobs were the strongest signifiers of crises. Half the population was considered vulnerable without enough food to eat and clean water to drink. The CAFOD representative had this to say: “We have had big humanitarian programs. There are crises in Zimbabwe such as HIV and vulnerable kids.” ADRA was wrestling with a cholera outbreak resulting from lack of clean water. Hospitals were consistently experiencing shortages of medicines and basic equipment. The plight of youth produced by the constant cycle of crises was deeply felt by the Communities of Mufakose. In its Youth Friendly Corners, the organization was catering to hundreds of youth with no meaningful education, skills or jobs. Unfortunately, because it was financially stressed, as an NGO it was completely challenged to meet the needs of these youths.

One of the more significant outcomes of the state of exception has been the heavy migration of citizens to various parts of the world. Previously, the notion of migration was little understood because Zimbabweans did not need to leave the country as economic refugees. Two prominent contributing factors of mass migration is the absence of both professional and blue collar jobs. Moreover, the salaries professionals are paid do not provide a living wage. For example doctors, nurses, and teachers earn the same as office workers without specific skills. Most families and communities now rely for their survival on remittances from family members in
diaspora. The government itself is increasingly looking to diasporic communities across the globe to invest in the country.

Participants of the study had mixed reactions about migration. There was a three pronged response to migration. First, there was a full acknowledgement that it was an outcome of the state of exception. Second, as we shall see from some of the experiences of participants, it was also perceived as worsening the state of exception. Third, migration was a blessing in disguise because for some, family members in diaspora had become their only source of livelihood. The Zimbabwean diasporic community generates millions of dollars in remittances for the country. Because of the state of exception, remittances currently play a significant role in keeping the country and its people from total collapse.

Some of the development NGOs had suffered massive brain drain due to migration. Plan had lost hundreds of good teachers mostly to neighboring countries leaving its schools with unenviable shortages. One of the consequences of heavy migration for Plan was the large number of undocumented children and youth. Zimbabwe has a senseless law on its books which prevents a mother, married or not, from securing a birth certificate for her child in the absence of the father. Plan and other rights organizations, was now advocating for changes to this law. CAFOD lost valuable partner capacity for its programs rendering it less effective in some of its areas of operation. Migration had also produced undue burden on some of the development NGOs. ADRA’s representative made an association made between migration, suffering and humanitarian aid: “Right now with deportations from South Africa, we provide water, food and soap to help people in distress at the border.”

The migration of more than a quarter of the population raises significant questions about the future developmental prospects for the country. The massive brain drain, the fracturing of relationships, loss of critical skills and professionals in all areas of businesses, farming, manufacturing, mining, education and health does not bode well for the future. I shall return to
this conversation in the final chapter of the dissertation where I reflect extensively about the future.

Best Practices

The exceptional economic and socio-political context acts as an antithesis to the efforts of development NGOs, thus the need for strategies and tactics on their part for survival. The ‘accomplishments’ named by participants in table 4, are an outcome of what I consider best practices devised by development NGOs. Whether these ‘accomplishments’ translate into meaningful and sustainable development remains a question at this juncture, but one I will address in Chapter 5. Four themes crucial to analyzing the survival of development NGOs in a state of exception emerged: participation, culture and communicative practices, triad relationships and collaboration.

Clearly the notion of participation is interpreted in multiple strands. Every interviewee emphasized the vital role of beneficiaries’ participation in initiatives in order to make development sustainable. How the notion of participation was understood varied among development NGOs. There are two main layers from which these understandings emanate. The first derives from the indigenous culture which is best characterized as communal and participatory. In fact, rural farming is embedded in a culture of sharing labor and farming equipment. For example, during farming season, families can corroborate to work family fields one at a time thus maximizing the labor potential of communities. This is a way of sharing resources—both draught animals and labor. Although SCC considered the participation of communities as an essential ingredient for a sense of project ownership, it was building on existing cultural participatory practices. In areas where boreholes were built, SCC left the decision about their location to communities. It also ensured that materials and labor was contributed by members of the community.

Second, representatives of NGO in the study are working with ideas of participation that derive from the literature on development (extensively discussed as part of the conceptual framework in Chapter 2). However, on the basis of their experiences, there is recognition that
participation generates commitment from beneficiaries and makes for better outcomes. In any case, development NGOs realize the value of localized knowledge about issues and potential solutions. The following remarks support my arguments about the commitment of development NGOs to participatory practices. “We involve children in designing, participating and suggesting how our programs should be implemented given the needs of the community.”8 For its part, WV regarded the communities it worked in as key stakeholders. The planning, monitoring, and valuation of programs involved community members: “We get input from the community. If we are designing a new livestock program we talk to people to find out what works well, what the issues are. They have to identify their needs themselves; we do not tell them what to do. We work with the community to define the project so they have ownership of it. The WV representative had this to say about participation: “The right term is transformational development, in which the communities participate. The communities identify their own projects which they want to engage right from the inception point.”

There was consensus among northern based development NGOs, that understanding culture was central for effective communication. Development NGOs used resources at hand (hiring indigenous, qualified individuals) to work with communities. Understanding local cultural practices, communicating in indigenous languages and building trust were crucial for working and building relationships with communities. In my view, this is an indication of the ability of development NGOs to adapt to the demands and constraints of the environment.

Here are some of the ways in which participants dealt with culture for efficient communication with beneficiaries: Plan employed program facilitators who lived in the communities it worked through an immersion process. The goal was to ensure that facilitators fully comprehended local cultures. The facilitators needed to have a social science background might be in development, communication, sociology, or psychology. In the words of Plan’s representative, the main goal was for “Our facilitators need to understand the language, speak it,

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8 Personal interview with representative of PLAN
know the culture and respect it. They need to earn the respect of the community.” SCC made a point of employing Zimbabweans to work with small scale farmers because they understood the culture. ADRA hired field officers from the areas in which it worked for similar reasons. The success of its projects hinged on how well its officers understood the culture, local norms and language.

Development NGOs with the financial and material resources were using newer technology such as laptops, and cameras for communication in creative ways. For example, WV was using cameras and videos to get communities to speak to donors directly so they could market themselves and their needs: “When we go to the countryside we take laptops, cameras and videos so we can use these to help communities interact directly with donors.” The use of interactive technology in which children communicated with donors in their native language, allowed sponsors to see the faces of the children in need. This encouraged donors to provide more financial support.

Recognizing the extent of the politicization of their work, development NGOs have taken additional steps to legitimize their activities in the eyes of the government. The result has been the emergence of triad relationships involving three stakeholders: development NGO, government and beneficiaries. Triad relationships among development NGOs, government and beneficiaries are built on the basis of the unease and suspicious relationships that exist among all three. Yet, significant statements constituting this theme point to triad relationships as tactical and a matter of survival. Although the rule of law no longer functions in Zimbabwe, there are several regulations that were created in the last few years specifically for NGOs who are perceived as agents of regime change. How and why this triad relationships work in a state of exception to make the survival of development NGOs is best left to the analysis of these findings in the final chapter of the dissertation.

The following remarks highlight how development NGOs have found ways of making government a significant and active member of the triad “We have been engaging the
government at every level so much that at times we provide its officers with transport so we can get them to remote areas. We provide government officers with food and machinery to light up places where there is no electricity. We work with some of the senior people in government. We lobby local MPs so they can take some of the issues to parliament to deal with some of the bureaucracies."  

This statement reveals the impact of the state of exception on government capabilities to perform certain crucial tasks. It also speaks to the material contribution of development NGOs to the triad relationship.

From a second participant we find out the importance of investing time and effort into building the triad relationship. "I guess we survive because we are non-partisan. We respect and work within boundaries of the Zimbabwe law. We align ourselves with the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe." When we go to the field we pay courtesy visits to the local government bodies. It takes time and effort, but it is important. Sometimes we go visit the office of the President. You have to invest time and energy in developing relationships. We go see local Members of Parliament in the areas where we work because it is important for them to know what we are doing in their areas and to get their blessing and okay on what we are doing."

Transparency is vital to making the triad relationship work from the comments of a third participant commented: "It has been very challenging. The most important thing is to be open with what you are doing and your motives. In communities where we work we make sure everyone is invited, traditional, church and political leaders. Because you work with everybody, it makes it hard for individuals to hijack and politicize projects."

Yet, a representative of ADRA remarked: "Assessing viable projects and potential benefits involves this organization, and other stakeholders such as local government, community leaders, ordinary community members, and traditional leaders. Our major stakeholder is

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9 Personal interview with a representative for PLAN.

10 Personal interview with representative of SCC

11 Personal interview with representative of SCC
government as we work through most of their departments. What it entails is we do not want to be seen as the big agency with the resources. Even if we have certain drugs we work with district government offices to figure out which clinics need the drugs the most. So it is the government and the communities themselves who are our biggest stakeholders. From these significant statements, we can begin to see a glimpse of why development NGOs survive the state of exception even as they have an unease and suspicious relationship with government.

Collaboration among various entities reflects a very good grasp of the extraordinary context in which resources are always in short supply. A dimension which does not fully emerge from significant statement in this theme, is the territorial fashion in which development NGOs function within Zimbabwe so that duplication of effort is never really an issue. The division of geographical locations among these entities is historical. For example, one can easily identify CAFOD and ADRA with certain regions where missionaries from their respective faiths settled in colonial times. Beyond using resources responsibly, collaboration is also a matter of synergy and building a certain strength in numbers.

Each development NGO worked with other civil society organizations as well as other NGOs. The goals of collaboration included sharing information, learning from others and avoiding duplication of effort. For example, Plan had several collaborative projects with other NGOs which allowed it to take advantage of their operative capabilities. Plan was working with Save the Children on a peer review of the United Nations convention for the rights of the child. It also worked with Justice for Children Trust, a set of lawyers who provided legal opinion on children’s issues.

SCC collaborated with multiple NGOs at a national level including Africare, CARE, the Germans, the Dutch, and the Farmers’ Union. Instead of duplicating effort, SCC looked at the development NGOs which were already working in specific communities in order to make the decision to establish itself or not. The goal was not to compete, but to get things done. WV

12 Personal interviews with representatives of Swedish, CAFOD and ADRA.
expressed a similar approach to collaboration. Part of its focus was acquiring the support and training necessary to improve its productivity and in this regard it worked with an umbrella organization of NGOs called NANGO. Because of the state of exception, the basic needs of communities were overwhelming making collaboration a necessity. The cholera epidemic, for instance, made collaboration among NGOs critical because of the need to contain it quickly.

At this juncture, I have presented the themes emanating from the results of the study about what development NGOs perceived as critical elements of development, contextual challenges, and the best practices adopted to survive the state of exception. For a fuller comprehension of the phenomenological experience of development in contemporary Zimbabwe, it is critical that we hear from the voices of beneficiaries. I want to focus on the views of the 2 groups of beneficiaries of the Communities of Mufakose about 3 issues: (i) their impetus for participating in an income generating project; (ii) contextual challenges and (iii) their conception of the notion of development.

Impetus for Participation

To gain insights into the role and contributions of development NGOs in Zimbabwe’s exceptional context, I raised several questions to find out why the beneficiaries of the Communities of Mufakose had been motivated to participate. Three themes emerged from the significant statements in Table 5 (at the end of this chapter) made by the two groups of women I interviewed. Their membership of the project was primarily driven by the desire for self-sufficiency, “I became a member so I could become self-sufficient and not have to ask for assistance all the time. The women were also driven by the need to acquire skills necessary for generating incomes. Each of the beneficiaries had pressing family responsibilities generated by the present circumstances as expressed in these remarks “I became a member so I could become self-sufficient and not have to ask for assistance all the time.”

The strongest motive for project membership among the women was self-sufficiency brought about by financial autonomy. Although the culture has in-built expectations in which
individuals with an income are expected to help members of the immediate and extended family financially and materially; relying on help is frowned on. The inability to provide for oneself and one’s family can connote laziness or lack of creativity. In extraordinary circumstances where making a living has almost become impossible, joining a project with potential for self-reliance seemed a real golden opportunity for the women. Moreover, given the levels of unemployment, most households no longer had male breadwinners upon whom to rely. Also the HIV/AIDS crisis had ravaged these communities to a point where most of the women had lost husbands and sons who used to be a source of financial and material support.

Most of the women did not have much of a formal education. However, they knew that without skills of a certain level, self-sufficiency would remain a dream. The desire to acquire skills was also driven by the realities of the present circumstances in which husbands and male sons no longer have formal jobs. Although some of the women had adult children working in neighboring countries or abroad, they were not guaranteed financial support via remittances.

All of the women recognized their own shortcomings in terms of the skills necessary for generating an income. Even those who were already engaged in the informal sector regarded the project as an opportunity to enhance their skill set. Two women had this to say: “I have always wanted to learn about how to make an income for my family, and the project gave me that opportunity,” and “I have always sold different goods to support my family. I joined the project because I wanted to gain more skills which would help me do more.”

Several of the elderly women had assumed parental duties towards their own orphaned grandchildren who lost both parents to HIV/AIDS. The Zimbabwean culture is communal. Relational ties are so strong that the notion of immediate and extended family does not work: cousins, nieces, nephews, aunts, grandparents and grandchildren from both the maternal and paternal sides of a family are always immediate. Because of this dimension of the culture, when children are orphaned they are not turned over to some orphanage for adoption or fostering. In fact, in traditional culture adoption and fostering kids with whom one has no blood ties is frowned
upon. Hence, the responsibility of bringing up orphans for these women was an obligation engendered by blood ties.

It is this strong sense of responsibility for the basic needs of one’s immediate and extended family that emerged as one of the key reasons some of the women had joined Communities of Mufakose. The relationship between self-sufficiency and family responsibility is clear: “I joined the income generating project so I can meet the needs of my family instead of waiting for handouts.” The responsibility for extended family members is expressed in this statement, “I joined the project because I have to support the orphans my son left behind. They need food, clothes and school fees.”

Contextual Challenges

Beneficiaries of the Communities of Mufakose were at the receiving end of the economic, social and political crises with which we have become familiar from Chapter 1. Thematically and directly linked to their efforts at income generating were three issues: (i) funding and training; (ii) the negative impact of the present economic circumstances on the sustainability of their small-scale businesses; and (iii) the ravaging consequences of HIV/AIDS.

The remarks made by beneficiaries about lack of funding and training validates a distinction I made between indigenous and northern based development NGOs in terms of access to funding (Chapter 3). The deficiencies of a local development NGO in terms of funding were highlighted in my conversations with the women. A community of Mufakose as mentioned earlier was poorly funded and was thus unable to provide meaningful financial, material and extensive training to the women. I also remarked earlier in this chapter on how sustainability was understood as nurturing and prolonging material and financial support for a development project due to various shortages including skills, resources and technology. Clearly, the women recognized that both limited training and funding constrained the possibility of growing their businesses.
Funding remained a perennial problem as the women sought to expand and grow their small businesses. A sense of frustration was obvious in these remarks, “We were not given any funds to start us off; we had to use our own resources,” “We want to find a building to rent from which to sell second hand clothes but we do not have the money for a deposit and the initial rent,” “Our group was offered a free piece of land where we can keep chickens for eggs and resale. We need money to build chicken enclosures and we cannot find a funder.” Although the women had received some training, they felt it was inadequate to help them move their agenda forward: “The training we were given was too brief and limited,” and “We need mentors who can continue teaching us ways of improving our small businesses because we do not have all the skills.”

The state of exception has generated anxiety, fear, frustration and powerlessness among citizens. There is a great deal of overlap with the theme emerging among representatives of NGOs about political, economic and social turmoil. In their remarks, these women are expressing the havoc that the extraordinary context has wrecked on people’s lives. The link between the faltering economy, loss of jobs with their own circumstances was well expressed in these statements: “At times it is difficult to find people to buy the second hand clothes we sell because too many people have no jobs and they are struggling,” and “There are not many jobs and so we have fewer and fewer customers.” There was a great deal of fear about the economic conditions and how potential for negatively impacting the women’s efforts.

The pain and suffering these women had endured was overwhelming. They had lost several of their grownup children to HIV/AIDS. In traditional culture, these are women who should be enjoying their grandchildren instead of starting afresh as parents to young children. At this stage in their lives, if all was well in Zimbabwe, they would be enjoying financial and material support from their educated and employed adult sons and daughters. Some of the women remarked on how hard it was for them to bury their grownup children instead of being buried when their time to depart came. The rampant negative consequences of the HIV/AIDS crisis were obvious among the women. Several elderly women spoke about the orphans that had been left in
their care due to the crisis. We already discovered that some of the elderly women had been compelled to join the income generating project as they found themselves with young children to bring up.

Conception of the Notion of Development

The notion of development was conceived by beneficiaries in the following four ways which were strongly related: (i) as improved access to material goods and a sense of well-being; (ii) as personal empowerment; (iii) as promise for a better future; and (iv) as communal advancement.

Understanding development in terms of having access to basic goods and services is a significant commentary on the extraordinary realities of Zimbabwe. Although poverty has always been a reality in Zimbabwe, in colonial times and for a few years after independence before the vicious cycle of crises begun, most families were able to feed, clothe and educate their kids. Because the economy was based on labor intensive industries and businesses, unemployment rates were quite low. This raises crucial questions about how we need to think about the nexus between development and the state of exception.

Although the women participating in the Communities of Mufakose had joined the project for a variety of reasons, they were all aiming at improved access to material goods. An income makes possible access to basic necessities such as food, clothes and money for school fees, as well as household goods. For the women this meant an improvement in quality of life; it meant progress. As one respondent said, “For me achievement is being able to feed, school and clothe one’s family.” A second supported this sentiment as follows, “Life has improved for me. Now I can feed my family buy kitchen utensils I did not have before.”

In their remarks, beneficiaries corroborated what we learnt earlier from development NGOs about the empowerment of women. The ability to generate an income was strongly connected to a strong sense of empowerment for the female participants, as one participant expressed: “As women it is a good feeling to have your own money, and take care of some of
your family's needs rather than wait for your husband to support you.” Work and the ability to provide are portrayed by the women as a source of dignity, pride and a strong sense of self-worth: “As women we need to uplift each other and live in dignity and not struggle.” One could read this as a shift in traditional culture in which men were generally uncomfortable with women making money. The perception of empowerment was reflected in a significant shift in the respect some women were earning from their spouses: “Because we are contributing to our families our husbands are happy.” Another participant stated, “As a couple we now discuss money issues and plan together. Before, he would make all the financial decisions without consultation.” However, we cannot deny the fact that the extraordinary conditions are largely responsible for these shifts.

Although these women have been devastated in unimaginable ways, they live in hope and thus continue to plan for the future. I attribute this sense of careful optimism to a strong desire to survive, resilience and prior experiences. These are older women who lived through colonialism, and experienced an independent Zimbabwe at its best. The women have lived through all these eras and so they have memory of better times and maintain hope that things could become better again. The present improvements in accessing material goods carried promise for a better future. Thus development was not understood as a single event but a long-term phenomenon. This kind of optimism is clear in these two statements: “Because as a group we are making some money we have plans to purchase blankets and refrigerators. I can dream about doing bigger things,” and “My goal for next is to buy roofing materials for my rural home.”

There was a prevalent sense of progress as communal and not individual. This made it possible for the women to work in groups of ten each. Here are a couple of examples of a strong sense of community: “I am generating greater income as a member of a group because we share ideas, and pull our resources together. Success is not an individual thing,” and “The idea is to help and support each other,” and “When you work with others you aim high.”
Understanding development as communal advancement affirms my observation of the Zimbabwean culture as highly relational, communal and participatory. It serves as strong support for the concerns that representatives of NGOs were sharing about the growing gap between the few elites and the suffering majority of poor people. In other words, the culture has lost its fabric because those with power are no longer willing to share for the good of the community.

Conclusion

I set out to report the results of the study of 7 development NGOs in Zimbabwe. The study sought to explore the nature and status of development in a state of exception, as expressed and experienced by those communicating it. The goal of the study was to investigate how the notion of development is perceived by development NGOs and the beneficiaries of their services in such extraordinary conditions. The study also raised questions about how these entities are able to survive such extraordinary challenges.

On the basis of IPA (Creswell, 2007; Smith, 2004), I furnished extensive significant statements made by representatives of development NGOs on four topics namely: (i) how the notion of development is understood; (ii) critical elements of development; (iii) contextual challenges negatively impacting potential for development; and (iv) the best practices adopted by development NGOs. I also reported significant statements made by beneficiaries on three topics: (i) reasons for joining community project; (ii) contextual challenges; and (iii) how the notion of development is understood. Through a process of clustering meanings formulated from significant statements on these topics several themes emerged. The full results are presented in Tables 1-7, at the chapter’s end.

As described above, five themes constituting what development NGOs consider critical elements of development emerged. These were sustainability and vested interest, social opportunities, instrumental freedoms, empowerment of women and funding. Contextual challenges brought about by the state of exception consisted of migration, and economic, political, and social turmoil. What emerged as best practices among development NGOs were
participation, an extensive grasp of local culture and its communicative practices, operating within the parameters of triad relationships and collaboration.

Beneficiaries of the work of development NGOs gave self-sufficiency, the desire for skills and family responsibilities as the main impetus for their membership in a community project. Their greatest challenges encompassed lack of funding for growing their small projects. The women also felt inadequately trained. The high unemployment rate was a threat to their small businesses. Like most people in the country, they were grappling with several social issues wrought about the multiple crises in Zimbabwe. The notion of development was conceptualized by the women as improved access to material goods, as empowerment, as future promise and as communal advancement.

Given what we know about the state of exception and the extraordinary challenges it brings to the work of development NGOs, how do we best respond to the crucial questions for which this study was commissioned? What does development mean in such an extraordinary context? What is the nexus between context and development? What mechanisms allow development NGOs to continue working in Zimbabwe? For what reasons do these entities persist? The following and final chapter is an attempt to explore the best possible answers from the data we have at this point.
### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Statement</th>
<th>Formulated Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development at a personal and organizational level is the process of helping people understand and appreciate a better world and tomorrow. In the process it is the people who define and determine what is good for them. Development starts from the individual and the grassroots. Each person has to ask “what is it I want?” Development has to be sustainable. You cannot decide and define what development has to mean for each individual. The individuals in communities need to have a vested interest for development to be effective. (PLAN)</td>
<td>Development is about a better world and future. Communities and individuals have to decide what they want for themselves and work towards it. This way development can be sustainable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personally for me development will be from the very macro level, the nation to the community level and individual level, good governance, and the realization of rights. I think that this is fundamental for good agriculture, water provision, health and Millennium Development Goals. A lot of the MDGs have failed because of lack of good governance. Good governance for our organization maintains that peace and security creates a good environment for development at the national, personal and household levels. You can have the best livestock program in the world but if you are in an environment where land is contested and people have no freedom to move what is the point? (CAFOD)</td>
<td>Government, communities and individuals each have a responsibility towards developing the country. The Government’s role is to create an environment which is conducive for development. Critical elements of that environment are good governance, rights, peace, freedom, and security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable development is not time bound. The availability of both human and financial resources is critical for development to happen.(PRFT)</td>
<td>Development is a continuous process which requires time, human and financial resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development means creating durable change for people in poverty and distress so they do not rely on handouts. It is creating just and positive change through empowerment partnerships and responsible action. (ADRA)</td>
<td>Development is about long term empowerment of the poor so they can take care of themselves. We have a responsibility to create a just society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organization and my own definition of development coincide in the sense that at an individual level, I believe development is having the right and the opportunity to take power or charge of your own life; so that you have access to education and health. You also expect the government to have an interest in my development as a person and in providing the most basic needs to its people and doing things</td>
<td>Development is about having rights, and opportunities to be empowered. The Government has the responsibility to provide opportunities for empowerment as well as access to basic goods and services such as education and health.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which are in the interest of its people. It is empowering people to take charge of their own lives. (Swedish)

My own understanding of development is being an agent of change. Development in a way has to be sustainable. In terms of sustainability what we need is a model. Ideally we should be in a project area for 15 years in order to do meaningful work. We need to be able to strengthen structures and systems in the area before we move on. (WV)

Development is providing people with skills they can use to generate an income instead of relying on handouts. The skills must sustain them in the long-term. (Mufakose).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The issue of gender is the most critical. We need to ensure communities understand the role of women because poverty affects women and children mostly. We need first and foremost to empower women; this is critical because women are not given resources like land about which they can make decisions. It all goes to the perpetuation of negative cultural and mindset issues. We as NGOs need to find ways of changing these negative cultural practices. For example with contraception for family planning, the men are not always positive. The patriarchal system makes things difficult; until these mindsets change some issues remain difficult to overcome thereby entrenching poverty. (PLAN)</td>
<td>Women are critical to the process of development. A culture of patriarchy is the largest obstacle to empowering women. For example, access to resources and owning one’s reproductive health for women is central to eradicating poverty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for people to access fundamental rights, but also very basic technology, healthcare, and tackling stigma for people with HIV Aids. All of this requires education, information, and training. There has to be parallel efforts at working with the government at all levels. (CAFOD)</td>
<td>Fundamental rights, access to basic facilities such as education, healthcare, information and respect for all human beings are all critical for development. The government has to be centrally involved in all endeavors for development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The key to development is investment in girls and women; without that development is flawed absolutely. You cannot empower women without challenging men’s perceptions, attitudes, belief and behaviors about women. There are traditions</td>
<td>Development can only happen if women and girls are empowered. Traditional and cultural practices need to be challenged because they hamper the empowerment of women which is</td>
</tr>
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113
and cultural issues which are not healthy and helpful for the empowerment of women. It is confidence building, education, inspiration, releasing creativity and potential. (CAFOD)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We need to rectify the culture of corruption which has created a situation of extreme wealth and extreme poverty. Our culture has been so corrupted. For example if you die today we have to bribe someone to get a decent grave and a death certificate. It will take a long time to get rid of corruption; everyone wants to make money. Every sector of the government has been so corrupted, the education sector, health sector, corruption has become a culture. (PRFT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corruption has become a culture responsible for creating extremes between absolute poverty and extreme wealth. Corruption is pervasive across society and its presence in government sectors is glaring making the provision of basic services dysfunctional.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful agriculture is necessary for growth; it is essential for the national economy and for lifting people out of poverty. With 70 percent of the population being women in the countryside it is important to work in rural development. For women there are several issues with the land, which involves conflicts between customary and constitutional law which need to be corrected. (Swedish)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture is central to growth for a country where the majority of people live in rural areas. Due to culture customary law often trumps constitutional law when it comes to land issues. Women are in the majority when it comes to working the land, but yet they do not have rights to it.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We believe justice is critical to reducing poverty. You cannot reduce poverty if people are not empowered and educated. Justice is not a political thing in that sense. (Swedish)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justice, empowerment and education are vital for development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For a project to work and succeed it has to have women in it because they follow through. Women are big on participation. If there are divisions among themselves, they are quick to resolve the problems so they can work together. However, for a project to succeed it has to have a healthy balance of men and women. (WV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women are team-players. The participation of both women and men in income generating projects is key to success.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women have been told that they cannot lead. In our traditional communities you find that women are not allowed to speak, and if they speak they are the last to speak. So they sit in the corner and cannot contribute their own ideas. (WV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because of tradition and culture, women have no voice. They are not allowed to contribute ideas and solutions to problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>As Africans we need to reevaluate the way we give. I do not see how a person drives a $200,000 car when there are children who need $100 help for schooling. We need to challenge our values; they are not right. We are becoming too</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have lost our culture of caring for each other. We have come to embrace an individualistic, materialistic and excessively consumerist culture. We need to share the resources we have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Like everyone else, we were affected by the political, economic, and social challenges particularly in 2008 which affected everyone. We were able to help our kids continue going to school; but we lost a lot of good teachers in the schools, and this was beyond our control. The tuition was available but the teachers left for South Africa and other countries because their work conditions were not viable. (PLAN)

Women work hard and motivation is not an issue; what is missing, are the skills to generate income. We really need stable and additional donor funds for projects; it is difficult for us to find the donors for funding. (Mufakose)

Local NGOs do not get any funding from the government; we are only donor funded. This explains why there was a demise of local NGOs during the challenging times of the last few years. Most of our funders fled to neighboring countries. Very few local NGOs are sustainable because they cannot raise enough funds to be independent and invest in assets from which they can generate income. (PRFT)

The political, economic and social context has been a real challenge. All of this negatively affected the retention of good teachers. Most of the good teachers had no choice but to migrate due to poor work conditions in Zimbabwe.

Women are hard workers but they have not been given access to skills and material resources. Funding for local NGOs is important to enable them to help impart these skills to women.

The government needs to help grassroots NGOs get funding for the important work they do. It also needs to create a hospitable environment for donors to stay in the country and continue funding grassroots NGOs.

During the 2008 elections, the government did not want any interference. There were a lot of food shortages in the country forcing millions

Table 3

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<tr>
<td>Like everyone else, we were affected by the political, economic, and social challenges particularly in 2008 which affected everyone. We were able to help our kids continue going to school; but we lost a lot of good teachers in the schools, and this was beyond our control. The tuition was available but the teachers left for South Africa and other countries because their work conditions were not viable. (PLAN)</td>
<td>The political, economic and social context has been a real challenge. All of this negatively affected the retention of good teachers. Most of the good teachers had no choice but to migrate due to poor work conditions in Zimbabwe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have worked in Zimbabwe through the whole political turmoil and crisis, and that has been a challenge in the sense of being able to respond and react. We have had big humanitarian programs. There are crises in Zimbabwe, such as HIV aids crisis and the vulnerable kids’ crisis. The challenges for us have been where we work with local partners; they have been targeted and pressurized. In 2008 there was an enclosure on all NGOs, they were not allowed to move or work; there was a ban. (CAFOD)</td>
<td>There has been turmoil and crisis in the country forcing NGOs to focus more on humanitarian aid. The freedom to work and move for NGOs has been severely curtailed due to the politicization of their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the 2008 elections, the government did not want any interference. There were a lot of food shortages in the country forcing millions</td>
<td>There has been a massive food shortage in the country forcing millions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
issues with about 8-12 million people suffering from hunger and dependent on food aid. The challenge has been local partners’ capacity; brain drain; and security because they work in politically sensitive and dangerous areas. Some of our local partners had to go into hiding. (CAFOD)

to depend on food aid. Brain drain has been an issue among local partners with individuals leaving the country for personal security reasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With the cholera outbreak we had to respond in terms of where we built boreholes. The issue was lack of clean water supply. We also provided medical supplies in clinics and hospitals. Right now with deportations from South Africa, we provide water, food and soap to help people in distress at the border. (ADRA)</th>
<th>There has been a shortage of clean water leading to a cholera epidemic. We provide humanitarian services at the border for Zimbabweans being deported by South Africa back to Zimbabwe.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The most critical challenge has been improving agriculture. It is very difficult to access commercial finance which is critical for meaningful development. (Swedish)</td>
<td>Small scale farmers have no access to commercial finance which is critical for their farming activities. With no financing there is no meaningful agriculture which is vital for development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are millions of people who are considered vulnerable, actually half the population. The UN monitors were saying half of the Zimbabwe population does not have enough to eat or enough clean water to drink; we are talking 5-6 million people. (Swedish)</td>
<td>The scale of food and clean water shortages has been staggering; it affects half the population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

<p>| Accomplishments |
|---|---|
| Significant Statement | Formulated Meaning |
| What drives me is to see results; watching a child get out of a hopeless situation. A young boy in Lupane was sponsored by a German doctor who told him that if he wanted to become a physician he needed to study biology and chemistry. The young boy was motivated to study these subjects, and eventually went to the University of Zimbabwe where he is now studying medicine. When we celebrated our 25th anniversary several people we had helped as youngsters including lawyers, and engineers came to thank us. (PLAN) | Our child sponsorship program has been a real success; we helped create professionals such as lawyers, engineers and doctors. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We are a partnership organization and fund local partners. For example we funded a local partner to translate local films into different languages. The films are educational; they are about women's rights, women's justice and empowering women. (CAFOD)</th>
<th>We are working hard and using various media to educate women about their rights and justice. We are making progress toward empowering women.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have a lot of expertise. We have lawyers, agriculturalists, economists, engineers and internet experts. We work alongside our partners to help build their capacity. Development means we are building and equipping local civil society all the time. (CAFOD)</td>
<td>We are playing a critical role by providing the necessary resources to help our local partners build their own capacity. Our local partners are part of civil society. A strong civil society is vital for development. By helping build this strength we are contributing to development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes development NGOs are making a difference especially given our Zimbabwe situation in the last decade when our economy met its demise. Instead of just complementing government efforts, NGOs provided much needed relief and aid. One can go further to say, some NGOs have been doing government work. The lives of many Zimbabweans depend on the aid NGOs provide. In my view I would put the survival of Zimbabweans to two players, namely NGOs interventions and remittances from abroad. (PRFT)</td>
<td>The lives of many citizens depend on the relief and aid that is provided by NGOs and the remittances sent by Zimbabweans in diaspora. The government has abdicated its own duties to citizens and left NGOs to pick up the pieces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are drilling boreholes and ferro cement tanks mainly in areas which had cholera outbreaks and so far we have 30 boreholes each in Manicaland and Makoni areas. We also have construction of toilets in the schools and hand washing facilities. With water available from the tanks, people are doing gardens. Previously parents were not encouraging children to go to school because there was no water and toilets in these schools. Now children are going to school and getting an education. Now parents are encouraging children to go to school because when they come home they also bring containers with clean water for the family. We are also giving children food at school to encourage them to attend. We found the enrollment improved and parents figured out they could cut down on expenses for food by sending their kids to school. (ADRA)</td>
<td>We are making significant contributions to communities. We provide access to clean water, and train communities in hygiene. We also provide food for school children and this has led to higher school attendance rates. By providing water, we have indirectly created the opportunity for families to generate income from gardening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the things we do is work with the dairy farmers trying to resuscitate the dairy industry. We are putting people into cooperatives for dairy</td>
<td>We have met success with dairy farming. The amount of income small scale farmers are generating is proof of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
farming where people come together and run associations and make money. The dairy farming is going very well. The economic success is impressive. (Swedish)

| In Matabeleland North and South we setup water schemes. Now people can plant all year round, feed themselves and sell the surplus. We have built several schools from the ground; built homes for orphans and vulnerable kids; distributed seeds and promoted conservation planting. (WV) |
|---|---|
| We are providing water which communities are using for self-reliance. We are also building schools and homes for orphans. We are making a positive difference in people’s lives. |

| There are several benefits large and small, and in a nutshell these women have made significant progress in their lives. Their families have more than adequate food supplies; they have purchased household items and furniture; and still some have purchased pieces of land on which to build property. (Mufakose) |
|---|---|
| The self-help project is helping families build a better life. Because of the income generated, families have enough food to eat. The women are making more than just a living. Now they can purchase big ticket household items and a few have even purchased pieces of land. |

Table 5

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<tr>
<th>Significant Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I joined the income generating project so I can meet the needs of my family instead of waiting for handouts. (Respondent 1)</td>
<td>I want to be self-sufficient and not have to rely on others for support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I joined the project because I have to support the orphans my son left behind. They need food, clothes and school fees. (Respondent 2)</td>
<td>I have the responsibilities of a parent all over again and so I need financial resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I became a member so I could become self-sufficient, and not have to ask for assistance all the time. (Respondent 3)</td>
<td>Standing on my feet gives me a sense of dignity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an income as a woman allows me to take care of my family. (Respondent 4)</td>
<td>Although I am a woman, I want to contribute financially to the well-being of my family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have always wanted to learn about how to make an income for my family, and the project gave me that opportunity. (Respondent 5)</td>
<td>I did not always know how to make an income and now I have some basic skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have always sold different goods to support my family. I joined the project because I wanted to gain more skills which would help me do more. (Respondent 6)</td>
<td>Skills are very important for making a living.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I live on my own, joining the project gave me something new to do and a new lease on life. (Respondent 7)  

Working gives meaning to life. It is also a way of dealing with loneliness.

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<tr>
<th>Significant Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The training we were given was too brief and limited. Moreover, we were not given any funds to start us off; we had to use our own resources. (Respondent 1)</td>
<td>Skills and resources are vital for income generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need mentors who can continue teaching us ways of improving our small businesses because we do not have all the skills. (Respondent 2)</td>
<td>We still do not have sufficient skills to grow our small businesses. We are willing to learn and gain the necessary skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were not given funds to help us start. We want to find a building to rent from which to sell second hand clothes but we do not have the money for a deposit and the initial rent. (Respondent 3)</td>
<td>Funding is important for starting and building a small business. We feel frustrated because we cannot grow our project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our group was offered a free piece of land where we can keep chickens for eggs and resale. We need money to build enclosures for the chickens and we cannot find a funder. (Respondent 4)</td>
<td>Funding is critical for cultivating our small business which is something we are keen to do. There is no-one to help us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group dynamics do not always work well. At times we have to resolve conflicts. (Respondent 5)</td>
<td>Working as groups brings its own challenges. Fortunately we are able to resolve our own conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the economic situation, everything is difficult, so I hope I can succeed. (Respondent 6)</td>
<td>The economic hardships are affecting everyone. I am fearful that it might ruin the chances of generating an income for myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a grandmother, but because of HIV Aids I have to feed, clothe and pay school fees for the many orphans my own children left me. (Respondent 7)</td>
<td>HIV-Aids has impacted my life negatively. Now I need to be a parent once more and I need an income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At times it is difficult to find people to buy the second hand clothes we sell because too many people have no jobs and they are struggling. (Respondent 8)</td>
<td>Economic hardships are not limited to individuals but communal. I do not see a bright future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish our local government could help us with funding so we can expand our small</td>
<td>Funding is a problem and we do not know where to look. The government ought to be a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although we are able to make a living now, I live in constant fear that the economy is moving backwards to 2008 when everyone suffered. There are not many jobs and so we have fewer and fewer customers. (Respondent 10)

Our small successes might be short lived because the economy is retrogressing. We live in fear of a repeat of the economic events of 2008.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Statement</th>
<th>Formulated Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am generating greater income as a member of a group because we share ideas, and pull our resources together. Success is not an individual thing, it is communal. (Respondent 1)</td>
<td>Development is not about the individual, it is about communities; working together is vital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For me achievement is being able to feed, school and clothe one’s family. Although I have lost my son and daughter to HIV Aids, I can now take care of the orphans they left in my care. (Respondent 2)</td>
<td>Meeting the basic needs of one’s family against formidable odds is a real achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As women it is a good feeling to have your own money and take care of some of your family’s needs rather than wait for your husband to support you and the family. (Respondent 3)</td>
<td>Having an income to contribute to one’s family is very empowering to women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life has improved for me. Now I can feed my family and buy kitchen utensils I did not have before. (Respondent 4)</td>
<td>Having basic necessities is real progress for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used to suffer from hypertension because I could not support my grandchildren who were orphaned. Now I feel much better because I can buy enough food for them and pay their school fees. (Respondent 5)</td>
<td>Having access to basic necessities with which to support the grandchildren under my care has had a positive impact on my health. For me this is very important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because as a group we are making some money we have plans to purchase blankets and refrigerators. Because I work with others to make a living, I can dream about doing bigger things. (Respondent 6)</td>
<td>My life is improving significantly since I can now access household goods. Generating an income allows one to plan for the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 7</td>
<td>I feel empowered as a woman. Work is dignity. Success is not for individuals, it is communal.</td>
</tr>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>As women we need to uplift each other and live in dignity and not struggle. As a team we pull our money together. Members of the group can borrow from the small savings we have for family emergencies. We have terms for borrowing and repaying the loan. The idea is to help and support each other.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent 8</th>
<th>Work gives one the capability to plan for the future. It creates a space for growth as an individual.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When you work with others you aim high. My goal for next year is to buy roofing items for my rural home. (Respondent 8)</td>
<td><strong>Work</strong> gives one the capability to plan for the future. It creates a space for growth as an individual.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent 9</th>
<th>Handouts are short-term. Knowledge and skills are of greater value because they are empowering.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When we started the training, I thought we would be given money, but we were told that we had to come up with ideas on how to make money. Other women left the training as soon as they found out that there were no cash handouts. I value the knowledge that we were given because I can use it to help myself and my family. (Respondent 9)</td>
<td><strong>Handouts</strong> are short-term. Knowledge and skills are of greater value because they are empowering.</td>
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<th>Respondent 10</th>
<th>Working and contributing to the well-being of one’s family has a positive impact on marital relationships.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because we are contributing to our families, our husbands are happy. Some of them now come to church with us; something they did not do before. (Respondent 10)</td>
<td><strong>Working and contributing</strong> to the well-being of one’s family has a positive impact on marital relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent 11</th>
<th>Making an income is empowering to me. My marital relationship has been strengthened. New doors for communication and decision making about financial issues have opened.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My own husband is very appreciative of my contributions. As a couple we now discuss money issues and plan together. In the past he would make all the financial plans without consultation. (Respondent 11).</td>
<td><strong>Making an income</strong> is empowering to me. My marital relationship has been strengthened. New doors for communication and decision making about financial issues have opened.</td>
</tr>
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Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis

Introduction

The key task in this final chapter is to discuss and analyze the results of the study. I set out to explore the nature and status of human development in Zimbabwe, based upon the phenomenological data I collected in November, 2011. This study sought to provide accounts of a social reality. There were several ontological questions to ask as follows. How is the notion of economic and human development understood by practitioners and participants “on the ground” in Zimbabwe? What capabilities do ordinary citizens have to develop within an extraordinary context of political, economic and social uncertainty? What creative strategies and tactics are adopted by development NGOs to make their operations possible in a context of severely curtailed freedoms? In other words, how do these entities make their survival possible? And how does communication constitute their efforts?

Ascertaining substantive responses to these demanding questions involves interrogating the results of the study. The inquiry entails paying particular attention to participants’ conception of the notion of development on the basis of their praxis within the state of exception. Both the conception and praxis of development can then be analyzed in the light of the spectra of theories of development, development communication and participatory approaches as per the dissertation’s conceptual framework (Chapter 2). It is these very tasks I intend to accomplish in this chapter.

Here is a brief roadmap for how the rest of this chapter unfolds. I begin by describing the conception of the notion of development among the 7 development NGOs. On the basis of their
comprehension of development, I locate these entities within the spectra of development and development communication theories I explicated in Chapter 2. I then offer an analysis of how and why development NGOs survive the state of exception. To help support some of the arguments I make in my analysis, I draw on the conceptual framework and emergent themes from Chapters 2 and 4 respectively. This is followed by a brief description of the significant contribution this study makes to scholarship. I then provide an outline of the main limitations of the study. The last two dimensions of the chapter consist of a summary of the first four chapters and reflection on future research.

Conception of Development

Participants’ conception of development was diverse. To fully capture how development was comprehended, I juxtapose data from Tables 1, 2 and 3 from Chapter 4 of this dissertation. Development was understood as a process of creating durable, just and positive change through empowering the poor and distressed so they could become self-sustaining without having to rely on handouts. Representatives of development NGOs conceived of development as occurring at an individual, communal, and national level. At an individual level, each person had the responsibility to decide and define what development meant. For development to succeed, all stakeholders had to be fully committed to the process. The government had a critical role to play at all levels. At a national level its crucial role was to create an enabling environment for economic and human development. Crucial elements of an enabling environment were human rights, freedoms, good governance, efficient and capable institutions, peace and security. At the individual and communal level, the government had an obligation to provide access to basic facilities such as education, health, information and so on. All of these dimensions were fundamental for development. In their role as development NGOs, sustainability was an important consideration. The notion of sustainability in this context was understood not so much in ecological terms but as nurturing and long-term commitment to communities.
Beneficiaries’ understood the notion of development (Tables 5 and 7, Chapter 4) mostly at a micro level, and that is to say at an individual and local level. For beneficiaries development was both individual and communal. It was invariably perceived as success, self-sufficiency, and achievement. Development was perceived as having enough money to secure basic goods for one’s family: adequate food, clothing, school fees, and basic household items. Development as self-sufficiency was understood as not having to rely on handouts and assistance from donors and family members. Development meant progress. It was perceived as providing a space for the women to plan, set goals, and dream about larger and bigger things. For instance, each of the two groups of women was trying to secure funds for expanding their projects which hopefully would generate larger income. One can infer from this that the women understood development as a progression and not a one-time event. However, the women were cognizant of the complex relationship between running larger incoming generating projects and their skill levels. Thus, for the women development also meant acquiring better business skills through ongoing learning and training.

There were four common elements for the multiple ways in which development was conceptualized by participants with development NGOs on the one hand, and beneficiaries on the other. These were culture, the exceptional context and its consequences, sustainability/self-sufficiency, and participation. Culture manifests itself within the theme of ‘empowerment of women’ among NGOs, while it emerges as ‘empowerment’ for beneficiaries. Both parties fully comprehend the patriarchal nature of the culture and its negative impact on women. Every representative of development NGOs named the empowerment of women and girls as one of the critical elements of development, without which development would not occur. The women I interviewed argued for empowerment as one of the ways in which they conceived of development. The role of patriarchal culture came through in their statements in very subtle ways. For example, some of the women felt empowered because of the income they were generating. As a result their spouses had started showing a certain level of respect they had not experienced.
in their marital relationships before. For the first time their husbands felt compelled to discuss and plan finances, something they were not prepared to do previously. Clearly, this demonstrates how little respected and voiceless women are within households due to traditional cultural practices.

Similarly, the theme on economic, political and social turmoil is common ground between development NGOs and beneficiaries. Because of their education, professional, and field experiences, representatives of development NGOs were more comprehensive in their description of the various dimensions of the extraordinary context and the impact thereof. As we discovered earlier, migration was both an outcome and a precipitating factor of the state of exception. Massive corruption, the violent land grab issues and its negative outcomes for the economy, severely restricted freedoms, multiple health crises, and food shortages were all contributing dimensions of the state of exception which was inimical to development. The women's experiences of the state of exception was direct and personal. These are women who had either lost several family members to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, or who were themselves living with it. As a consequence, some of the elderly women were taking responsibility for their orphaned grandchildren. The faltering economy was a source of anxiety for the women who feared that their projects might be short-lived as a result. The state of exception became a common lens through which to comprehend the notion of development.

The themes on sustainability and self-sufficiency work hand in hand as follows. Because sustainability is understood by both development NGOs and beneficiaries as long-term commitment and the nurturing of communities with regard to income generating projects, there is an expectation on the women's part for more funding and training from the Communities of Mufakose. The women were lamenting the lack of additional funding and training from Communities of Mufakose for growing their small businesses. With more funding and training, the women expected to become self-sufficient. Thus notion of self-sufficiency is strongly tied with sustainability understood as long-term commitment and nurturing on the part of the development NGO.
The theme about participation is the fourth common platform. Each of the development NGOs had embraced some form of participatory practice because of the communal culture and the sense of ownership of projects it generated among beneficiaries. The notion of participation for women emerges in the theme about communal advancement. This is one of four ways in which they conceive of the notion of development. The fact that the women worked in groups of ten each is testament to the communal and participatory nature of their culture. Working in a participatory manner as members of a group allowed the women to share ideas. In fact, the women believed that success must be experienced communally.

Due to the exceptional context, fundamental elements for development were not in place. Zimbabwe was described as a place of multiple crises which had pushed development NGOs into a mode of reacting. Due to circumstances, as entities, their focus had shifted from doing development to big humanitarian programs which consisted of providing food, clean water, and medicines to millions. The representatives of CAFOD and ADRA clearly made this distinction between development and humanitarian aid programs meant to mitigate the suffering of millions from hunger and disease generated by the state of exception. The country was experiencing massive brain drain through migration of millions to neighboring countries and across the globe. A consumptive mentality and a culture of corruption had become the norm among political elites. The state had abandoned its basic obligations toward ordinary and poverty stricken citizens. Access to basic social opportunities were largely absent while instrumental freedoms had been severely curtailed. Efforts to develop agriculture were being frustrated by the unavailability of credit to small scale farmers and a market that continued to dwindle as businesses shut down and individuals migrated to other countries. The dire picture that I offer in Chapter One was corroborated in vivid detail by the NGOs and women in their interviews.

Beneficiaries’ narratives of the impact of the exceptional circumstances on their welfare, was equally powerful. The women were concerned about the high levels of unemployment. Fewer jobs meant that fewer and fewer people had disposable incomes to spend. This situation had
negative connotations for potential customers for the goods they were marketing. At a personal level, most of the women were dealing with the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS. The lack of funding and further training was a source of considerable worry for the women.

Location within Spectra of Theories

So far I have explored how development NGOs and beneficiaries of their services conceive of the notion of development. Where in the spectra of theories of development, and development communication, do their conception and practice of development fit in? The goal is to find out whether there is a theoretical framework in which they might function. If not, what potential new model had they crafted, considering the complex and multiple challenges of the state of exception?

Development

As we learnt in the second chapter of this dissertation, development theories are broadly classified as conventional and non-conventional. Conventional theories of development are based on the acceptance of a capitalistic system as the best there is. Development is defined as economic growth and the accumulation of wealth by a few, while poverty is its unfortunate consequence which can be rectified through charity and aid. On the other hand, non-conventional theories critique capitalism as fundamentally flawed, ethically challenged, inherently unequal, unjust and unsustainable. Well- conceived development centers the human aspect rather than just economic growth. An influential non-conventional theory of development I explored in-depth was Sen's notion of development as freedom which argues for the expansion of real freedoms. Sen also argues for a political, social and economic environment which enables individuals to secure capabilities. The latter can then be actualized into functionings.

Given what we now know about the conception and praxis of development by participants which of the two theoretical frames makes a sensible fit? Non-conventional theories are the framework shaping how development NGOs execute their duties. Each of the 7 NGO participants' conception of development centered people. Development is described as starting from the
individual and grassroots; as creating durable change for the poor and distressed; as just and positive change. It is also perceived as giving individuals the right to take charge of their own life. When commenting on critical elements for development, participants displayed a sense of urgency about the need to empower women and girls. Participants were equally passionate about giving individuals access to fundamental rights, releasing creativity and potential, as well as rectifying the huge gap between extreme wealth and extreme poverty. For participants, empowerment and education among the poor was a matter of justice.

The comprehension of development by participants is supported by its praxis (extensively discussed in Chapter 3). Five of the development NGOs work with and among the poor and the distressed in remote parts of the country, while Communities of Mufakose and PRFT engage the urban poor. Plan and WV work diligently to assert the rights of children at risk, while PRFT advocates for the urban poor. On their part, Swedish and Communities of Mufakose focus on imparting income generating skills to small scale rural farmers and urban poor women respectively. Beyond the sanitation and water projects in remote villages, ADRA works to relieve the suffering of would be migrants at border posts, while CAFOD provides desperately needed resources to grassroots organizations who engage the poor through various projects. The theme on participation corroborates the fact that development is understood as not only involving communities in income generating projects; it means imparting a sense of ownership. Likewise, the practice of hiring locals demonstrates an approach to development which considers culture and communication as critical factors in income generating initiatives.

Within the umbrella of non-conventional theories, I argue that both the conception and praxis of development among participants align well with Sen’s notion of development as freedom (1999) which has become ever more relevant due to the exceptional context. Zimbabwe as we already know is characterized by unfreedoms of poverty, lack of economic opportunities, neglect of public facilities, intolerance and repressive behaviors. As a result, it has become a place of vicious cycles of crises. It is these crises that development NGOs are working hard to mitigate.
through meeting the basic needs of the poor for food, health, clean water, shelter, clothing and education. The lack of substantive freedoms has robbed individuals of the capabilities to meet their own basic needs. Through training women and small farmers, development NGOs continue to make frustrated efforts to provide access to basic capabilities. As we know, capabilities are critical in Sen’s conception of development because of the role they play in broadening human choice. Choices are valuable because they create a space for individuals to create the kind of life they want.

The pivotal role of capabilities for development in Sen’s theory is made more apparent by the state of exception in Zimbabwe. The frustration experienced by development NGOs at their inability to enhance beneficiaries’ capabilities finds full expression in the theme on sustainability. Development NGOs ideally want to work with communities long-term, nurturing skill sets and building relationships with communities. The present state of exception has rendered these kinds of commitments impossible because of the burdensome constrains on their resources. Development NGOs find themselves redirecting more of their resource to relief work. Similarly, beneficiaries of Communities of Mufakose are frustrated that their own capabilities in terms of training and skill sets are not fully developed as an outcome of the state of exception.

Development NGOs and beneficiaries as we discovered in Chapter 4 find relief unsatisfactory because of its connotation as handouts. For Sen, handouts are equally unsatisfying as they do not provide room for participation. Communities of Mufakose cannot commit to the project long-term limiting the women’s capabilities to grow their small businesses. The critical importance of capabilities is well expressed by beneficiaries of Communities of Mufakose within the themes on their impetus for membership in the project. Self-sufficiency understood as independence from handouts resulting from financial autonomy was a powerful motive. The women therefore joined the project in the hopes that their capabilities for income generation would be enhanced through training.
Another significant dimension of alignment between praxis of development NGOs and Sen’s notion of development as freedom is their attempts to give women agency. Sen recognizes the critical role women play in development initiatives and yet often they face complex and multiple challenges. Participants of the study were unanimous in their identification of the empowerment of women as one of the most critical elements of development. Attempts at empowering women happen at multiple levels. The main one is to impart basic skills which are useful for income generating. We see the Communities of Mufakose and Swedish doing this kind of work with women. CAFOD provides resources to grassroots NGOs which are utilizing creative ways to teach women about their rights. Plan, ADRA and WV each have programs whose goal is to engage and challenge male community leaders in rural areas about traditional patriarchal culture and its refusal to empower women. The aim is to sensitize male leaders to the detrimental impact of antiquated cultural practices on women, families and communities and the potential for development.

The impact of the severe curtailment of various freedoms emerges as a powerful theme for development NGOs in Chapter 4 because of the negative outcomes it generates. Sen’s thesis on development as freedom has demonstrable bearing in the context of Zimbabwe. Because development NGOs are fully cognizant of the critical role of freedoms for their work, they have devised strategies and tactics which emerge as best practices in Chapter 4. I want to allude to the complex theme about triad relationships in which the government and beneficiaries each have a stake. The continuation of the work of development NGOs depends on how well they communicate and relate to the government. Thus tactically, transparency with communities, political and communal leaders becomes a matter of survival as does projecting an image of being non-partisan. As a result, development NGOs of this study have the freedom of movement and the freedom to continue working. It is important to locate this argument within the framework of the politicization of the work of NGOs in Zimbabwe. As recently as 2013 tens of NGOs lost their operating licenses for various trumped up charges.
Having established that development NGOs in this study function with Sen’s notion of development as freedom as a reference point, I now turn to their communicative practices. On the basis of their praxis, how do we best locate their communicative practices along the continuum of development communication theories? Is their location on the continuum compatible with their development theory reference point? These are the questions I explore next.

Development Communication

We discovered from the conceptual framework that modernization theories of development were associated with a monologic paradigm of development communication which depended on a linear transmission of information (Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote, 2003). On the other hand, the non-conventional theories functioned well with a dialogic communication paradigm in which communication was mainly horizontal and a two way street. Although communicative practices of participants of the study are unlikely to be based on firm theoretical underpinnings, there are strong suggestions from the results that they communicate dialogically. One of the best practices emerging from the study was the investment development NGOs had made to understand culture for effective communication. For example, Plan communicated with communities through its program facilitators. These were individuals who came out of the same communities and were therefore part of the culture and its communicative practices. For Plan’s child sponsorship program, community members were tasked with identifying children who stood to benefit the most. All of this entailed dialogical communication. WV applied a similar approach in identifying children at risk for its own child sponsorship program. Outside of the child sponsorship program, WV worked through dialogic communication with various community leaders, traditional leaders and community members to identify the greatest needs. If a community desperately needed a dip tank for its animals or clean water for household needs, WV would work with the community to meet the specific need.

Each of the participating entities operated within some framework of dialogical communication. Although there were various models, they were hugely shaped by the
exceptional context. ADRA’s example serves to make the point. Because clean water was in desperate short supply, communities approached their local authorities with specific requests for ADRA to come and help provide boreholes. In such circumstances, communication was from the bottom to the top and for ADRA it was a matter of responding to existing needs. The cholera outbreak serves as another example where communication processes were shaped by events to which development NGOs had to respond urgently at the behest of local authorities.

Swedish provides a prototype of dialogic communication with its beneficiaries. Beneficiaries made individual choices with regard to the nature of small scale farming activity they were interested in. In most cases, the selection process was based on prior experiences with the specific farming activity. Because Swedish offered intense training through its value chain program, dialogic communication between its field officers and farmers seemed intuitive. Dialogue was not only between field officers and small scale farmers. Swedish provided the farmers with literature about production and marketing. It encouraged the farmers to form groups to discuss these materials, and exchange ideas on various farming topics. Thus although small scale farming was an individual activity it was also communal and cooperative through dialogic communication among beneficiaries. Field representatives formed long-term relationships with the communities they worked with through processes of dialog and training.

Although participants’ communicative practices might not have been based on firm theoretical underpinnings, it is clear that each functioned out of a dialogic communicative framework (or, at least avoided the tendencies of monologic communication). There is evidence that they fully embraced some of the principles of development communication. In their praxis, participants communicated dialogically as the foundation to development initiatives. As an approach dialogue guarantees that all stakeholders are heard and the priorities of the project are aligned with those of the people. Development NGOs in this study agitated for the participation of all relevant stakeholders. However, both the participatory and dialogic processes they implemented were rooted in the Zimbabwean culture and shaped by the extraordinary context.
In my commentaries on themes about participation, and also culture and communicative practices (chapter 4, best practices themes 1 and 2), I remarked that local culture is both communal and relational and not individualistic. The culture takes for granted both participation and dialogic communication. I want to point out that because development NGOs have come to understand the Zimbabwean traditional culture well, they simply built on the communicative and participatory already embedded in the culture. However, development NGOs’ communicative practices have become much more complex due to the politico, economic and social exigencies. I revisit this observation later in this analysis.

Although participation is already embedded in the culture, the strong adoption of participatory practices among development NGOs also emanates from their ethos, which is a rights based approach to economic and human development. Centering people in development initiatives entails a fair amount of their participation. Participatory approaches are so commonplace within international development circles for the reasons I articulated in chapter 2. From the results, each development NGO goes to great lengths through open dialogue to be inclusive of all the voices that stand to benefit from a development initiative.

So far I have concluded that on the basis of the praxis of development by participants of the study, development NGOs function out of a non-conventional development theoretical framework. More specifically, in spite of the extraordinary context, one can infer that they are guided by Sen’s theory of development as freedom. Non-conventional development and dialogic communication is much harder and less efficient to embrace than charity particularly within the state of exception with which we have become familiar. The themes from Chapter 4 on the best practices adopted by development NGOs speak to their commitment to doing development in an ethical way. A significant sign of this commitment is visible in four dimensions: (i) their investment in fully comprehending the culture and communicative practices; (ii) building on existing communal and participatory traditions; (iii) collaborating with other organizations to limit waste
and share workable ideas and; (iv) the tactical triad relationship they have built to mitigate severely restricted freedoms and the suspicious treatment at the hands of government.

Within the spectra of development communication theories, I ascertained that development NGOs communicative practices were dialogic. The manifestation of their adoption of dialogic communication can be found within two themes on best practices (Chapter 4): participation and culture and communicative practices. The adoption of various participatory practices entails negotiation, openness, listening and hearing. Each of the development NGOs emphasized letting communities prioritize projects. Because of the natural affinity between dialogic communication and participation, development NGOs fully embraced and agitated for participation from all community members and critical stakeholders with regard to identifying projects, as well as their implementation. The theme on culture and communication also confirms an investment in dialogue. By immersing employees who spoke the language in specific communities to develop a fuller understanding of the culture, development NGOs were creating spaces where meaningful dialogue could happen. However, the complexity of the political circumstances has pushed development NGOs toward complex inclusive communication practices. At this juncture we can begin to respond to the key question of this dissertation. What makes it possible for development NGOs to survive the Zimbabwean extraordinary context which negates the very notion of development? Moreover, what motivates these organizations to persist?

How and Why Development NGOs Survive

The longevity and ability to withstand the exceptional political, economic and social circumstances of development NGOs, I want to argue, is predicated on a several factors. First, although unique, each of the organizations is guided by a strong ethos and firm principles whose goal is improving lives of the marginalized and poor. CAFOD, ADRA and WV are guided by religious values. According to the teachings of their respective faith traditions, society is required to stand up for justice, work to relieve poverty among the poorest, and empower women. On the
other hand, Swedish and Plan are driven by a rights-based ethos whose vision is that of a world free from poverty and injustice. Such values, principles, and belief systems, ought to be taken seriously as powerful motivations and a potent source of sustenance.

Second, we discovered that five of the seven participants are northern based and very well financially resourced. Extensive financial resources in an exceptional economic climate serve as almost a guarantee for survival. Millions of ordinary people and the government desperately need the humanitarian services the NGOs provide. The state has lost its capacity to provide basic services to citizens. For the last two decades, the government has lived with sanctions imposed by Western governments, powerful international financial institutions, and multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, and the European Commission (an institution of the European Union with responsibility for implementing the Union’s policies and expenditure of funds). In addition, the government-to-government aid from Nordic countries and beyond discontinued several years ago. When all of these dimensions are taken into consideration, it is no surprise that well–resourced international NGOs become indispensable due to the humanitarian role they play.

We discovered from the results the extent to which development NGOs had adapted to the culture. We also found out that they fully comprehended the extraordinary context. Emerging from the phenomenological data, I argue that their deep comprehension of culture and exceptional context makes for a third explanation of their survival. Because of their strong grasp of the culture and environment, development NGOs recognize the need to re-conceptualize the notion of development in the following manner. Development in extraordinary contexts is not a zero sum game. It has to be understood and operationalized in a complex fashion. It needs to be understood as operating on a continuum or scale. The lower end of the scale consists of providing relief from hunger, thirst and illness and so on for millions of people living in desperate poverty, and on the higher end of giving communities and individual skills (the work of development).
We see ADRA, Plan, World Vision, and CAFOD combating the vicious cycles of crises confronting Zimbabwe at the same time that Communities and Swedish are capacitating participants with income generating skills. This is a clear demonstration of embracing the complexities and challenges of exceptional contexts in which development assumes different meanings. Each day brings its own set of unexpected challenges for which there are no clear cut and viable theoretical frameworks; one must simply grapple with the realities. In other spaces such as with the small scale farmers, the work of development continues. In extraordinary contexts, there are simply no clear cut spaces for humanitarian or development work; it has to be both and in-between.

A significant dimension of the results was emerging themes on best practices adopted by development NGOs. Out of the 4 best practices I outlined, I want to single out triad relationships as a fourth explanation for the survival of development NGOs. In the first chapter, I described the relationship between the state and NGOs as confrontational and suspicious because the latter are perceived as western agents of regime change. Because development NGOs have come to know the environment so well, they have crafted specific communicative practices in their relationship with the state which serve as a strategic tool for survival.

The theme on triad relationships demonstrated how development NGOs engage the government at every level including inviting politicians to sites of their activities. In fact, a participant remarked that engaging the government this way, was a matter of survival. Being open with one’s motives was tactical. Investing energy and time to get to know and interact with local government officials and members of parliament was crucial to developing political relationships and transparency. Seeking out the participation of community and traditional leaders in development initiatives entailed a level of political strategy, due to the extensive politicization of development work.

I made extensive comments on the adoption of participatory practices by development NGOs which built on a communal culture. I also linked their commitment to participation or
speaking with instead of for beneficiaries to their commitment to dialogic forms of communication. I want to assert that because this commitment to participation and dialogue is genuine, beneficiaries have been receptive to their efforts, thus making the survival of development NGOs possible—even in a state of exception. Moreover, it is not lost on citizens that the state has absconded from its basic obligations towards them. The fact that development NGOs have stepped in to provide for basic facilities and yet continues to be committed to development work, adds a positive piece to the relationship between development NGOs and the people.

I have argued for six distinct explanations for the survival of development NGOs in Zimbabwe: (i) strong ethos, firm principle and commitment to improve lives; (ii) financial resources; (iii) adaptability to local culture; (iv) embracing and adapting to complexities and challenges of the exceptional context; (v) strategic use of triad relationships; and (vi) adoption of participatory practices which align with the culture. We still have to respond to the question about their motivation to persist in dire conditions in which their goals are more often frustrated than not. On the basis of the results of the study and from conversations with participants, I find three significant reasons for their motivation.

In Table 4 of Chapter 4, I present significant statements about what participants deemed accomplishments. Although in ordinary circumstances these accomplishments might appear trifle, in an extraordinary context they are true achievements. The success of children sponsored Plan and WV who go on to earn college degrees and become professionals, is no small feat given their backgrounds of extreme poverty and stories of growing up as orphans. Swedish and Communities of Mufakose’s income generating projects with small scale farmers and women respectively, cannot be discounted in conditions of abject poverty and record unemployment rates. The fact that families and communities are able to generate adequate incomes for their basic day to day needs is an accomplishment in Zimbabwe. I want to maintain that these accomplishments are consequential and impactful. These achievements serve as motives for development NGOs to continue. In an exceptional context, development NGOs are making a
difference however small it might appear. These achievements must also be understood in the light of the opposition beneficiaries have toward humanitarian aid which is largely perceived as handouts. Clearly, there is a sense of self-worth and dignity that emanates from participating in income generating projects and the outcomes thereof.

The fidelity of development NGOs to creating durable, just and positive change through empowering the poor and distressed has been severely compromised by the state of exception. I want to argue that the resolve to persist is manifest in all three thematic categories as discussed in Chapter 4 for the following reasons. First, the theories on critical elements of development (sustainability and vested interest, social opportunities, instrumental freedoms, empowerment and women, and funding), demonstrates a remarkable comprehension of the state of exception as well as the culture and their import on development. Second, the themes on contextual challenges (migration, and social turmoil) are evidence of being grounded in the realities of everyday work of development. Third, the themes on best practices (participation, culture and communicative practices, triad relationships and collaboration) show their adaptability to the state of exception. It shows a remarkable ability to use knowledge of the context to devise strategies of survival and not flight.

The present study reveals the extent to which development NGOs and citizens have remained resilient in the face of so much political, economic and social disasters. Although not a motive, resilience functions out of a certain level of hope for a better future. Hope becomes a motive for persisting in the face of deep frustration and pain. Resilience acts as a cushioning mechanism from the pressure of multiple and severe traumas. As a cushion, resilience is really about the will to live. Thus we witness the relief work of development NGOs as they provide food, clean water and medicines to keep millions alive. In the midst of horrendous conditions, both development NGOs and beneficiaries continue searching for ways of generating incomes for families and communities however frustrated they might be. Resilience becomes a tool for learning from the present for reconfiguring the future.
Hope as a motive to for development NGOs to persevere arises from historical facts and observations. From a historical perspective, Zimbabwe was not always a fragile state. In the first decade of independence, the future was bright and the country served as a breadbasket for Southern Africa. Zimbabwe is rich in minerals. It also boasts some of the highest literacy rates in Africa. Although now dispersed across the globe and in neighboring countries, its citizenry is highly educated and has much to offer in skills for various professions. If and when visionary leadership comes into being, the country’s extensive human and material resources will play a significant role in moving the country toward economic and human development.

Citizens and development NGOs alike draw lessons from other African countries which were traumatized but able to recover economically, politically and socially. Neighboring Mozambique serves such an example. Over several years Mozambique was traumatized by the Renamo civil war. With significant changes in leadership and governance, the country made a full recovery; it is presently thriving. This provides Zimbabwe with hope that recovery is possible.

Development NGOs and beneficiaries have shared hardships and challenges catalyzed by the state of exception. There are significant strong bonds that have formed through participation and dialogic communication in the process of income generating activities. The strength of these relationships is crucial for a sense of shared hope and resilience I articulate here. As the country looks to the possibilities of the future, these bonds will serve development NGOs and the beneficiaries of their services well. At this juncture, I want to reflect on the main contribution this study makes to scholarship about development and development NGOs?

Significant Contributions

The first chapter of this dissertation bears testament to the amount of scholarly work that has been done in the last few years about Zimbabwe’ political, economic and social extraordinary events. How they coalesce to push the country to the brink of collapse, is a topic of considerable discussion and debate. What has not been studied so far is the impact that an exceptional context has on the work of development NGOs. The main contribution this dissertation makes to
scholarship is about how an extraordinary political economy can negate economic and human development. More critically it revealed compelling reasons for the survival of development NGOs. It provides salutary lessons about the critical importance on the part of development NGOs to fully comprehend their context of work. I want to assert that conventional and non-conventional theories of development constitute a basis for rethinking how to respond to new and evolving challenges in development work.

The present study provides a critical lesson about the pivotal place that context occupies in enabling the work of development NGOs. This study centers the political economy of Zimbabwe. Through an exploration of its colonial history and the events leading to the present, we find out how powerfully political choices, institutional structures and forms of governance shape and influence economic choices made by a government. These choices are deep determinants of growth and development because of their power to drive policy choices. In Zimbabwe such choices have had the many negative consequences on economic development players.

Furthermore, the study has provided a rare opportunity to interface a specific theory of development with reality. It presented a favorable juncture of circumstances in which Sen’s theorizing of development as freedom was put to use to critically think about the role of ideology, politics and culture in creating a hostile environment for development. Sen’s view on the complexity of the linkages between culture and development were vindicated in the results of the study. We witnessed the negative impact of a culture of patriarchy on women’s empowerment (with regard to education, access to land, information, health facilities, and skills) without which development is unlikely to succeed. Sen’s concern with the multiple inequalities women suffer which are detrimental to the potential for development, are well expressed by development NGOs in the theme about women’s empowerment.

The relevance of Sen’s theory of development as freedom aligned well with themes emerging from the results and their discussion. As we come to grips with how the state has
abdicated its obligations towards citizens in terms of providing access to capabilities which lead to functionings and human well-being in terms of education, health facilities, creating an environment in which meaningful work is available and so on, the relevance of Sen's theory becomes ever more obvious. The loss of capacity experienced by development NGOs can be partially attributed to the severely curtailed security guarantees. We are able to see why Sen's theory centers freedoms as the basis for development. The unfreedoms of poverty, lack of economic opportunities, neglect of public facilities, intolerance and repressive behaviors with which Sen is concerned characterize the state of exception in Zimbabwe. The alignment among Sen’s theory of development as freedom (Chapter 2), themes on critical elements of development and on turmoil and crisis produces incredible results. It is as if Sen’s theory was designed to help us come to grips with the state of exception in Zimbabwe.

Limitations of Study

The limitations of this study arise from some of the designing choices I made and logistical challenges at the site of data collection. I recognize three limitations. First, the sampling process I adopted was circumscribed by my physical location in the United States and circumstances on the ground in Zimbabwe. Because I am domiciled more than 10,000 miles away from the site of research and have limited access to sources of information about development NGOs in the country, I sampled participants from a single online portal. Second, my sample was skewed in favor of representatives of development NGOs over the beneficiaries of their services. Although I was able to interview two groups of women, I received less input from beneficiaries. This limits the range of potential responses from beneficiaries about some of the questions I asked. For example, I might have received different responses from beneficiaries to questions about participatory practices. Although I had planned on interviewing more beneficiaries, the logistics of getting to the remote places where they tend to be domiciled proved daunting. Furthermore, the city women I interviewed were not representative of countryside women who face different sets of socio-economic circumstances.
Third, I was not able to conduct follow-up conversations with participants for clarification on questions that arose in the process of writing-up findings. Cost, time and distance were real constraints on meaningful follow-up. Fifth, I was not able to conduct all my interviews in English. My conversations with the two women’s groups working with Communities of Mufakose were in Shona, a local indigenous language. This raises questions about what might have been lost in the process of translation. However, I do not believe that much was lost. Shona is my first language and I understand English well enough to minimize the loss of meaning during the process of translation. All five limitations have a very minimal negative impact on the significance of my study and its related findings.

A single study on a topic of this magnitude remains insufficient as we direct our attention to the future of economic and human development in Zimbabwe and the entities contributing to development initiatives. We must therefore envision other angles future research might consider. However, prior to making such contemplations, I want to redirect attention to the ground this dissertation has covered.

Summary

The first chapter set the political, economic, social, and communicative framework for the study of the work of development NGOs. It set the stage for the goals of the study and why it matters. In many ways, this chapter was about the political economy of Zimbabwe. Through an exploration of the political economy we discovered how political choices, institutional structures and forms of governance influence economic choices made by the government. We found out how political choices, institutions and forms of governance act as deep determinants of growth and development because they drive policy choices.

Through exploring the political economy we uncovered the dialectical relationship between the economy and the state, in which the latter uses politics and ideology to regulate the economy. However, the political and ideological regulation of the economy has acute consequences for its relationship with international economic players. Because international
economic players wield so much power, Zimbabwe’s relationships with multinational corporations, international banks, international financial institutions and northern foreign banks comes to a screeching halt. The consequences for the economy and ordinary people in Zimbabwe formed a significant part of the discussion.

In the second chapter, I provided a conceptual framework for the study. To fully comprehend the nature and work of development NGOs, I discussed theories, concepts and approaches about development, development communication and Non-Governmental Organizations. Theories, notions and concepts are the standard against which we can gauge the work of development NGOs. Although a standard or guide, the praxis of development NGOs in Zimbabwe help us rethink the value of theories given the exceptional context. The value of a theoretical framework is visible in the final chapter as we analyze the relationship between theory and concepts and their applicability on the ground. Beyond development theories, development communication theories and theories about NGOs, I gave a brief description of a fragile state.

In Chapter 3, I explained the choices I made in how I went about collecting data. Due to the ontological and qualitative nature of the study, I found a critical theory paradigm compelling. Because the data is about the phenomenon of development, I was guided by a phenomenological approach. The data collection method of choice was through interviews. The larger part of the chapter consists of a description of the sample. I offered comprehensive information about the mission, vision, guiding principles, ethos, sectors of work, activities and financial sources of 7 participating organizations namely Plan, WV, CAFOD, ADRA, Swedish Coop, PRFT, and Communities of Mufakose. The chapter concluded by providing the guide I used to evaluate the research.

The results of the study were the focal point in chapter four. The presentation of the results was premised on an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). On that basis, I tabulated extensive significant statements which then serve as support for emerging themes from participants’ transcripts. The study produced several themes from representatives of development
NGOs and two groups of beneficiaries. As a way of organizing emergent themes, I worked with the following categories for development NGOs: (i) critical elements for development; (ii) contextual challenges; and (iii) best practices. Similarly, I organized emerging themes among beneficiaries into: (i) impetus for participation; (ii) contextual challenges; and (iii) the conception of development. Alongside each of the themes, I made commentaries which were based on my membership of the Zimbabwean culture, my prior experiences working for development NGO in the country, as well as my knowledge of the context. The emergent themes in chapter four set a foundation for the analytical work of the present chapter.

In this final chapter, I sought to respond to the critical questions the study raised, namely: what makes it possible for development NGOs to survive the extraordinary context in which they perform their work? In addition, I wanted to find out what the motivation for their persistence was. I also wondered how the state of exception had impacted their goals and objectives. Moreover, what theoretical frames were they using to guide their activities?

I began by ascertaining how the notion of development was conceived by both representatives of development NGOs and beneficiaries. Both parties understood development as a process of creating positive and durable change by empowering the poor so they could generate incomes for their family. The government was a critical stakeholder in enabling a conducive environment for development. The exceptional context was responsible for the absence of fundamental elements for development such as human rights, freedoms, good governance, efficient and capable institution, peace and security. Development was a process which occurred at an individual, communal and national level.

Through a process of interrogating their praxis, I discovered that overall, the 7 development NGOs functioned out of non-conventional development theoretical framework. Although no specific development theory was mentioned, my interpretation of the results leads me to conclude that Sen’s theory of development as freedom is a relevant guide. Clearly, the exceptional context drives this alignment between the praxis of development and Sen’s argument.
that freedoms are pivotal for development. In my analysis, I outlined the germane points of alignment between Sen's theory and the praxis of development by development NGOs.

I discovered that in terms of their communicative practices, these entities operated within a dialogic communication framework. Although not based on a firm theoretical underpinning, their communicative practices appeared to be guided by a dialogic communication paradigm. All of the organizations centered beneficiaries' needs and ensured the full participation of communities in initiatives. A significant part of both their communicative practices and participatory approaches emanates from their comprehension of the culture which is heavily communal and relational.

This dissertation explored the critical role that development NGOs play in an extraordinary context. We learnt from this study that one of the crucial explanations for their survival is communication with various constituencies. Thus, genuine two way dialogical communication is pivotal to development. It is clear from the state’s communicative practices with various constituencies that it does not recognize dialogic communication as critical factor for creating an enabling environment for development. It is not an exaggeration to say that a significant factor of the state of exception results from its hugely problematic communicative practices. The government’s inability to dialogue genuinely with white farmers, multinational corporations, businesses, international financial institutions, development NGOs and its citizens, brought the country down economically and socially. Given all of this, what should future research explore? What political and historical realities should it focus on? What cultural practices explain the state’s communicative practices?

Reflecting on Future Research

One of the most compelling lessons from this dissertation is the pivotal function the state's political choices, institutional structures and forms of governance play in economic and human development. We also discovered how such choices are deep determinants of growth and development. What is eminently clear from what we now know about the exceptional context is that Zimbabwe lacks competent leadership, thus the loss of state capacity to fulfill its basic
obligations towards citizens. Rebuilding capacity is going to require a diverse set of players who are dedicated to doing the difficult work. Research on visionary leadership will be but one critical part of that process. However, this kind of project is for consideration in the longer term.

In the more immediate horizon, there are several dimensions of the present study which I could explore further. For instance, I was unable to converse with a diverse group of beneficiaries some of who work with the better resourced development NGOs such as ADRA, World Vision, and Swedish Coop. The group of women I interviewed live in the city and so their experiences of development are shaped and formed by the demands of a city environment. In the future I might consider exploring the conception of the notion of development among rural beneficiaries such as the small scale farmers with whom Swedish Coop work. Rural life generates significantly different life demands which would enrich my research. This kind of research would provide a critical space from which to explore the notion of sustainability (understood as long-term commitment), the nature of dialogic communication, and the participatory practices thereof.

A second and equally exciting space for future research consists in investigating the work of local development NGOs. Areas of investigation might encompass the key challenges they face, their relationships with government and beneficiaries since they are members of the culture. I would also be interested in finding out the spectra of theoretical frames with which they function. We learnt from this study of the financial and material challenges faced by local development NGOs. In a future study, I would investigate the efforts and manner in which local development NGOs search for financial support.

Clearly there is hard work to do in the future. The multiple demands that lie ahead for economic and human development for Zimbabwe cannot be underestimated. Rebuilding state capacity and exploiting the country’s potential for economic and human development will require a diverse set of dedicated players. This study has been an eye opener for the scholarly contributions I could potentially make as an emerging scholar.
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Current Status

Since the collection of data toward the end of 2011, the economic, political and social context of the country has worsened in many respects. The Government of National Unity (GNU) was dissolved through a questionable election in July 2013. The Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front (ZANU, PF) is back in power. There is no solid political opposition in the country. The few opposition political parties in the country are characterized by squabbling, jostling for power and are inclined to fracturing internally. The ruling party ZANU (PF) is marred by internal factionalism as a few individuals fight for succession to the presidency. The 90 year old president has refused to groom a successor. In recent weeks, the President Robert Mugabe who is also the Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe awarded a doctorate to his wife Grace on September 12, 2014. There are no records of her studies with the University in any form or shape. Speculations abound in the country that Mugabe is grooming his wife to take the reins of power (The Standard, 2014). The possibility that the country will soon make a turn in the right direction seems to be dimming with the passage of time.

The economy which seemed to have stabilized during the four year life (2009-2013) of the GNU has begun declining steeply since the July 2013 elections. Zimbabwe still has no currency of its own; it now uses 13 different currencies, chief among them the US dollar and the British Pound. Company closures continue unabated. As recently as May 13, 2014, there were reports of 15 companies shutting down in one of the towns, Kwekwe (New Zimbabwe, 2014). The closures are due to severe liquidity shortages, unrealistic labor legislation and an overall harsh economic climate. These businesses have had their assets attached by courts because of their failure to pay wages for several months running. Foreign direct investment is stalled because of the high political risk, a confrontational mentality toward foreign companies among political elites, and unreasonable preconditions for conducting business. The country is in arrears by $11 billion.
for loans advanced by International Financial Institutions; a hefty amount considering the size of the country's economy.

The social dimension of the environment shows no signs of improvement. Some families rely for their survival on remittances from members and relatives in diaspora. The scourge of the HIV Aids epidemic has not abated. On a recent trip in 2013 to Zimbabwe with a group of graduate students from the United States, I witnessed first-hand people dying in their own homes from HIV Aids. Families in the impoverished communities we visited depend on volunteers from a grassroots HIV Aids NGO. Because it has little financial and material resources, Life Empowerment Support Organization (LESO) provides basic home-based care. We also visited orphanages which are struggling to support babies and youth of all ages who have nowhere else to go. The most visible sign of the high rate of joblessness is the prevalence of informal self-employment with which ironically, the government is not happy. Most people subsist on the selling of small wares and food stuffs. The bleak, dilapidated industrial sites we travelled through signaled the extinction of the manufacturing sector. The future of the country and its citizens truly hangs in the balance.

A culture of corruption continues. In fact it seems to be accelerating. In January 2014, the president spent $5 million on a lavish wedding for his daughter (New Zimbabwe, 2014). Within the next couple of months, the president spent an additional million dollars on his birthday. Recently, the president spent $16 million on statues of himself to commemorate his uninterrupted rule since 1980 (New Zimbabwe, 2014). There has been a barrage of stories in the Zimbabwean media about massive looting by directors and chief executive officers tasked with running state enterprises and local authorities. The plunder is happening as employees of these state enterprises go unpaid for months. Top politicians have tried to gag the media for these revelations. No one has been held accountable for hemorrhaging state coffers. In the words of one journalist, the whole saga goes to show how shameless and morally bankrupt the leadership
of the country has become. With this current update and the results of the study, we find ourselves at a juncture where we need to think critically about Zimbabwe.
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Doing Development in Extraordinary Environments: Exploring the Impact of Development NGOs in Zimbabwe

You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the work of development Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Zimbabwe.

Participation in this study should take about two hours of your time. We can meet more than once if the time commitment on your part is limited. Participation will involve responding to a range of questions about your goals, objectives and a variety of issues regarding your work as a development NGO. The risks associated with this project are minimal, and participation is strictly voluntary. If at any point during the conversation you feel uncomfortable, you are free to discontinue. Please do not feel obliged to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable, as I respect your right to choose this option. Refusal to participate or withdraw at any point during the conversation does not carry any penalty. There are no financial or material benefits that will accrue from your participation.

The responses you provide to the research questions and any other information related to the project will be used solely for the purpose of my dissertation. Your identity will be kept in the greatest confidence, and I will be the only person with access to your individual data. I will only use a tape recording device with your permission.

In the interest of maintaining the highest confidentiality with regard to your personal data, your personal information will be kept separately from the responses you provide to the questions for the study. Analysis of the data from the study will exclude names and personal information. Beyond our conversations for the study, I will not be keeping or using your personal data in any context. Please feel free to raise any questions you might have regarding the security of your personal information.

I am conducting this research as a doctoral student at the University of Denver in the United States. My dissertation is being supervised by Dr. Christina Foust in the Department of Human Communication Studies at the University of Denver. My supervisor can be contacted at her office number which is 303 871 4330.

If you have any concerns or complains about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303- 871-4052 or write to the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

Since I am not asking for permission from my main office to participate in this study, the responses I provide are solely my own and do not represent the opinions of the organization I work for.
I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of your project on investigating the effectiveness of NGOs in Zimbabwe. I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature__________________________ Date________________________

_____ I agree to be audio taped.

_____ I do not agree to be audio taped.

Signature__________________________ Date________________________

_____ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address:
Appendix C

Informed Consent (Shona Version)

Ma Development NGOs Anogona Kuchinja Hupenuh Hwevanhu Chaizvo Here: Kune Dzimwe Nzira Here?

Murikukokwa kuti muwe diwi rehurukuro dzinotsvaga kunzwisisa basa rema development NGOs muZimbabwe.


Kuti tichengetedze mazite enyu pahurukuro idzi, handisati ndichizoshandiswa zita renyu pakunyora nhorondo yezvatinenge takurukura. Zita renyu, nezvimwe zve pamusoro penyu zvichachengerwa pazvo zvega, zvisinganiswe nemhinduro dzamunopa. Kana munemibvudzo pamusoro paizvozvi, izivai makasununguka kubvunza mibvunzo.

Ndirimikuita basa iri semudzidzi kuchikoro che University ye Denver ku United Sates. Mudzidzisi wangu wandirikushanda naye anonzi Dr. Christina Foust wanoshanda mu Department re Human Communication Studies mu University ye Denver. Foni namba yemudzidzisi wangu ndeiyi 303 870 4330.

Kana mana muine zvisina kukufadzai pahurukuro dzedu, munogona kukurura na Paul Olk, Mukuru Mukuru we Institutional Review Board pa 303-871-4531, kana kuti na Sylk Sotto-Santiago muhofisi ye Research and Sponsored Programs pa 303-871-4052 kana kunyorera University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.


Signature_______________________ Date __________________________

Ndinobvuma kuti pashandiswe tape recorder.

Handibvume kuti pashandiswe tape recorder.
Signature __________________________  Date __________________________

Ndinoda kutimirwa zvinenge zvanyorwa pamusoro pehurukuro idzi pa address iyi, kana pa e-mail iyi:
Appendix D

Interview Questions
Questions will be mostly open-ended, but crafted in a way that generates discussion in order to draw out useful information. There are two sets of questions, with one specifically meant for development NGOs, and a second for recipients of development aid. However, there will be some overlapping questions for both development NGOs and recipients. I have divided questions for development NGOs into primary and secondary questions. The primary questions are focused on getting responses to the issues raised in my thesis. They are focused on motive, effectiveness/impact and communication. The secondary questions are meant to provide a fuller understanding of the development NGOs and how they function.

Questions for Development NGOs

Primary
Provide a brief historical background of your organization as well as the length of its life in Zimbabwe?
What sectors of development is your organization engaged in?
What are the ideological commitments that drive this organization? In other words what is the motive for doing development work? How do you see these commitments materializing in the day-to-day workings of your development NGO?
At a personal level, what motivates you to be part of an organization that engages in development work?
What do you understand as the mission and vision of the organization?
How did you learn about the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the organization you work for?
Who are the major stakeholders for this organization? I am referring to donors, funders, government departments, recipients of your services and employees.
How well informed are these stakeholders of the mission, vision and goals of your organization?
What modes of communication does your organization adopt when dealing with the various stakeholders?
Since technological modes of communication are extremely limited for the communities you serve, what communicative strategies do you use?
How relevant are these modes of communication to the context? Do you believe your organization is effective at communication?
What in your opinion is the importance of communicating effectively with various stakeholders?
What is the nature of the skills and capabilities that you impart to the communities you serve, and are these sustainable?
Do you believe that development NGOs make a difference in people’s lives?
What do you see as the substantive difference that development NGOs make?
Has this organization changed lives and if so how?
Since the focus is on the development side of your work, what is your organization’s understanding of ‘development’?
How do you conceive of development? Or is there you can recall, or even a moment within a project, which seemed to capture what “development” means to you?
What challenges do you face in Zimbabwe in terms of doing your work as a development NGO?
How does your organization negotiate these challenges?
How do you measure or determine whether your original goals and objectives have been achieved?
What are your sources of funding and what is its basis?
Is there a relationship between the levels of funding you receive and the achievement of your goals and objectives?
What other criteria is used by your funders and donors to continue financial and other support? How do you convince donors to continue funding a project which has met with several setbacks and obstacles, in which you still see potential? What is the nature of your relationship with the communities you work with on various projects? Do you consult with your constituencies, i.e. recipients upfront to establish what their needs and expectations are? When measuring the impact of your work, do you consult with the recipients of your services? What is your assessment of the successes your organization has attained with the various development projects you have undertaken? Can you provide an example of a time when you felt that your work had made a difference in someone’s life? Has there been a time when you felt that there was a conflict of interest between what you believed needed to be done with the policies of the organization? What might be some of the best ways of tackling poverty and ensuring its eradication? Could you please discuss the role that women play in the development projects you have been involved with? What constrains limit women’s participation in the Zimbabwean society? What are some of the best ways of empowering women so they can become full participants within the Zimbabwean society? Do you stick with a project until it is completed, and what criteria are used to ascertain completion? What advocacy activities are you involved in? What collaborative activities does this NGO engage in with other NGO’s doing similar work, and with Civil Society Organizations? In what way do you contribute to the umbrella bodies such as NANGO, Kubatana and the regional SADC –Coalition on NGOs?

Secondary
What criterion is used in the selection of participants in any one of the development projects that you undertake? Do you believe there are individuals who are left out of project who otherwise would like to participate? What is the relationship between those who qualify for participation and those who do not? What do you understand as the root causes of poverty in Zimbabwe? What rules and regulations do NGOs have to comply with? What aspects of the governing rules and regulations make your task easier and harder? What are your honesty views of NGOs given your experience? Do you have discussions with colleagues and friends about NGOs and their place in the world? What in your view distinguishes NGOs from other business institutions? What do you see as the future of your organization’s role as a development NGO in Zimbabwe? What is the nature your organization has with other development NGOs? Do you collaborate on some of the projects, and what is the nature of that collaboration? If there is competition between NGOs, what is the effect on the communities you serve?
Appendix E

*Questions for Recipients (English Version)*

**What does development mean to you?**

**What is the nature of the development project that you are participating in?**

**If you were involved before what NGO were you working with and what was the nature of the project?**

**How many people are involved in the development project you are working on currently?**

**What role do you play in the development project your community is involved with?**

**Were you approached by the development NGO to find out what your pressing needs were?**

**Were you consulted by the NGO to find out whether this specific project would be of value to you?**

**If you were not consulted, do you know whether someone else in your community was consulted?**

**Did you make a communal decision to get involved with this project?**

**What in your view is the purpose of this project?**

**Do you believe that the project is on target and on the right path to achieving its goal?**

**What is the frequency with which you interact with the NGO people directing the project?**

**How would you characterize your relationship with the NGO?**

**What do the other members of the project think about the communal relationship you have with the NGO people?**

**Given your experience with NGOs, what do you think of its people and the work they do?**

**Do you believe that the NGO people understand your circumstances and your needs?**

**What views do the other members of the project from your community have about the project?**

**What have you learnt so far from the NGO people and your involvement with the project?**

**Do you believe that the skills you have gained so far will help you in the future?**

**What is your experience with the skills that you acquired from previous projects with development NGOs? Have you been able to put them to beneficial use?**

**Overall, do you think NGOs are good for the community?**

**What skills would you really want to acquire and why?**

**Who else could help you with improving your life apart from the NGOs?**

**What are the benefits that you have gained from the development aid provided by the NGO?**

**At a communal level what do you see as the short term and long term benefits of the development project?**

**What are the most pressing needs that you have at a personal and at a communal level that an NGO could meet?**

**Have you tried communicating these needs to the NGO you are currently working with?**

**What kind of help do you think might be most effective in dealing with issues of poverty?**

**How best might NGOs help with the eradication of poverty?**

**How many development NGOs do you know of that are currently doing work in your community and the surrounding areas?**

**What is the range of the work these different NGOs are doing?**

**Do you believe that your life and that of your family will improve in the near future?**

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*Appendix E*

**Questions for Recipients (Shona Version)**

**Ma Development NGOs Anogona Kuchinja Hupenhu Hwevanhu Chaizvo Here: Kune Dzimwe Nzira Here?**

**Mibvunzo**

*Mibvunzo mizhinji ichasiyiwa yakavhurika, asi inenge yakanyorwa nenzira inobatsira kuti pawe nehurukuro dzinobatsira. Pachawe ne nemibvudzo munzvimbo mbiri, imwe ichave yema development NGO, yechipiri iri yevanoyamurwa. Zvisinei, pachawa nemibunzo yakafanana kuma*
development NGO nekune vanowana ruyamuro. Izvi zvinobatsira nekuziva kana madiwi mawiri aya ari kushandira chinangwa chimwe cheto. Kechipiri, zvinobatsira nekuziva kana ma development NGO achitsvaga kunzwisisa zvinodiwa nevanhu.

Ruyamuro rwerudzii rwamurikuwana?
Ndeyipi NGO yamurikushanda pamwe chete nayo?
Makasangana seiko ne NGO iyoyi?
Makambenge muchiyamurwa neimwe NGO here?
Ruyamurwo rwakaita seiko rwamakambopiwa neimwe NGO?
Mubasa ramurikuita ne NGO iyezvino, vanhu vangani warikushanda pamwe chete?
Munevanhukadzi vangani, zvakare munevanhurume vangani?
Chinhano chenyu ndechipi mukati mebasa ramurikubata?
Musati matanga basa iri, NGO yakakurukura nemi here ichtsvaga kuziva rubatsiro rwamunoda?
Makatsanagurirwa here ruyamuro rwamange muchizowana musat matanga iri basa?
Kunevamwe here wamunogara navo vakabatsira kuita chisarudzo chekuti muvane ruyamuro urwu?
Semaonero enyu, chinangwa chebasa iri ndecheyi?
Munofunga here kuti basa iri ririkufamba nenziwia yakakodzera uye kuti rinosvika pamhedziso yakanaka?
Munopedza nguva yakawanda sei muchibata pamwe chete nevanhu we NGO? Vanouya kanganu musondo kana pamwedzi kuzoono zvamurikuita?
Ukama hwenyu nevanhu we NGO wamurikushanda nawo wakamira sei?
Vamwe vemunharaunda yenyu warikuyamurwa ne NGO imwe chete wanofunga chii pamusoro pekushanda neyii NGO?
Mumashandiro enyu ne NGO iyi munofunga chii pamusoro payo nevanhu vayo?
Munofunga here kuti vanhu warikuyamurai vanonzwisisa mararamiro enyu nezvinoshayika zvenyu?
Munofunga here kuti zvamadzidza pakushanda ne NGO iyi zvinokubatisrai muzuva ramangwana?
Kane pane zvamakadzidza kare neimwe NGO muchiri kuzvishandisa here pakutsvaga kuchinja hupenyu kuti huwe nani?
Mukufinga kwenyu, munoona basa rinobatwa nema NGO riine hukoshi here muupenyu hwevanhu?
Chiiko chaizvo chamunoti munowana murubatsiro rwamurikupihwa?
Ruyamuro rwuwi chaizvo rwamurikutsvaga?
Munofunga nhamo dzemari, chikoro nezvinwere rinogona kupendzwa here?
Chiiko chinofanirwa kutora nzvimbo kuti zvifambe?