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An Examination of the Role of Arts Councils in the Development of Theatre: the Case of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and Theatre in Harare

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Brett Pyper

February 2008

Declaration

I declare that this Research Report is my own unaided work.

Florence Mukanga

Place _____ **Date** _____

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ABSTRACT

This study brings into critical focus the relationship between the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) as an aspect of the government's cultural policy and theatre in Harare. It demonstrates that the birth and well being of the NACZ has been shaped by global and African perspective of arts councils as well as politics in form of colonisation and decolonisation processes. It argues that the NACZ played an influential role in the development of theatre before 1995, mostly through administering legislation that facilitated, provided a framework and regulations that created the surrounding in which theatre operated as well as providing minimal funding. It has also been effective in facilitating the movement of local and international theatre artists into and out of Zimbabwe during the period under study (1985 to present date). Generally this promoted the development of community theatre.

However it maintains that its role was negatively affected by the restructuring process it underwent in 1995, and worsened by the changing economic and political conditions after 2000. Due to those circumstances it has not been able to regularly disburse enough funding yet that is the biggest area of deficiency in the sector. Instead it is the donor community that has shouldered this aspect mostly, in some cases with the assistance of the NACZ, which in turn has promoted largely, the development of political and theatre for communication. Theatre artists are continuously aligning themselves to the expectations of the donor community.

KEY WORDS

Arts council, theatre, 'arm's length', patron, engineer, architect, facilitator and theatre association.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Debates on cultural policy have been around since, at least, the early 1940s. This has been largely due to post war challenging conditions in which culture is operating. Landry and Pachter (2001, p.18) note some of the new conditions in which culture is operating to include the ascendance of the market place as an arbiter of value and taste, a reconsideration of what identity means and the rise of the knowledge based economy. Power and Scott (2004) also note the rise of a new economy whose most important segment comprises industries that supply cultural products. He points to their rapid growth in recent decades as a reflection of increasing convergence that is occurring in modern society between the economic order and systems of cultural expression.

In Africa, cultural policy developments date back to the late 1950s when African artists, intellectuals, political groups and liberation movements looked up to culture as a powerful weapon to fight colonial and cultural oppression. This gave birth to movements such as the Senegal Cultural Association, and to the organisation of conferences that offered forums for reflection on the challenges of African culture, for instance the First and Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists that took place in 1956 and 1959 respectively. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) also organised meetings that promoted the development of cultural policies in African States, for instance the 1969 meeting organised in West Africa. These

meetings had a strong influence on the later cultural policy developments in African countries like Zimbabwe, though the influence may not have been very direct.

National Arts Councils (NACs) as factors of state cultural policy have not been left out in these developments. An arts council is a government or private non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting the arts mainly by funding local artists, awarding prizes, and organizing events at home and abroad. It is often 'arm's length' from the government to prevent political interference in their decisions.[1] NACs have aims and objectives outlined in the pieces of legislation on which they were formed, though whether or not they are followed is debatable. Often their function is honorific, according their aims and objectives due respect on paper, only to lose focus on them when coming to real operational grounds.

1.1 Aims

This research is aimed at analysing the role that the NACZ has been playing in its policies, relevance and responsiveness to the development of theatre in Harare in relation to the needs of the sector as well as global trends and developments, from 1985 to present date. It explores how the institution has been and is working in relation to theatre in the city of Harare; this includes metropolitan Harare and the high and low density suburbs of Chitungwiza. It offers insight into the implications of the relationship that existed and currently exists between the NACZ and theatre in Harare. The thrust of the research is an attempt to answer the following question:

[1]The Wikipedia encyclopedia [online]. Available on: http://www.answers.com/topic/arts-council. [Accessed on 10 October 2007].

How has the NACZ been interacting with theatre as an art form since its formation in 1985 and what has been the negative and positive impact of those interactions on the development of the art form? It will also answer the following questions:

- What were the circumstances surrounding the creation of the NACZ, its mandate in general and with specific reference to theatre?
- In which theatre-related areas has the institution been active and how have its operations and policies affected theatre as a form of cultural expression with specific reference to Harare? (These include funding, training for theatre artists and capacity building for theatre associations, facilitating local and international tours).

1.2 Rationale

Globally the arts, theatre arts included, are in change. There are many developments in terms of their role in society including the aforementioned increasing commercial drive. These recent developments have led to situations where governments act as facilitators, architects, engineers and (or) patrons for the arts (Chartrand and McGaughey, 1985). In many cases this is being done through arts councils. Harris (1969, p. 264) maintains that it is crucial to look at the effectiveness of these administrative devices used by governments to extend their assistance to the arts. The functions of these councils differ from nation to nation. Hence, the desire to examine how the Zimbabwean national arts council works in relation to theatre; this is compared to other councils in the region as well as internationally.

There has not been much research around the issue of the national arts council of Zimbabwe. Most of the literature on arts councils tends to be western centred thus leaving out Africa, Zimbabwe included. It is therefore hoped that this research may bridge this gap by examining the same topic in the context of Africa, but focusing on Zimbabwe.

It has proved imperative for this research to focus on the development of theatre arts in Harare because it is the most prominent region in theatre, with many practitioners and arts associations and organisations.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

The discussion of the relationship between the NACZ and theatre will be done following the framework for the four alternative roles governments take in supporting the arts as treated by Chartrand and McCaughey (1989). This framework was developed in the context of the relationship between governments and the arts but it is applicable to arts councils as in most cases they are part of cultural policy implementing agencies put in place by governments. It helps to delineate the parameters that must be considered in investigating the role of the NACZ in the development of theatre in Harare. It goes further to provide the structure for understanding the mandate of the council as an institution created by the state as a custodian of the arts. The research demonstrates the applicability of this framework to the NACZ with reference to theatre in Harare.

It is necessary to point out that in this research the word ‘patron’ has been used at two levels. Chartrand and McCaughey in their publications on arts councils use it to mean a role assumed by a government in funding the arts through ‘arm’s length’ institutions. Balfe (1994) and other scholars use it to refer to individuals, instructions and organisations that fund the arts in general. This paper will not explore its various meanings but will apply the two levels of meanings as are used by these authors to establish an understanding and implications of the relationship between the NACZ and theatre.

Chartrand and McCaughey (1989) maintain that a patron state funds the arts through arts councils that will be at ‘arm’s length’ from the state, receiving funds from the government that in turn is not controlled by the government. They point out that the government determines how much aggregate support to provide, but not the organisations or artists to receive the funding. That decision is taken by a board of trustees appointed by the government of the day but expected to fulfil their grant-giving duties independent of the interests of the party in power. This role maps the historical context of arts councils, as it was the first one to be adopted by the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB), but it was modified in the process of being adopted by other countries

As facilitators, governments fund the arts through tax exemptions with the aim of promoting diversity of activity in the non-profit styles of arts. They do not support specific standards of arts but the tastes and preferences of donors determine the nature of art produced. It is common in the USA. This role is not directly applicable to arts

councils but it is in countries where it co-exists with such an institution it has interesting implications for arts councils.

Unlike facilitatorship, the architectural role is common in Western countries where the arts are funded through government ministries or departments of culture in which case granting decisions are generally made by politicians. The architect state tends to fund art that meets community rather than professional standards of excellence; this can result in creative stagnancy. Again its existence has implications for the role of arts councils in countries where it co- exists with an arts council.

The engineering role differs from the other three in that it involves state ownership of the artistic means of production such as theatres and was common in the Eastern Bloc countries. Funding is made available to artistic work that meets political standards of excellence. It is attractive to a 'totalitarian' regime because it focuses on the creative energy of artists towards attainment of official political goals. This role is applicable to arts councils; in fact it is the case in Singapore where the government owns all artistic means of production and the arts council does not make decisions on how artists utilise the means. In this case the arts council cooperates with the government and all decisions are ratified by the government.

Often governments play a mixture of these roles, working hand in hand with arts councils. In some cases arts councils can operate as government organs that will be assuming some of those roles. It is interesting to note that the NACZ, as a state organ that

is responsible for the arts, assumes some of these roles but in different ways because of different reasons as is explained in later chapters.

1.4 Literature Review

1.4.1 The Global View of the Relations of Arts Councils, the Arts and the State.

This report uses literature from the theoretical and historical background, written in the global, regional (African) and Zimbabwean context. Continuous reference was made to scholars who have written about debates around NACs in the context of cultural policy outside Africa. In this regards wide reference was made to literature that traces the birth of arts councils and among which is *Culture at the Cross Roads* by Landry and Pachter (2001). They expose the crisis that cultural institutions are facing because of changing operational conditions at the cultural front. In explaining the causes and the crises they trace the history of the operational conditions of culture, including the arts, from the Renaissance period through to the reign of Charles I, enlightenment period and the French Revolution that later played a pivotal role in the birth of arts councils. Their text lays a foundation to the influence that politics had on the birth of arts councils.

In his article on the cultural economics of arts funding, Chartrand (1987) also give a brief explanation of the birth of arts councils. He points out that the birth of arts councils was linked more to politics than economics an important aspect of arts councils that affects the manner in which they function today.

Upchurch (2007) has also an interesting article in which she describes the process involved in the creation of the Canada Arts Council. Her work is particularly interesting in that it explores how Canada, as one of the members of the British Commonwealth countries adopted the arts council policy model of the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB). Her work illustrates how the ACGB model was modified when it was adopted by Canada. This is an important example of how the ACGB model was modified as it spread across the globe, especially to the former colonies of Britain. The modification of ACGB is important in this research since NACZ is also an example of an arts council in a former British colony and it would be interesting to note how it has modified the ACGB model to suit its environment.

From an American perspective, Harris (1970) examines the origins of the involvement of the US government with the production of the arts through the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965. He gives a detailed explanation of the structures of the National Council on the Humanities and National Council on the Arts, the two institutions created by the Act. He also explains the importance placed on education by the Act and how that aims to facilitate growth of the arts. The article gives background to some of the political reasons that led to the birth of arts councils

In the same American context, Heilbrun and Gray in their book called *The Economics of Art and Culture: an American Perspective* (1993), expound on the history of the National Endowment of the Arts arguing that in the beginning the attitude of the Americans to arts funding was very negative. They go on to explain how this attitude changed. They

explore interesting reasons that may be applicable to the global context and help to answer the question of why governments fund the arts though arts councils today.

This study also makes use of literature that deals with the operational aspects of arts councils. This includes the works of Swaim (1978), who writes about state involvement in the arts. Swaim discusses the problems created by the US government's involvement in the arts through the National Endowment of the Arts. He gives a discussion of the ways through which the state supports the arts including theatre, for instance arts subsidies through tax breaks, and importantly how they affect the production of the arts.

In addition, Chartrand (1987) in 'Towards the International Evaluation of Arts Council Funding' explains briefly the principle of 'arm's length' that is usually applied by autonomous arts councils to prevent the government from interfering with the arts functions works. This text is important in that it provides a historical view of the 'arm's length' principle that was adopted, with some modifications, by many commonwealth countries in establishing arts councils. It also touches on how arts councils established after that model operate maintaining that, "the legislative mandate of an 'arm's length' arts council is, by definition, enabling rather than operational in nature. [This is to say] that legislation sets out general powers [but lets] the council [to interpret and define] these powers" (Chartrand 1987, p2).

Chartrand and McCaughey (1989) also have an article that gives a detailed analysis of the four roles (Patron, Facilitator, Engineer and Architecture) that governments assume in

supporting the arts which also apply to arts councils as they are a factor of cultural policy put in place by governments, in some cases with the support of stakeholders in the sector, as implementing agencies for cultural policy.

Balfe (1994) has a collection of essays on the controversies over arts patronage by state institutions such as arts councils. She maintains that, "patronage always involves issues of visibility and control" (Balfe 1994, p.3). She also raises an interesting idea for this research when she maintains that "patrons support the arts because this is how they obtain the art they want" (Balfe 1994, p.2). The essays also examine the degree of control patrons have presumed, and the degree to which they have been able to exercise control on the arts, whether they are private individuals, private institutions, state institutions or city institutions. She makes use of the word 'patron' not only in the context of governments but to include private institutions and individuals. The term is used by this research to explain the implication of this kind of patronage for theatre in the Zimbabwean context.

Andrés, *et al* (2004), writing on the same topic, expound on how particularly the British, French and the United States governments, continuously 'interfere' with the arts through institutions like the arts councils that are part of broader cultural policies whilst preaching the gospel of 'arm's length'. They trace these influences from the early 1940s elaborating the presence of state influences in the cultural lives of these countries.

McCaughy (2005)'s recent work compares state funding of the arts through arts councils in a range of countries including Denmark, Canada, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. She highlights the differences of mandates that arts councils have. for example the National Arts Council of Singapore and the Canadian Arts Council. She brings out an interesting aspect of arts councils not being always at 'arm's length' with the governments as is the case with the National Arts Council of Singapore.

Hibernian Consulting (2005), in a report submitted to the Arts Council of Ireland, touched on the challenges that international theatre practitioners face such as poor variable incomes and sporadic employment. This has given governments the occasion to put measures in place to keep theatre alive. The Report explains the different measures employed by different countries, France, for instance, through their arts councils to subsidise the incomes of theatre artists. Though the report was written from a European perspective, it gives a background to the challenging conditions in which theatre artists are operating; these conditions exist across the globe, including Zimbabwe. Arts councils have to assist artists to live through these conditions.

1.4.2 Arts Councils: the African Context.

Most of the literature that was used from an African point of view does not deal directly with arts councils but gives insight into an understanding of the idea of arts councils in the African context. Kerr (1995) explains how the colonisers segregated African forms of cultural expression in order to reinforce domination. He notes that in West Africa, specifically in the French colonies, the policy of assimilation created a more identifiably

Europeanised class of Africans who were occasionally admitted into theatre clubs that were mainly for whites (Kerr 1995, p.27). It can be argued that this was meant to facilitate the process of eroding African forms of cultural expression. Later when Africans gained independence they began the process of decolonising themselves; this has become an outstanding feature of the present African arts councils. The feature has significant implications on the relationship between arts councils and the arts, including theatre.

Plastow (1996) also deals with the manner in which the governments of Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and Zambia have been relating with the arts though arts councils. She points out that, artists are approved of in the post-colonial era of Africa so long as they offer the state uncritical support. She observes that most arts councils are conceived as bureaucracies that can impede cultural development through administrative structures that swallow up central funding and give precious little assistance to the artists.

Riccio (1988) explains how the government of Tanzania used state funded arts institutions serving the role of an arts council to advance its political interests. He observes that Julius Nyerere established the state funded National Arts Group, that functioned as an arts council, in 1967 as a way of helping Tanzania to regain its lost cultural pride. It was established to promote the arts, mainly performing arts but also to act as a mouthpiece to advance Nyerere's socialist doctrine (Riccio 1988, p.130). This points to the fact that some African arts council are used to execute political agenda, a

feature that has become a dominant characteristic of African arts councils and that determines the manner in which they deliver to the different sectors of the arts.

Crehan (1990) explains the issue of politics and arts councils in the Zambian context. He expounds on the relationship that has existed between the Zambian government and theatre from independence. He argues that during the early years of independence the government did very little to develop theatre though it was making great promises to improve the state of theatre. According to him, that greatly affected it as it was over-reliant on state patronage and yet the state could only do a little. This brings out an important characteristic of African governments and arts councils. It appears they do not invest much in the development of the arts, and this in turn impedes the development of the arts that are independent from the dictates and preferences of the donors.

1.4.3 The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and Theatre

Literature that deals with the birth of the NACZ has also been used in this research and among the scholars writing about theatre in Zimbabwe is Chifunyise (1990) who gives the background conditions on how the government of Zimbabwe related to theatre before the birth of the NACZ. In describing the trends in Zimbabwean theatre since 1980, he notes that just after independence the government was determined to redress the cultural imbalances left by colonialism through promoting previously neglected cultures; he narrates the different ways the government tried to reconcile cultural relations between blacks and whites. This was to later determine the manner in which the NACZ dealt with theatre associations that were born during and after the colonial era.

Taking a step back, Plastow (1996) gives a very interesting exploration of how cultural forms of expression such as theatre, were used to conscientise and boost the moral of freedom fighters and the general populace during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. According to her, "The politicisation process called heavily on the performance arts. In the guerrilla camps political discussion was frequently carried out through the medium of theatre…" (Plastow 1996, p.108). The use of culture to resist colonisation has shaped the ideology of decolonisation that is part of the circumstances surrounding the establishment and informs some of the policies of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe today.

1.5 Methodology

This research project was conducted in Harare and data was collected from NACZ employees, theatre artists' organisations, artists, secondary sources that deal with the topic and pieces of legislation among other sources.

Qualitative method was mainly used for this research project and data got from it was used to substantiate arguments and to act as evidence for claims and assertions. Qualitative research according to Ambert (1995) is that inquiry which seeks for depth rather than breadth through the analytical exploration of phenomena. This research sought to explain the relationship between NACZ and theatre in the Harare Province. Lazaraton (2003) says that qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual lives.

1.5.1 Oral Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with different stakeholders in the arts, like the artists and NACZ staff, as they allowed for an in depth treatment of the questions asked without limiting the interviewee. Following De Vos (1998, p.29) in conducting interviews, carefully arranged pre-formulated questions were asked in a fairly similar sequence. However, some of the questions were determined during the course of the interviews through probing which brought out more information. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995) the entire design for a qualitative project cannot be planned in advance because the design changes as one learns from the answers solicited by the research. A rough and tentative idea is what is needed because sticking to significant structuring only might lead to lack of flexibility to respond to emergent insights.

Interviews with Chifunyise, NACZ workers, and Ravengai from the University of Zimbabwe were very helpful in a way that was more than expected. NACZ workers gave useful information especially on the limitations and challenges that the institution is facing in delivering its services. It was also very useful to interview Mr. Cuthbert Maziwa, the oldest employee of the Council; he gave most of the much needed information. He has worked for the Council for more than fifteen years. There was a tendency by some interviewees in this category to give inconsistent or contradictory data but that was dealt with through testing the authenticity of contradictory issues on other interviewees for verification. The idea that kept on popping up is the one that was ultimately adopted but the contradictory one was also mentioned in the analysis.

Artists were difficult to find; nevertheless, useful information was solicited through telephone interviews with some artists. In some cases the artists were unavailable so questions were given to them to write down answers at their free time; this of course was collected later. (*See appendices 1 and 2 for the list of interviews; see Appendix 7 for some of the questions asked during interviews*).

1.5.2 Sampling Interviewees

Mouton and Marais (1991, p.50) define a sample as a group which is investigated. Multiple sampling methods were employed by this research.

1.5.2.1 Random Sampling

This research used random sampling that involves selecting a sample from the population in such a way that the characteristics of each unit of the sample approximate the characteristics of the total population was employed (Leedy 1997, p.205). It was used to choose five theatre arts association workers from the Harare region who were interviewed. A list of arts associations was compiled using the Zimbabwe theatre directory and it was decided that the first worker from an arts association that the researcher met would be interviewed. These interviews were not very successful because most artists were not willing to do the interviews for free. Most complained that they had busy schedules and hence were not available to do interviews. This may have affected this study in that artists could have helped with more information and verification of data got from the NACZ workers especially on funding.

1.5.2.2 Convenience Sampling

The project also used convenience sampling method in which the researcher questioned artists on the condition that they were the ones who were available to do the interviews. It was used after all appointments that had been made in November had been fruitless. In this case the researcher was not residing in Zimbabwe hence it was the most convenient method to substitute random sampling. This method was used especially for theatre associations such as Children's Performing Arts Workshop (CHIPAWO).

1.5.3 Key Interviewees

Some of the interviewees were dictated by the topic. For instance Stephen Chifunyise, the then Permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture had to be interviewed on how the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe was formed since he has first hand information on the subject and has been in the arts for long. The same is true for academics at the University of Zimbabwe's department of theatre arts (Samuel Ravengai). NACZ workers as well as the employees at the Harare Provincial Arts Council were also interviewed under this category. Since they were very few, they could not be sampled. Interviews were done with programme officers and directors.

1.5.4 Recording

All interviews were recorded and no problems were faced in that exercise. The names of interviewees in this work were disclosed with their consent for ethical reasons. The researcher sent this work to interviewees like Chifunyise, Ravengai, NACZ workers,

electronically and a letter asking them to identify areas that they were not comfortable with, in terms of their representation but they did not object to anything.

1.5.5 Secondary Sources

Some of the information for this research was sourced from existing literature world wide: journals, historical documents, text books and autobiographies that have information on arts councils and theatre. This is because secondary sources are important in developing background knowledge to the topic. Most of the literature written generally about the NACZ is on its website and in newspaper archives. The National Archives of Zimbabwe and libraries in Zimbabwe were visited to search for documented information on arts councils. However this approach was greatly affected by the fact that most of the literature on arts councils is not particular to their relationships with theatre but focuses on arts collectively.

The unfortunate part was that the NACZ could not provide the researcher its annual reports and strategic documents. These could have been very useful as evidence for claims made and could have provided more details for this research. There was a problem of electricity at the institution. The researcher was told that since the beginning of October 2007 the institution has not had electricity and the staff was not sure of the day when they would have it, hence all the documented information on the performance of the institution saved on the computers could not be accessed. The situation was not like that when this research was initiated. This situation may have had serious effects on the quality of this research as lack of access to computer resulted in few facts and

evidence being recovered to back up claims especially in the area of funding. In order to ameliorate this situation most workers were kindly asked to give examples where it was applicable to back up their claims. These claims were further tested on theatre artists and their organisations for verification.

1.5.6 Electronic Sources

Electronic information in the form of articles and reports on the internet were consulted to access places that the researcher could not travel to in person such as Europe. The International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies was successfully contacted, via email, for information on arts councils. The Observatory of Cultural Policy in Africa databases were also consulted for clarifications for more information about arts councils in Africa.

1.5.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis was done simultaneously with data gathering. According to Maxwell (2002), one of the things that have to be avoided when doing qualitative research is letting unanalysed field notes pile as they might make final analysis discouraging. An overall analysis will be done after the whole process of data gathering. Gall, *et al* (1996) in Leedy (1997, p.158) notes that case study data can be analysed using the reflective analysis method. It refers to using primarily intuition and judgment to portray or evaluate the phenomenon. This method was employed to analyse interview data and was complemented by McNamara's model (1997).

Data obtained from interviews was also interpreted using the model put forward by McNamara (1997). It seeks to examine data for themes and patterns that can be used to interpret data following five steps of data analysis. The first thing that was done was reading through all the data, followed by organising comments into similar themes for instance concerns, suggestions, strengths, weaknesses, and similar experiences. After that the categories or themes were labelled, that is, giving them appropriate names after which patterns, or associations and causal relationships in the themes were identified. In this regard several themes emerged on how the NACZ relates to theatre and they include that the NACZ is a government institution, it has not been able to disburse a lot of funding, it is responsible for education and training, touring, arts festivals and marketing and it has been and is still relevant in Zimbabwe. Comments were put under each of these themes.

Lastly, the findings have to be kept after analysing data. Data was interpreted by means of comparing findings with findings from other data sources like documented data, noting common issues and recording recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

The Birth of Arts Councils

The birth and mandate of the NACZ resembles in many ways a link with the birth of arts councils across the globe, though the actual process leading to its establishment is quite different to that of other arts councils. The manner in which the institution delivers in the sector is also similar to other arts councils in many ways.

Globally, most arts councils do not have clearly written policy documents that focus on theatre, with the exception of a few like the Arts Council of England. In 2000, the Arts Council of England published a national policy for theatre that sets out the council's vision for theatre. The word 'policy,' according to the *Free Dictionary*, means, "a plan or course of action, as of a government, political party, or business, intended to influence

and determine decisions, actions, and other matters,[2]" and its process includes the identification of different alternatives, such as programmes or spending priorities, and choosing among them on the basis of the impact they will have. The *Webster Dictionary* defines policy as "a definite course or method of action selected (by government, institution, group or individual) from among alternatives and in the light of given conditions to guide and, usually, to determine present and future decisions."[3] Schuster (2001, p.4) maintains that though it is desirable for a policy to be explicit, analysing a policy might require inferring that policy from the many disconnected actions of government or quasi-government agencies and or paying close attention to published documents that purport to be descriptions of that policy.

This chapter traces the birth of arts councils across the globe with the aim of providing the background information on the establishment of the NACZ and placing it within the international context of cultural policy. The first part of the chapter examines the birth of arts councils outside Africa whilst the second part deals with the birth of arts Councils in the African context.

2.1 The Birth of Arts Councils: The Global Experience

A close look at the mandates of different arts councils across the world shows that they are mostly funding organisations. The arts council of England is defined as a national body that is responsible for distributing public money from the government following the

[2] The Free Dictionary. [Online]. Available at: www.thefreedictionary.com. [Accessed on 15 May 2007].
[3] The Webster Dictionary. [Online]. Available at: www.websters-online-dictionary.org. [Accessed on 15 May 2007].

'arms length principle'[4]. This principle will be explored in the later parts of this chapter. Canada also defines its National Arts Council (NAC) as a national arm's-length agency which fosters the development of the arts in Canada through grants, services and awards to professional Canadian artists and arts organizations, as well as administering scholarly awards, and having under its aegis the Public Lending Right Commission and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and reporting to Parliament through the Minister of Canadian Heritage.[5] In addition, McCaughey (2005, p.4) maintains that the arts council of Singapore has a wide range of activities that include running theatre buildings and administering grants. The actual circumstances surrounding the formation of individual arts councils differ from one country to another, let alone one continent to another though there are some similarities between the general ideas that informed and are still informing their birth.

Generally, the origins of arts councils are rooted more in political developments in Europe after the Second World War. Chartrand (1987, p.1) claims that, "funding of the arts…reflects a stronger connection with political traditions than with economic theory." In the late 1930s, the British government was determined to assist financially cultural societies that were being affected by the Second World War. Note that before that, culture, including theatre arts, served many controversial functions. Landry and Pachter (2001, p.21) state that the greatest modes of cultural expression in the Renaissance period "focused largely on the recreation of the city in the service of princely power."

[4] The official website of the Arts Council of England. Available at: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/ . [Accessed on 12 March 2007].
[5] The official site of the Canada Council for the arts. Available at: http://www.pch.gc.ca/pc-ch/ac-os/cac-cca_e.cfm. [Accessed on 12 March 2007].

During the Elizabethan period, patrons of theatre used to have troupes at courts for the nobility. Companies of players attached to households of leading noblemen became the foundation for the professional players that performed on the Elizabethan stage but though the situation was like that, companies performed for the general public in the name of 'rehearsals' as they were the real source of income while performance for the queen were mostly for prestige. By the later part of the reign of Charles I few plays were being written for public theatres. Theatre was mostly enjoyed by the elite[6].

The coming of the French Revolution in 1789 with the ideas such as equality, liberty and fraternity challenged the powers of the nobility and gave further expression to an enlightenment period that emphasised, 'the development of knowledge in the service of establishing an improved citizenry and society' (Landry and Pachter 2001, p.21). Nearly a century and half later, enlightenment ideas were still to play a role in the formation of arts councils.

During this new period people like John Maynard Keynes, at the time the world's preeminent economist, felt the need to involve everyone in the arts. According to Keynes's biographer as stated by Harrod (1951) he, 'had long been of the opinion that in the modern world art required a new kind of support to take the place of the affluent classes of earlier times. …In the time to come the mass of people should be able to enjoy the delights of fine art which in the past had been reserved for the favoured few' (Harrod

[6] The Wikipedia Encyclopedia. Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Renaissance_theatre#Theatres. [Accessed on 05 November 2007].

1951, p. 518). These people supported government funding of the arts so that everyone could get an opportunity to enjoy them but there was a suggestion for an institution that would be the intermediary between the government and the arts to avoid government control.

In 1939, the British government formed a Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) whose main objective was to promote accessibility to and greater knowledge, understanding and practice of the fine arts and to give financial assistance to the afore-mentioned. In 1945, its name was changed to the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) and in 1946 it was granted a royal charter of incorporation that governed it until 1967 when a new one was adopted.

The new charter redefined the objectives of the arts council as follows: to develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts; to increase the accessibility of the arts to the public throughout Great Britain and to advise and co-operate with departments of Government, local authorities and other bodies on any matters concerned, whether directly or indirectly, with the foregoing objects.

Chartrand (1987, p.2) notes that the arts council of Britain was created as a way of avoiding the pre-war system in Germany and Russia where the Ministers of culture imposed official arts on the citizens of the countries.

The ACGB was created at ‘arm’s length’ from the government. In western countries, the ‘arm’s length’ principle is applied to a wide range of constitutional and public affairs such as separation of power between executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government (Chartrand 1987, p.2). It forms the basis for ‘checks and balances’ used in pluralistic democracies to avoid undue concentration of power and conflict of interest. When applied to the arts, it is when governments create autonomous councils to distribute arts funding to the arts. The idea of having the ‘arm’s length’ principle applied to the ACGB was to prevent the government from interfering with the arts. It was developed from the experience of other British cultural institutions such as the University Grants Committee and the British Broadcasting Corporation (Chartrand 1989, p.2). Hutchson (1982, p.15) maintains that the government also recognized ‘a desire to run one’s own show and deep rooted mistrust of bureaucratic interference’ within the arts community, hence its support of the ‘arm’s length’ principle. However Schuster (2001, p.5) holds that the extent to which the principle can be implemented is debatable. Hutchison (1982, p.15) further affirms that with or without the principle, the ACGB had to function within the grain of government policy. The birth of the ACGB was followed by the establishment of many arts councils after the British ‘arm’s length’ principle like the Irish Arts Council in 1951, the Canadian Council for the Encouragement of the Arts, that later developed into the Canadian Arts Council, in 1957, the National Endowment for the Arts of America that serves as an arts council, the New Zealand Arts Council in 1963 among others.

It has been noted that until the 1930s the Americans were also hostile to the idea of government funding of the arts partly due to a *laissez-faire* economic philosophy that gave the arts less importance in favour of agriculture and housing. Teachout (2003, p.9) maintains that, "in 1903, comparatively few Americans took anything like a passionate interest in the arts." According to Chartrand (1989, p.2) the only state support for the arts in the United States was through tax exemptions, that is, more of facilitatorship role than patronage.

The 1960s saw the advent of a policy of direct ongoing state and federal support for the arts in America. This was further enabled by the leadership in America those days of the likes of Governor Nelson Rockfeller who was an important patron of the arts. He facilitated the establishment of the New York State Council on the arts in 1960. The same applied to August Heckschur who was appointed by President Kennedy as a special consultant in the arts. He later recommended the establishment of a National Arts Foundation to offer grants to arts institutions. These moves were seriously opposed by the Southern Democrats and Conservative Republicans fearing that government subsidies would lead to control (Teachout 2003, p.9). Fullman (2006, p.4) maintains that the United States has a historic mistrust of government interference in private life, culture being a factor of the life. However Heckschur fought until 1965 when legislation was put in place that saw the birth of the National Endowment of the Arts. Fullman (2006, p.6) notes that it was created not as a federal department but as a semi autonomous agency reinforcing the British tradition of 'arm's length,' Federal approach to investment and management

of the arts and culture. Today it has grown to be the nation's largest annual funder of the arts in all the fifty states of the country including rural areas.

The creation of the Canadian Arts Council also was influenced by the 'arm's length' tradition though it was dissimilar to the British model. Upchurch observes:

> As a confederation of former British colonies, Canada's parliamentary government and much of its intellectual life is, of course, derived from British precedent and influence. In these terms the adoption of the arts council model is hardly surprising. However Canada faced vastly different circumstances from those of Great Britain (2007, p. 3).

In 1951, the Canadian Royal Commission on National Development in the fine arts recommended the British 'arm's length' arts council model as the most suitable for Canada, rejecting direct funding of the Arts (Chartrand, 1989, p.2). This saw the creation of the Canada Council for the Encouragement of the Arts in 1951. It was created using death duties levied on the estates of two prominent Canadian industrialists and according to Chartrand (1989, p.2) that made it to look more like the United States private foundation. For the first five years it was financially dependent on the Carneigie, Ford and Rockfeller Foundations and that made it to be, at least for that period, independent from the government financially and politically.

The Australia Council was also established after the ACGB's 'arm's length' principle. Formed as an interim Council in 1973 only to be given statutory authority in 1975, it replaced an earlier body called the Australian Council for the Arts which was established

in 1968 as a division of the Prime Minister's Department.[7] After its establishment, it took on board other arts-related government functions such as the Commonwealth Literary Fund, which had supported writers since 1908, and the Commonwealth Arts Advisory Board, which was set up in 1912 to develop a national art collection and to advise on matters related to the visual arts. This it did, and is still doing, with considerable independence from government in its policy-making and funding roles that any of its predecessors[8].

In Asia, the National Arts Council of Singapore was set up as a statutory body in 1991 to facilitate the development of arts in the country, working closely with the Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts. It does not have a final say in terms of funding but the Ministry. Since its independent in 1965, Singapore has undertaken national efforts to build the economy, trade, basic social infrastructure, education and housing. With the improvement of the standard of living and economic development in the later half of the 1980s, the country began turn to the questions of developing culture and leisure as parts of the citizen's lifestyles to match the increasing material wealth of country. To this end, it created institutions like the National Arts Council of Singapore. The idea of establishing a National Arts Council was adopted by the government following proposals made by the advisory committee of the Advisory Council on Culture based on the findings of a survey carried out to find out desires of the populace with regard policies for programs and needs concerning the arts for making Singapore a city rich in arts and cultural activity.

[7] The Official website of the Australian Arts Council. Available at: www.ozco.gov.au/the_council . [Accessed on 11 October 2007].
[8] Ibid.

It is very important to note how the origins of arts councils, their global view and relations with the arts informed and can be related to the African experience of arts councils in the last part of this chapter.

2.2 Arts Councils: The Post Colonial African Experience

This part traces the development of arts councils in Africa in the context of global perceptions and generic codes generally common to arts councils. It examines how Western influences, such as colonisation, have shaped their mandates. This history has had significant impact on the present well being of national arts councils, including that of the NACZ. It also explains the modifications of those world perceptions on arts councils in the context of Africa.

In Africa, state support of the arts is in the embryonic stages though cultural policy has been in existence since the late 1950s. This is mostly due to poverty and a poor economic environment that is not conducive for establishment of strong arts funding policies. In fact the arts are seldom in a prominent place on the political agenda in Africa.

In addition, the idea of arts councils is still very new on the continent. Tanzania had its arts council established in 1974, The NAZC was established in 1985, the Arts Council of Seychelles in 1991, the Zambian arts council was established in 1994, South Africa's arts council was established in 1997 and the National Arts Council of Namibia in 2007. In most African countries there are no arts councils, for instance, in Senegal, Mozambique,

the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Djibouti, and Congo Brazzaville among others. In fact, more than three quarters of African countries have yet to establish arts councils.

The Ministries that are responsible for arts, culture and, in some cases tourism, are the ones that deal with the arts. This role, according to Chartrand and McCaughey (1989) is architectural as it involves ministries on culture directly dealing with the arts. Yet this situation is a variation of the architectural role in which these direct transactions are not caused by excessive growth that goes beyond the budget of arts councils but it's caused by the absence of the institutions.

Zambia got its independence in 1964 but the new government was very reluctant to support the arts. In spite of famous speeches made by Kaunda, the then president who, in 1967 promised to build an arts centre that incorporated a national Art Gallery and a National Theatre in Lusaka, nothing was done to review let alone fulfill the promises (Crehan 1990, p.294). The government had established a department of cultural services by 1967 but still very little development was seen on the cultural front.

It was only after 30 years of independence that Zambia had an arts council that is almost 13 years old now. It is the overall coordinating body of all artistic activities in the country. Its mandate includes assisting, financially or otherwise, in conjunction with the Government, any citizen of Zambia in obtaining relevant training within or outside Zambia, any group or individual representing Zambia in any artistic activity within or

outside Zambia and to raise and maintain a fund from such sources and by such means as the Minister may approve to enable the Council to carry out its functions.[9] Its leadership comprises of leaders of the nine national arts associations in the country such as Zambia association of musicians founded in 1979, the National Theatre Arts Association of Zambia founded in 1986 and the Zambia Visual Arts Council founded in 1989 among others.[10]

In considering the few in existence, it can be argued that colonisation and its hegemonic ideological legacy as well as the process of decolonisation have given shape to the idea of arts councils in Africa. In most cases their structures tend to be informed by those of former colonial masters but their mandates display a form of resistance to colonial ideas. For instance the National Arts Councils of Tanzania, South Africa, Seychelles and Zambia share the word 'arts council in their name with the ACGB, which was the first institution that used that name. They have also inherited the general trend that arts councils are funding agencies. The Arts Council of Seychelles, established in 1991 has a mandate to provide advisory information, educational services as well as grants for the promotion of arts among others. The National Arts Council of Namibia has the duty of disbursing funding to artists that involves deciding on funding and investments in arts projects. The same applies to the National Arts Council of South Africa that provides funding to individuals and institutions.

[9] The Official website of the National Arts Council of Zambia. Available at: www.nationalartscouncil.org.zm. [Accessed on 10 October 2007].
[10] Ibid.

These arts councils also exist, in most cases, as statutory bodies run by a board just like most arts councils the world over. The arts council of Zambia was established under Act 31 of 1994. South Africa's National Arts Council was formed in 1997 by an Act 56 of Parliament, three years after the end of the apartheid era. It is a statutory public entity with the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) as its executive authority. The National Arts Council Act 56 of 1997 determines the mandate, functions, methods of working, management guidelines, and regulation of staff matters and financial affairs of the Council (NAC Act 56 1997, p.1). The National Arts Council of Tanzania was established by the National Arts Council Act of 1974, which also determines the manner in which it operates.

In spite of the aforementioned similarities; there are also significant different factors that are common and confined to arts councils in Africa. African arts councils, like most western arts councils, tend to be driven by political agendas such as the determination to redress imbalances and promote access to the arts for all citizens. The difference is the nature of politics that shape them, with Africa resisting colonial domination by western countries and western arts councils resisting autocracy. Modern African culture is characterised by conflicted responses to Arab nationalism and European imperialism with Africans trying to reassert their identity. This resistance to cultural domination did not just begin after the attainment of independence. In West Africa, a series of cultural policy meetings that were aimed at resisting cultural domination were organised in the late 1960s, for instance the 1966 first World Festival of Negro Arts and the 1969 symposium of the Pan-African Cultural Festival which yielded a coherent conceptual framework for

African Cultural Policies which culminated in the Pan-African Cultural Manifesto of 1969.

The Pan-African Cultural Manifesto of 1969 states that:

> Colonialism is an evil that has been experienced and endured by our people, first in its most distinctive form,…and in its most tangible and insolent form, political domination, over which we must strive to triumph…Cultural domination entailed the distortion of the personality of a part of the African peoples, their history, systematically disparaged and suppressed, their religious and moral values, attempted to replace progressively and officially their language with that of the coloniser, thus rendering them powerless and stripping them of their raison d'être (Pan-African Manifesto 1969, p.2).

The Cultural Charter Africa adopted by the Heads of State and government of the Organisation of African Unity meeting held in Mauritius in 1976 also signified this resistance to cultural domination that has given shape to most arts councils in Africa. It states that under colonial domination African countries found themselves in the same political, economic, social and cultural situation that led to "the depersonalization of part of the African peoples, falsified their history, systematically disparaged and combated African values…"[11] This affirms the common perception that African history has been falsified and its values suppressed or derided to such an extent that African identity has been seriously compromised.

These meetings had an impact on African politicians, including those in the then Rhodesia, about how they related to culture so much that they were obliged to adhere to the continental view of culture. It is from these meetings that most African states drew and are still drawing inspiration to establish cultural policies, in some cases, with arts councils as part of them. Article 23 of the Charter emphasised that African States were

[11] The Cultural Charter for Africa by the Organisation of African Unity, June 1974, p2.

supposed to be active in promoting national cultural development through a policy of effective assistance, both as regards collective methods of creation, and in favor of individual artists. Prior to the adoption of the charter there were a few developments in Africa in relation to arts councils and cultural policy.

Colonial governments in most cases had policies to support European arts as a way of advancing their agendas of domination and segregation. Brink (1997, p.164) notes that during the '70s and '80s the apartheid government in South Africa erected vast modernist theatre complexes in modern and modern versions in the Nuremberg style in most urban centres and filled them with the most up to date equipment available at that time but these were not always open to blacks, or those who produced anti-apartheid work. The same situation prevailed in Zambia. According to Crehan (1990, p.291) the policy of arts by the colonial government was that of exclusion and subordination rather than cultural assimilation.

The South African White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage adopted by the new democratic government in 1997 also has clear evidence of this. The policy document was adopted to set up institutional frameworks for the arts, culture and heritage sector of South Africa. It asserts that the arts, culture and heritage could not be left out in the transformation process of the country from the apartheid era since, 'they were overtly affected by the maldistribution of skills, resources and infrastructure during the era.'

Prior to that South African indigenous cultures, theatre included, suffered a lot of repression during the apartheid era. Blumberg and Walder (1999, p.13) note how the Standard Bank Grahamstown festival initially promoted English theatre leaving out works of black South Africans. According to the White Paper on Arts and Culture of South Africa:

> Arts and culture cannot be an exception in the transformation process (that attempts to redress inequalities brought about by colonisation). Since they, too, were overtly affected by the maldistribution of skills, resources and infrastructure during the apartheid era (1997, p. 4).

The same situation prevailed in Tanzania just after the end of colonial rule. Riccio (1988, p.130) notes that Julius Nyerere established the state funded National Arts Group, that functioned as an arts council, in 1967 as a way of helping Tanzania to regain its pride in culture. This is also evidence of the fact that the idea of supporting the arts and culture by African governments was also to go about reconstructing the pride, identity and African culture that was perceived as having been trampled upon in the previous era. It was established to promote the arts, mainly performing arts and to act as a mouthpiece to advance Nyerere's socialist doctrine (Riccio 1988, p.130). This aspect departs radically from the 'arms length' principle upon which the arts council of Great Britain was formed.

The South African arts council, unlike this one, also emphasises the principle of 'arm's length.' According to the South African White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1997), publicly-funded arts institutions, organisations and practitioners have independence from party political and state interference. This is because consultations made prior to the adoption of a cultural policy included special visits to the British and Australian arts councils, among others and perhaps because the South African

transformation depended on being able to get consent from very different parties – including those who had been ousted from power).

2.3 Conclusion

The discussion of the evolution of arts councils in this chapter exposed significant common factors between these institutions. These include that they were found mainly as funding institutions for the government established by Acts of parliament and whose main agenda is to advance the development and delivery of the arts. It is interesting to note how such factors, conceived in one country, have grown to become generic models after which most arts councils are fashioned despite the differences in historical processes that different countries adopting the ideas underwent.

There are also very interesting similarities and differences between African arts councils and arts councils in other continents. These similarities and differences are very important in that they will explain how the NACZ functions since it tends to function more like its sister organisations in Africa given the similar background it shares with them. It also places the NACZ within the international and continental notions on the birth of arts councils as the origins of arts councils have had serious influences on the manner in which they function.

CHAPTER THREE

The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe: Establishment and Background

The NACZ resembles, in some ways, external influence from within and outside Africa but the actual process of creating it was different from the processes involved in creating the different arts councils of other countries. This chapter traces the history of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe as it determined how the institution has been and is delivering services and impacting the development of theatre in Harare.

Just like the National Arts Council of Tanzania, the NACZ was established as a parastatal in 1985 by an Act of parliament. According to the *Free dictionary*, 'a parastatal is a company or agency owned or controlled wholly or partly by the government.'[12] Its mandate according to the Act is "to foster, develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practise of the arts and their presentation, performance, execution and exhibition to the public."[13] The arts in this case include theatre and music among others. It is also responsible for advising and co-operating with the Government, local authorities, registered arts organisations, societies, associations, and groups or other bodies or individuals in any matter concerned directly or indirectly with the arts and the teaching or practice of arts. It is directly answerable to the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture.

[12] The Free Dictionary, Op cit.
[13] The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe Act 27 of 1985 p.1.

Prior to 1995 the institution was run by a board that consisted of ten members appointed by the Minister from the various areas of expertise such as business administration, knowledge of the commercial sector, Association of Urban and Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe and eight members from the eight provinces chosen by and representing the Provincial Arts Councils. This aspect was adopted from the ACGB which was also run by a board. The difference is that the ACGB did not have members who were appointed by the provinces.

It developed from the National Arts Foundation formed in 1971 by the Rhodesian colonial government as a trust with no national status to serve the interests of the colonialist's culture and theatre working with organisations such as the REPS Theatre (Chifunyise 2007). According to the Zimbabwe Theatre Report (1988) the National Arts Foundation's role was to raise funds for the cultural institutions of the white minority such as the National Theatre Organisation (NTO) (*see the next chapter for a detailed discussion of this organisation*). McLaren (1993, p.2) adds that initially its membership had consisted of white amateur theatre companies such as the REPS theatre that hosted British and American musicals, comedies and thrillers for a white audience. REPS Theatre was built in 1931 to stage theatre that was meant for a white audience.

Chifunyise (2007) further explains that the organisation operated under the leadership of individuals who did not represent stakeholders in the arts. Hence the new democratic government decided to create an institution that would facilitate the democratisation of the arts, including theatre.

At the advent of independence the new government decided to continue working with it and provided that it appointed a new Board of Directors to run the organisation as part of its deliberate policy to decolonise and democratise culture. This was because the government wanted to avoid a discriminatory policy that had exited before independence. In this regards, Plastow explains that:

> In many areas the state had to consider existing structures and prejudices. Dealing with bodies such as the National Arts Foundation and the National Theatre Organisation meant a choice between accommodation and confrontation with bastions of White Conservatism. Yet such organisations could not simply be ignored. At the interest of harmony the government wished to avoid confrontation, and since they lacked a coherent cultural policy it was possibly wise and probably inevitable that a piecemeal approach should be taken towards reconstruction (1996, p.166).

In the same regards the government appointed a team of renowned artists among them Basel Chidyamatamba, to hold consultations with other arts councils that were already in existence in independent African states of Kenya, Tanzania and Mauritius on how best it could create a national democratic institution to be responsible for the arts that would enable the broad masses to participate in decision making and satisfying grassroots structures. These consultations took five years and adopted what can be called ‘a general postcolonial African approach to cultural policy whose main characteristic have been discussed in Chapter Two. The government decided to create a National Arts Council in form of a parastatal with structures in the eight provinces and fifty six districts in the country in 1985. These structures would then participate in electing the board members to sit on the national body. The other ten body members would be appointed by the Minister of Education, Sport and Culture on the basis of specialisation.

According to the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe Act of 1985, the Provincial Arts Councils would be run by members elected by the district council members from amongst themselves and each district elected its representative to the province. Their main duties would be to promote arts in provinces and communicating such information to the national body, encouraging arts organisations to register themselves according to the stipulations of the Act, to assist, advise and supervise registered arts organisations operating in the province and performing any other functions that may be conferred on it in terms of the Act or any other enactment. [14]

It is important to note that the NACZ operated like this until 1995 when it was restructured. There were only eight Provincial Arts Councils in Zimbabwe with the city of Harare artists working with a committee headed by Ephraim Chamba. The Harare Office was established in 2005 May to cater for artists associations and organisations in the capital owing to the growing arts industry that overwhelmed the city arts committee.

While Chifunyise, the then Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, insists that the institution was formed as a way of democratising culture. There were those in the likes of Samuel Ravengai, a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Theatre Arts who insisted that it was formed by the government to advance the policy of scientific socialism. Ngugi Wa Mirii in the Zimbabwe Theatre Report (1988) agrees:

[14] *National Arts Council of Zimbabwe ACT 27*. 1985. Harare: Government Printers

> The attainment of political independence in Zimbabwe nourished the search for relevant applicable progressive methods and techniques for building a socialist culture and consolidating Zimbabwean National Independence. One of the identified approaches to the promotion of culture and indeed facilitating the building of a socialist culture was the launching of the Zimbabwe community based theatre project under the ZIMFEP by the Minister of Education and Culture in 1982 (1988, p.41).

The Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP) was a politically oriented parastatal organisation established by the government of Zimbabwe in 1980, initially to provide education for ex-combatants and later to foster the development of education for all citizens.

In his article on trends in Zimbabwean theatre since 1980, Chifunyise agrees that scientific socialism affected theatre in Zimbabwe in the 1980s. He says, “An analysis of Zimbabwean theatre is in many ways an assessment of the successes and obstacles in the development of a non-racial and socialist culture in Zimbabwe” (Chifunyise 1990, p. 276). McLaren (1993) also affirms the prevalence of scientific socialism and the effects it had on theatre in Zimbabwe during the 1980s. This aspect can also be explained by the situation of the National Arts Council of Tanzania, one of the arts councils that were consulted prior to the establishment of the NACZ, that served to advance the state policy of socialism explained in the previous chapter.

In the early years of independence in Zimbabwe government sponsored drama used to be part of independence celebrations. The government felt that there was need to develop theatre arts as an instrument of advancing political interests of the ruling government. According to Plastow (1996, p.23), “socialism gave writers and performers a dynamic structure within which to work and offered a way forward which could appeal to

anyone." Considering this evidence, it can be argued that the new post colonial government through the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture worked with theatre organisations such as the National Theatre Organisation and the National Arts Foundation and later created the NACZ in 1985 to develop the state of theatre and advance the socialist ideology that was dominant in the 1980s.

However the ideology of scientific socialism did not mean complete eradication of the elements of and new skills acquired through colonialist's theatre. According to Chifunyise and McLaren's Zimbabwe Theatre Report, published by the University of Zimbabwe's drama department as a way of providing a comprehensive briefing of what was going on in theatre to the public, "it is difficult to introduce socialist change, a cleansing process to acquire new habits and attitudes." (Chifunyise and McLaren 1988, p.14). This means that the elements of European theatre continued to exist in African theatre though the government was encouraging indigenous theatre.

In both cases it is interesting to note that the government tried to promote black forms of cultural expression that had been subverted before independence drawing on pre-existent tradition of colonial resistance theatrical traditions and attempting to use them to reinforce its policies. During the colonial era, the Rhodesian government encouraged white citizens to imagine themselves as Europeans through a common cultural heritage. Chifunyise (1990, p.277) observes that theatre clubs in urban centres in the then Rhodesia focused all their energies on policies that encouraged a separate cultural life and stressed a common European heritage. Kaarsholm affirms this by saying:

> In the narrowly exclusive Rhodesian colonial cosmology, dramatic and other cultural modes of expression of black Africans were firmly situated outside the boundaries of art or culture and relegated to the dark hinterlands of anthropology (1990, p.249)

Blacks were not allowed to subscribe to theatre organisations such as National Theatre Organisation (NTO). Also they were not allowed to watch performances meant for the white audiences.

This negation of black forms of cultural expression however, did not stop them from existing. With the coming of the liberation struggle, most black forms of cultural expressions especially theatre, started to play a uniting role. During pungwe meetings, guerrillas and black masses sang liberation war songs and danced to boost morale of the masses. According to Kaarsholm (1990, p.255), "the promotion of African cultural tradition was to serve a mental decolonisation role." Plastow further explains:

> The politicisation process called heavily on performance arts. In the guerilla camps political discussion was frequently carried out through the medium of theatre. Traditional dances were revived and a huge number of liberation songs were carried into Rhodesia for consciousness-raising purposes. The pungwes made use of all those performance forms both to revive a sense of cultural identity and to illustrate political messages (1996, p. 108).

It was during the time of scientific socialism when the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe was formed. There was an emphasis on African cultural forms which was supposed to go along with socialism, a European ideology that had been adopted from Russia and China as a way of advancing political relations established during the liberation struggle. According to Chifunyise, the then Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture of Zimbabwe, it was formed as a parastatal.

Mparutsa of Global Arts maintains that in Zimbabwe parastatals are created along party lines, led by party faithfuls who are technocrats, unable to engage with the artists for fear of losing their jobs. Chifunyise (2007) explains that it worked and is still working as more of a political structure of the government than an 'arm's length' organisation.

Its major mandate has always been to fund the arts including theatre through their associations, receiving and channelling a parliamentary grant and donor funds and build administrative capacity of national arts organisations and institutions and creating marketing and funding opportunities, but its day to day operations and the manner in which it has been operating has not been uniform as the government continuously restructured it. Before 1995 the government, through ZIMFEP, shouldered the responsibility of running training programmes in theatre among other arts through cultural officers in provinces and districts even with the NACZ in existence. The Cultural Officers were introduced in government around 1982 and about one hundred and thirty cultural officers were appointed to facilitate educational programmes because the government wanted to shoulder all education in Zimbabwe. Plastow puts it across in a clearer way saying:

> The attitude of too many such governments (African governments that used theatre to educate the masses during the liberation struggle) has been that, once liberation has been achieved, the conscientisation process can stop and all political education can be safely left in the hands of the ruling party, to be passed down as unquestionable wisdom to the waiting masses (1996, p. 180).

This role was more architectural than patronage though it was driven by different motives than the ones cited by Chartrand and McCaughey (1989) as the reasons that normally lead governments to play that role. Chartrand and McCaughey (1989, p.2) explain that

the architectural state funds the fine arts through ministries or departments of culture but the artistic enterprises maintain their autonomous status in artistic decision making. Recently this role has grown popular due to the fact that NACs are receiving small allocations of funds from governments while at the same time arts organisations are growing big, resulting in them posing too much pressure on the declining budgets of NACs. That in turn has called for the immediate attention of governments.

In 1995 the government restructured the cultural sector including the NACZ due to the fact that the democratic structures were so expensive that the money allocated to the NACZ hardly reached the artists. The process saw the abolition of the offices of cultural officers and reduction of the number of board members running the NACZ from the original eighteen to only nine as the overwhelming administrative structures were believed to be wasting a lot of money on board meetings. The number of officers in the Provincial Arts Councils was also reduced and instead of the officers being appointed by the districts, the national body took the responsibility of appointing them.

According to Maziwa, one of the programme officers at the NACZ in the period before 1995 the NACZ was really better in terms of theatre funding. The NACZ was receiving grants for disbursement from the donor community, besides the allocation from the government (*see Chapter Four*). Most associations were kept going by the NACZ's annual administrative grants that guaranteed them of cover for office rentals and administrative costs that are necessary to coordinate the work of theatre artists. Walter Mparutsa, who has been in the theatre front for more than twenty-five years, in a

telephone interview confirmed that before 1995 the NACZ regularly disbursed some funding which benefitted theatre associations though the funding could not cater for all the needs of associations.

That is contrary to what Chifunyise observes about that period. He says that the NACZ was not giving out enough funding to artists due to its overwhelming administrative structures hence the restructuring process. However it is interesting to note that while Chifunyise argues that the restructuring was meant to improve the service of the arts council, the process added more burdens to the NACZ. Two major challenges emanated from these developments. The first one was that the human resource capacity of the provincial office was severely weakened, for instance, following that development the Harare Provincial Arts Council Office only has two officers, a director and a programme officer.

The budget of the council also did not expand with the expansion of the responsibility; hence, the problems remained unsolved to a greater extent. The NACZ became seriously under-resourced financially and in terms of human resources such that the manner in which it worked with artists was also weakened. Chances are high that the process might have been driven by some hidden agenda and not the desire to improve the service of the institution.

This research examines the period before and after the restructuring period as the process affected the relationship that the NACZ had with theatre. For the purposes of this study

theatre is defined as drama and dance performances that take place in the presence of living audiences and artists in the sector range from actors, actresses, dancers, choreographers, playwrights, directors, designers (lighting, costume, set and sound), technicians, stage managers, production managers and producers. Its types include community, political, and theatre for entertainment. Aspects of indigenous theatre, such as music, folktale and dance were dominant in community theatre. These will be discussed in detail in the later chapters.

The role of the NACZ has also been significantly affected by the state of politics in Zimbabwe hence the need to examine the role it played after 1995 in two phases, that is, before and after 2000 as that year was the watershed of the political terrain in Zimbabwe. Before the 2000 elections the government's relations with the outside world were not very bad but after that year the government became very unpopular due to the land reform and that in turn affected the manner in which the NACZ impacted theatre. Laakso (2002, p. 441) observes that "by 2000 Zimbabwe was in a vicious cycle of deepening economic and political crisis. The donors expressed their dissatisfaction with the government on many occasions." According to the current Director of the NACZ, Mr. Titas Chipangura, the NACZ is the same as the government of Zimbabwe hence it is affected by issues that affect the government. After the 2000 parliamentary elections the government lost support that it used to get from European donor community and so did the NACZ.

Since its establishment it had been getting some of its funding for disbursement from non-governmental organisations and donors such as the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) but recently NGOs and donor agencies have withdrawn their support. This left the NACZ in an even more sorry state because before the withdrawal of funding its funding has been patchy, with little impact on the well being of the sector.

From the time when it was established it also had a pothole in that the government did not prioritise expertise in the arts in defining qualifications that is, both officers appointed to work for; and board members of the NACZ should have. This has led to the appointment of leadership with little or no knowledge of the arts in general, which impedes their understanding of developmental needs of the various sectors of the arts, including theatre. Mparutsa, the Director of the Global Arts Trust expressed the view that the workers at the NACZ cannot meaningfully engage with artists for fear of losing their jobs and due to lack of proper qualifications. Nandi-Ndaitwa, as cited by Van Graan puts in across as follows:

> Members of such…arts councils should be persons with insider understanding and knowledge of art, our most prominent writers, filmmakers, painters, all exclusively nominated on merit and in their personal capacity. Otherwise we risk putting true artists into a very awkward and unequal relationship versus politicians, or worse still, civil servants. That would not be good …for arts development.[15]

Landry and Pachter (2001) observe that the major challenge facing cultural institutions is lack of leadership that is rooted in culture itself. He calls for leaders who have passion for

[15] Van Graan, M., 2005. Namibia Makes its Bed. *Mail and Guardian*, [internet]. 25 March. Available at: http://www.chico.mweb.co.za/art/2005/2005mar/050325-artwit.html [Accessed 12 January 2008].

culture to lead cultural institutions. Lack of leadership that has vision for the arts has also affected the relationship of the NACZ with theatre.

This chapter has examined the birth of the NACZ, building a somewhat theoretical background and foundation for chapter four, that is a close exploration of the impact of the NACZ on the development of theatre in Harare. The historical review laid useful foundation and perspectives for the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and Theatre in Harare: Registration and Funding of Theatre Associations.

The NACZ's responsibilities such as overseeing funding, education, audience development, the presentation of the arts to the public, capacity building for arts associations and artists, facilitating the promotion and marketing of the arts have had a direct impact on the development of those art forms, making it to be a development agency going beyond mere guardianship of the arts. Until 2005 May, the NACZ worked directly with arts associations and organisations in Harare and even after the establishment of the Harare Provincial Office the National Office still works with most of the associations in Harare.

This chapter seeks to interrogate the process of registering theatre associations and funding of the sector in Harare by the NACZ and the Harare Provincial Arts Council as an off shoot of the NACZ. It explores the manner in which the NACZ has influenced the

development of theatre in Harare, directly and indirectly, through funding and registering theatre organizations.

One of the major responsibilities of the NACZ is to register theatre arts organisations and associations. The registration process involves associations filling in and submitting membership forms for processing and approval by the management through provincial offices. Both national and provincial associations have to register via this channel and upon completion of registration they pay an annual subscription fee to endorse their membership.

Failure to register is an offence and according to the Statutory Instrument 87: reads,

> Any person who contravenes any provision of these regulations shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding twenty million Zimbabwean Dollars or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding 5 years or to both such fine and such imprisonment (2006, p.23)

Besides that organisations and associations that fail to register will receive no funding from NACZ, they will not easily access funding from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOS) or other funding bodies, will not be able to invite foreign artists, cannot be consulted by NACZ on critical issues regarding the industry and they cannot enter into legal binding agreements. This means that any association that is not registered cannot exist in Zimbabwe and in turn all theatre artists and groups that are not affiliated to the provincial and national association cannot trade in the business of theatre.

Prior to 2000 the NACZ funded arts associations such as NTO, the Zimbabwe Association of Community Theatre (ZACT) and the Zimbabwe Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ZATCYP) that made a significant contribution to the

development of theatre in Harare. It disbursed annual grants to these organisations mainly to cater for administrative expenses such as office rental and payment of electricity bills. According to Chifunyise the NACZ played a role of patron of these associations but he did not imply that in the context of Chartrand and McCaughey's definition of a patron. Greffe (2002, p.65) explains that "patrons express demand for cultural goods by supporting or enabling artistic activities. Their actions could be motivated by many factors which range from altruism to snobbery…" There is need to understand the reason why the NACZ funded these associations.

The major reason for funding these associations was to facilitate the democratisation of theatre and make sure that citizens had equal access to theatre. It was also for the purposes of advancing the government's policies. Although the NACZ did not have direct influence on the projects of these associations and their member groups, there was a tendency of these groups to conform to government policy. For instance most theatre groups that subscribed to ZACT would stage plays that spoke highly of the government as part of celebrating independence.

According to Maurine Matibu, a programme officer at the Harare Provincial Arts Council, the NACZ defines an arts association as a group of arts groups from the same sector like theatre arts that are membership driven and have offices in four or more of the provinces in Zimbabwe. Their role is to coordinate the activities of their groups, represent and present the needs of theatre to the NACZ. They represent what Chartrand (1987, p. 2) termed the "the double 'arm's length'." In explaining it he says, 'an arts council would

operate at ‘arm’s length’ both from the government and its clients. Thus an arts council, having assessed the artistic merits of clients, would not direct or control their activities (Chartrand 1987, p.2).’ In this regard the NACZ makes funding decisions that are independent from the government. It funds associations because they are the ones that are on the ground and in direct contact with theatre artists. It does not exert direct control on their programmes or on the programmes of its member groups.

Funding was made available only to registered organisations and associations that submitted their constitutions, annual reports with information such as the projects that the organisation accomplished in the previous year, audited financial statements and plans of activities for the coming year. This is because the NACZ wanted to make sure that the organisations being funded were not bogus.

Before 1995, the situation of the NACZ was better in terms of funding resources. According to Maziwa, the NACZ funded many theatre associations during the period between 1985 and 1995. The NTO was among the associations funded by the institution in the past. Founded in 1957 with the name the Southern Rhodesian Drama Association, the NTO was renamed the Association of Rhodesian Theatrical Societies before adopting the name of the National Theatre Organisation in 1977. According to Rohmer (1997, p.86) its role was to cater exclusively for the European amateur theatre clubs. Plastow (1996, p.165) states that “the National Theatre Organisation of that time (the colonial period) has been described by Susan Hains, its first director under the new government, as a ‘disgustingly racist organisation.’

It organised festivals and theatre competitions for the colonialist theatre but after independence it sought to include blacks in its programmes. As from 1985 its new chairperson Dr. Susan Hains started to democratise it going along with the new government policy in such a way that the government was convinced to continue working with it. Rohmer (1997, p.86) observes that, "There can be no doubt about the fact that the NTO's policy has undergone major changes in favour of the development of black theatre over the last ten years." Due to that conformity, the NTO also received financial support after the establishment of the NACZ in form of administrative grants.

NTO greatly contributed to the development of theatre in Harare through organising festivals in which local playwrights participated. That helped to raise significantly the status of local playwrights so much that from 1987 producers and actors increasingly became interested in Zimbabwean plays that resulted in nine out of ten plays that were showcased at the second National Music, Dance and Drama festival held in 1987, being locally devised and written (Chifunyise and McLaren 1988, p.4).

ZACT also received funding from the NACZ. It originated from within the government's department of culture, directly sponsored by the government under ZIMFEP. Formed to work mainly with grassroots organisations, it sought to involve the public in the process of development through theatre taking theatre to be an element of education and a tool for critical consciousness and promote community theatre. Community theatre seeks to involve the public in the process of development through theatre. It values theatre as an

element of education and a strong tool for critical consciousness. ZACT did a lot of projects that included organising training workshops for theatre artists, taking part in World Health Day and Soweto Uprisings commemorations as well as taking part at annual independence cultural gala and Heroes Day celebrations.

It had Harare theatre groups such as Tatanga Youth Theatre, Theatre Manoeuvres Youth Theatre from Mbare and Zvido Zvenyu Youth Theatre as some of its members. Its membership continuously increased over the years with the formation of more full-time theatre groups in Harare such as Batsiranai, Zimbabwe Theatre Works and Theatrical Manoeuvres all formed in 1987. .

The other association that received funding from the NACZ was ZATYCYP, formed in 1993 with the aim of putting children and young people at the centre of improving the state of children's theatre, young people and professionals in the sector. During its time of existence it was linked to regional and international theatre artists, being the centre of the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ) and the International Amateur Theatre Association (IATA). It developed and nurtured budding theatre artists and assisted in the formation of groups such as CHIPAWO that has significantly raised the status of theatre for children and young people. CHIPAWO was nurtured by ZATCYP to an extent that even its constitution was formed after that of ZATCYP and presently CHIPAWO has attended more that fifteen international festivals representing Zimbabwe and in some cases the whole of Africa. It is marketing Zimbabwean theatre in a magnificent way and has grown to become an association itself.

After 1995, the NACZ's funding patterns changed in response to the changing economic terrain in Zimbabwe. The NACZ was not able to disburse funding on time and the amount of funding itself had severely deteriorated. According to the e-newsletter of the NTO of 3 March 1997, the NACZ's funding pattern severely changed to such an extent that in 1997 the NTO, ZACT and ZATCYP still had not received their grant-in-aid for the past three years but it referred to the NACZ as being under-funded.

However the NACZ could still disburse some minimal funding during that period. For instance, Chipangura, in the *Financial Gazette* of 20 January 2005, recalled that in 1999 the NACZ was able to disburse about five billion Zimbabwean dollars to arts associations with the assistance of some donors. This figure was given in respect of all sectors of the arts but it implies that theatre associations also received a share.

The situation worsened after 2000 when the Zimbabwean government became unpopular on the international scene and this made many donors to strip off funding from the NACZ. In the previous chapter it was noted that the Director of the NACZ indicated that the NACZ and government are the same hence it was severely affected by political developments in the country. The NACZ started new ventures in funding the arts, including theatre but these were not very successful. Raisedon Baya, writing in the *Sunday Mail* of 16 December 2007 says that he cannot even remember when the NACZ last disbursed funding to theatre associations. The NACZ workers in interviews seemed to suggest that the institution still disburses funding to associations. This research will

proceed to examine the funding pattern after 2000 to bring out an understanding of the trends of theatre that have emanated from it.

In 2001 the NACZ established the Arts Development Fund (ADF) that gets funds through registration fees collected from arts organisations and promoters and the donor community but the donor funding has been seriously depleted. The ADF has three facilities namely the Scholarship Fund, Grants to National Arts Associations and a Loan Revolving Scheme.

Grants are disbursed to arts organisations and associations not to individual artists in line with a statutory instrument that provides for the registration of and issuing of certificates of registration to associations and promoters, giving scope and direction in the operation of registered arts associations and promoters, as they are critical players in the development of theatre. It does not require groups, individual artists or clubs to register. Theatre artists and their groups have to register with theatre artists associations dealing with the promotion and development of theatre such as Global Arts Trust (national), provincial arts associations that operate in Harare such as the Associated Theatre Artists of Highfields based in Highfields and Young Africa that is based in Chitungwiza.

These associations then apply for funding to the NACZ. When lodging their applications, they are required to provide their constitutions, areas of activity and affiliate membership. According to the provisions of the Statutory Instrument, arts associations are required to keep a register of their membership and financial accounts. They are also expected to

submit to the NACZ annual reports and programme plans for the coming year for them to qualify for grants from the mother body. According to the Communications Officer of NACZ:

> The provisions come in the wake of mismanagement of many associations that made them unable to provide direction and support to their affiliates, leading many to collapse. Many associations that have been vibrant over the years have folded up due to issues of corporate governance, and the instrument is expected to oblige them to adhere to these principles.[16]

The idea of putting security measures in order to avoid cheating is very important for any funding institution. It is not just a matter of funding theatre that leads to development because the funds may not be used for the proper purposes for which they were given. William Bulger, the long term president of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, emphasising on the importance of evaluating measures, as stated by Schuster (2001, p. 4), saw the state arts agencies such as the arts council as a black hole swallowing government funding very little or no way of knowing what the money was accomplishing.

There is need for all the funds given to theatre artists to be accounted for and there has to be a way of measuring success and failure against which funded projects will be evaluated. Wail in Schuster (1995, p.36) states that 'without a definition of success of course (Arts Councils) lack a definition of failure.' The National Arts Council of

[16] A., Chinamhora, New law boon for arts sector in *The Herald.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.herald.co.zw/inside.aspx?sectid=5948&cat=10&livedate=7/11/2006. [Accessed on 11 July 2006
Herald].

Zimbabwe's accountability measures put in place to make sure that theatre artists receiving funding are not bogus artists and that the real artists use the funds allocated to them for the purposes for which they were given it is in this case that they are very relevant.

The loan facility is administered through the Micro King Department of the Kingdom Bank that is given to artists meeting specific criteria. The artists have to meet the requirements of the bank in order to obtain the loan. The NACZ deposits a certain amount of money that is used as collateral security and guarantee to the bank in case some of the theatre practitioners fail to pay back the loan. This facility in the sector of theatre is to encourage theatre practitioners to deal with banks for loans and not to over-rely on government and donor funding.

Considering that the theatre arts industry in Zimbabwe is not very developed loans cannot be the best form of funding to promote growth. Generally the sector is considered to be risky unlike areas like music that are flourishing. Ndinde, in an interview, indicated that he does not know of any theatre artists who have benefitted from the loan scheme. He explained that theatre has never been able to build a reliable audience base for itself and recalled that in the past theatre practitioners such as Mrs. Mutupa of Kaluza Arts Centre in Marlborough applied for the loan but could not obtain the funding. CHIPAWO attempted to apply for the loan but was put off by its inability to meet some of the demands of the loan such as collateral security (Chatikobo (former programme manager of CHIPAWO) 2007).

Theatre artists need debt free capital so that they start to start from a better level rather than to begin projects with debts. The idea of micro loans is difficult to apply to the case of Zimbabwe in that the economy of the state right now is bad which makes it difficult for the provision of micro loans. The nation has got the highest inflation rate that has ever been experienced in the world. The issue stressed above is that the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe has limited power to provide financial assistance to artists though it claims that it is responsible for disbursing funds to arts organisations. The question emanating from that is how that is affecting the development of theatre in Harare.

It is interesting to note that lack of adequate government funding disbursed through the NACZ has resulted in the development of certain types of theatre in Harare such as political theatre. According to Ravengai, lack of funding from the NACZ has been encouraging to the development of theatre in that it does not limit the artist's creativity. For instance, recently there has been considerable growth in the production of 'post modernistic' political plays that tackle politically sensitive issues. These plays simulate everyday life through the use of images. Political theatre has grown to become the most popular genre of theatre staged in Harare. By definition it is the type of theatre that is motivated by and seeks to address political ills in a community. Kirby (1975, p.129) explains, "it is a performance that is intentionally concerned with government, which is intentionally engaged in or consciously takes sides in politics." Theatre artists who do not receive funding from the NACZ do not censor their work as expected by the government.

Some of the post modernistic protest plays that have been showcased in Harare include *Rags and Gabbages* written by Raisedon Baya, directed by Dylan-Wilson Max and produced by Daves Guzha in 2002. The one man play is a frank talk about Zimbabwe's political and social problems. There is also *Super Patriots and Morons* written by Daves Guzha that is set in an imaginary autocratic state characterised by problems such as long ques for fuel and food and government repression among others.

According to Reed (2003) government funding normally has implication such as erosion of integrity of the recipient institutions due to the fact that government funding might bring with it some baggage like political manipulation. He further argues against state funding mentioning that art is too important to be dependent upon politicians as they will end up being politicised. He explains that minimal government interference is one of the conditions under which artistic creativity is best nurtured. Brenner as stated by Jarvic (2007), speaking about the relationship between a United States institution responsible for distributing state funding for the arts and the artists says that, "bureaucratic culture is not genuine culture.... It was the unsubsidised writers, painters and musicians—imprisoned in their homes if they were lucky, in asylums or in gulags if they weren't—who created lasting culture."[17] This further affirms that government funding normally has problems. These arguments are really applicable to the Zimbabwean situation given the fact that the government is very sensitive to criticism and therefore will not support the development of political theatre.

[17] Jarvic, L., 1997. '*Ten good reasons to eliminate funding for the National Endowerment for the Arts,*' Available at: http://www.heritage.org/Research/Budget/BG1110.cfm. [Accessed on 30 may 2007].

However some theatre artists maintain that lack of state funding channeled to them via the NACZ has been a major impediment to the development of theatre. In the same regards some scholars elaborate that theatre cannot develop well in the absence of state funding. They justify public funding of theatre on the basis of the inability of the market to sustain theatre. According to Harris (1970) the arts, including theatre, cannot function properly without substantial government patronage and in future their very existence is likely to depend on public subsidy. Trudeau cited in Harris (1970) maintains that governments have a responsibility to ensure that the arts (including theatre), which are an essential grace in the life of civilized people be available in full measure to those who want them. Keat (1999) argues that the market cannot be relied upon to provide the conditions for the success of culture because market economies sometimes fail.

The fear that most people have that governments cannot be trusted with the arts is not realistic because even donor funding comes with attachments. In fact the issue of control in theatre is fate because either way there is control. Heilbrun and Gray (1993, p.245) observe that "more often the donor's influence on artistic policy makes it felt without direct interference: the recipient institution bends its policy to conform to the agency or donor's known preferences. Such effects are subtle and not easily demonstrated." Landry and Pachter (2001) note that recently the market has become the arbiter of cultural value and taste and many institutions have to negotiate between purpose and goals of the society and the underlying conditions of this era due to disquiet on the cultural front. They explain that the conventional funders of culture are reassessing the reasons for

funding culture and the donors want to directly control the funds they are giving to arts. Although they write from a European point of view, their ideas are very applicable to the Zimbabwean situation because the donors that fund culture in Europe are more or less the same as those in Zimbabwe.

The absence of state funding has also implied conformity to the demands of donors and NGOs or death of theatre. Writers have found themselves having to align themselves to the expectations of their funders. The same applies to associations. The reason why ZACT died in 2003 was because it had failed to agree with its principal donor (SIDA) on its programmes and management of funds. According to the director of the NACZ, the institution tried to mediate between the two but their efforts were in vain as the director of ZACT, Ngugi wa Mirii refused to conform to the expectations of the donor. In that case ZACT could have opted for state funding had there been such and could still be in existence now. Considering the hard work that the association was doing in theatre one can argue that the death of ZACT was a serious blow to community theatre in Harare. In the area of funding the NACZ has done a lot but not enough to meet the needs of theatre.

According to one artist who spoke on condition of anonymity, the national cake is too small. While it is true that the NACZ has done a lot in assisting associations to set up administrative structures that help them to solicit funding from NGOs and donors that work in the field of theatre, they prefer to work with established artists. Their goal is not to develop the sector but to use it to communicate development messages. This in turn has been sabotaging the development of theatre at grassroots level. Tafadzwa Muzondo

of Edzai Isu Drama Group based in Highfields quoted in *The Herald* of 21 January 2008 said:

> There is the issue of sustainability. A group cannot perform without money so this prompted most groups to move away from the actual community theatre to commercial theatre. The reason was that the groups had to hire venues and needed transport. In view of this, someone has to pay the bills at the end.[18]

Following such observations most theatre artists had to re-align themselves to the donor's expectations. It was not easy to solicit the actual amount of money and the names of specific donors funding specific groups because artists fear being persecuted and harassed by the government. Furthermore, elaborating on that Cont Mhlanga of the renowned Amakhosi Theatre of Bulawayo quoted by the same paper on the same date explained that since 1998 there were changes in theatre such as technique, script and presentation and most plays became political and touched on similar issues.

While the funding environment was relatively good before 1995 with a beneficial impact on theatre, visible most clearly in the raised status of the art and of the artists and the growth of a receptive public for local works, after 1995 the NACZ suffered from its close association with the increasingly unpopular Zimbabwean government and as a consequence its funding base was depleted. Simultaneously there were attempts made to tighten up the management and accounting functions of arts organizations and to wean artists from dependence on donors. But the kind of financial alternatives did not work well for theatre artists.

[18] J., Mbiriyamveka. 2008. *The Herald* of 28 January. [Online]. Available on: http://allafrica.com/stories/200801210198.html. [Accessed on 29 January 2008].

What were the consequences of fund depletion and a more stringent accounting environment? To some extent good since artists were freed from loyalty to the government. We see a rash of plays that took up fearlessly with the problems of the Zimbabwean state as a result of little state funding. However that lack of government funding made artists look up to the donors who are just as demanding in terms of preferred ideological content and it has also been observed that younger, aspirant artists are at more of a disadvantage than their better established elders in terms of obtaining funding for donors and that is a set back from the development of grassroots theatre. Thus seems to support the view that as long as art depends more on state or private funding there is always an element of control from whoever will be paying for the production of art.

CHAPTER FIVE

The NACZ and Theatre in Harare: Education, Training and Tours

This part of the chapter focuses on the NACZ's role in the education, training and theatre tours. The NACZ administers a bursary as part of its arts development fund. The bursary is open to students taking arts-related courses at tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. Theatre institutions that are into theatre training apply to the NACZ for funding. In this regard they work with organisations such as CHIPAWO. This organisation was founded in 1989 with the aim of working with children in the arts to ensure that they know and

appreciate the arts as part of culture. It has a programme called Zimbabwe Academy of Arts Education Development (ZAAED) under which it organises workshops for children of school going age to in dance, drama, music and media. The programme has two specialised centres for theatre called the Harare Junior Theatre for primary school children and the Harare Youth Theatre for secondary school pupils that work with children selected though auditions. According to Chifunyise (2007) CHIPAWO has greatly benefited from NACZ funding but Chatikobo did not agree with Chifunyise. According to him CHIPAWO was only promised funding but the funding never came through.

According to the NACZ director, through the bursary the NACZ also supports the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Theatre Arts established in 1990, after seven years of being hosted by the department of English and African Studies as Practical Drama courses. To date, the Department has an Honours Degree and courses in the Bachelor of Arts General Degree. In the past students like Yvonne Zisengwe from the University of Zimbabwe have benefited from the NACZ's bursary scheme. Ravengai did not agree that the University of Zimbabwe benefited from the NACZ bursary in the past. He explained that the University of Zimbabwe's department of theatre arts has never applied for the bursary because they know that it is very small.

The scheme has not been very effective in promoting the acquisition of formal training and skills in the sector of theatre because of a thin budget. According to Ndinde (2007) in 2007 the Harare Provincial Arts Council did not disburse any funding towards education

because it had no money. In Zimbabwe the training of theatre artists has been extremely informal and oral, without many institutions that help to make it recognised as other disciplines in the education system yet engaging artists formally enhances their intellectual power and promotes professionalism. Theatre education is very important to the artists as it enhances their skills and makes their work more marketable. The human resource base for the industry is narrow, which adversely affects the industry. Fields like dance and theatre need a lot of skill besides talent. Brockett and Ball note:

> Acting skill is a mixture of three basic ingredients: innate ability (a special talent for acting), training and practice experience. Talent is perhaps most essential but usually it is not enough in itself, it needs to be nurtured and developed through extensive training and repeated application in performance (2000, p.348).

In their report on the status of theatre artist in Ireland, commissioned by the Arts Council of Ireland, Baumol, Jeffri and Throsby (2004, p.28) explain that this art form requires high commitment and extensive training despite a relatively short career life cycle. This means that theatre in Harare remains unprofessional to a greater extent and its contribution to employment creation remains very low.

Still on training and acquisition of skills the NACZ has an obligation to organise training workshops for theatre artists. As has been pointed out before, after 1995 the institution had to shoulder all education and training programmes in the sector of theatre, among others. In 1999 it co-organised a theatre workshop with SIDA in which resource persons like Doreen Nteta from South Africa came to train artists on arts management. However Chipangura maintained that most of the endeavours of the NACZ in this regards are severely disturbed by lack of financial resources.

In the area of tours the NACZ has been doing a lot. Prior to 1995 The NACZ facilitated the touring of schools by theatre groups, developing an audience for theatre shows. Under that it gave artists clearance letters that they used to get access into schools. Member groups of associations like ZACT toured around Zimbabwe without any problems between 1985 and 1995. Those tours were very important as they helped school pupils to appreciate theatre as well as providing employment for theatre artists. Many theatre artists survived from money that they were getting from those local tours but fortune changed after 1995 because the government tightened censorship of theatre plays that were being taken into schools. According to one member of staff at the NACZ who spoke on the condition of anonymity the situation worsened after 2000 because tours were no longer allowed by the government for fear that they would increase political awareness of the children and stir opposition to the government.

At the international level the NACZ has always been playing a big role in facilitating tours to other countries. The NACZ has been helping theatre artists through providing information about festivals and exchange programmes outside Zimbabwe, helping them secure travelling documents and linking them up with foreign groups. Around 1987 ZACT groups made an impact on the international scene with its member groups taking performances to international festivals such as the famous Edinburgh Festival. In the same regard Chifunyise and McLaren (1988, p.4) has it that some of the member groups of ZACT toured Holland and Zambia in 1987. This was done with the assistance of the NACZ.

The same applies to CHIPAWO that is always assisted with the itinerary when they want to attend festivals. Between 1994 and 2000 CHIPAWO attended more than eleven regional and international theatre festivals for children and according to Chatikobo all travel arrangements were facilitated by the NACZ. This has helped in changing the perception that most parents have about theatre, raising the profile of children's theatre. Chatikobo stressed that the NACZ played a very important role in all those tours, in some cases providing strong recommendation letters for CHIPAWO. Without its support CHIPAWO might not have made it to some of the festivals.

In some cases the NACZ assists practitioners in obtaining passports and visas required for travelling. It also underwrites travel and accommodation for theatre companies coming for tours and exchange programmes in Zimbabwe as well as giving clearance to such groups. In the case of regional and international 'friends' of theatre organisations visiting their Zimbabwean friends, the NACZ lobby the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority so that the organisations do not have to pay for accommodation in foreign currency as per the expectation of the law.

Organisations like Zvido Zvevanhu and Wamanda from Highfields have recently benefited from that provision. The former spent ten months of 2007 while the later spent 6 months in China on a cultural exchange programme and tour. It is during such tours that theatre practitioners acquire new skills and further develop their skills as well as boosting the name of Zimbabwean theatre across the globe.

In 2006 the NACZ, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and the Korean Embassy organised a cultural event in which Korean Dancers, Hwamanda Cultural Troupe, Together as One Dance group from Highfields and the University of Zimbabwe Theatre Arts Department participated. This intercourse between these groups provided a learning opportunity for all of them.

In the same regards, the NACZ works with the Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA) to facilitate movement of artists including theatre artists into the country. In an interview, Ndinde indicated that the Harare Provincial Arts Council worked strenuously as a liaison organ of HIFA in 2007. Without the hand of the NACZ as a trusted government organ HIFA could be having many complications in having its artists cleared to participate in the festival. In turn HIFA has blessed theatre in the province in many ways. It has afforded theatre artists an opportunity to mix with international artists through bringing some of the renowned theatre artists to the festival. In 2007 HIFA brought the acclaimed English Director Andrew Dawson and the famous London-based Tavaziva Dance Company to Harare and afforded theatre artists inspiration. The Dance Company did some performances in Chitungwiza and Tafara suburbs and in First Street of Harare where they raised the flag of theatre that could help to change the attitude of people towards art form in Harare and help to build an audience for it.

HIFA also has programmes such as Hi-Five started in 2006 that promote the development of theatre in Harare. Presented by the British Council, the project aims to develop and encourage new theatre writing in Zimbabwe and to see new plays put on the stage. Its

impact has been great in Harare as artists do not have to worry about expensive bus fares to attend the project's exhibitions. In 2006 a call was made for aspiring playwrights to submit plays after which 12 writers were selected and subsequently mentored by British playwrights. These mentors came out for the Festival last year, and the plays produced by the 12 were given public staged readings as part of HIFA's 2006 theatre programme. Some of the budding writers in Harare like Tafadzwa Muzondo of the Associated Community Theatre Artists of Highfields were chosen to participate in the project.

HIFA also has an exciting programme for school students called Schools Amigos Programme that hosts training workshops in which high-profile artists who will be performing at HIFA mentor school students from Harare schools like Prince Edward allowing them to partake in a range of different artistic disciplines they have probably never heard of or dreamed of trying. A select few (six students from each Schools Amigos member school) attend a specialised workshop in acting, directing and stage craft and will be given the opportunity to learn from top facilitators and professionals during the Festival. The programme helps develop skills that allow these students to produce and appreciate theatre.

This chapter has established that the bursary for supporting tertiary educational programmes by the NACZ has not been a great success because of lack of adequate funding. The failure is significant because theatre requires the refinement of skills-without training it cannot make advances. The theatre school tours that the NACZ successfully supported before the political problems in Zimbabwe seemed to be making headway particularly because they challenged negative perceptions about theatre and

theatre practitioners that most people had. However, as more political pressure mounted on the government and theatre artists ventured into political theatre, the government stopped the tours fearing that the content of the plays performed on these tours could be too risky for them.

There has been considerable success in the area of exchange programmes – here skills acquisition is successful and through them Zimbabweans make contact with the wider world and the wider world learns to appreciate what Zimbabwean artists have to offer. Thus despite the unpromising financial and political atmosphere it has proved possible to create programmes which contribute to the development of theatre in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

This work examined the role played by the NACZ in the development of Harare since its establishment in 1985. It explained the origins of arts councils in and outside Africa with the aim of laying foundation of the manner in which the institution delivers its services to theatre in line with the belief that mostly cultural policy is influenced by factors such as its origins and the environment in which it operates. It has been established that the birth and operation of the NACZ is informed by external and internal forces.

This paper illustrates how the NACZ, its decisions and policies have promoted and hindered the development of theatre in Harare, directly and indirectly. It has been established that the NACZ does not deal with theatre artists directly in disbursing funding. It works with associations of theatre artists that in turn deal with theatre artists. In dealing with theatre arts associations it has a final say on all funding decisions that it makes. The government does not interfere with the NACZ in making funding decisions due to the fact that it avails very little money for disbursement to the institution that hardly attracts many associations to apply for funding from the institution.

In addition, the institution's funding patterns have changed since 1995. In the past it used to disburse money regularly to theatre arts associations but from 1995 it does not disburse adequate funding to theatre. Most of the funding for theatre comes from NGOs and

donors that have agendas such as using theatre to communicate development issues and that has affected the state of theatre as most plays are now designed to suit the donors expectations. This in turn has led to the development of mostly communication and political theatre and makes it clear that if a policy is not backed by financial resources it may not be very effective in achieving its intended objectives.

It has been established that the NACZ is also responsible for supporting theatre education and tours and in this regards it has been successful in the area of tours. In education and training it has not been very effective due to its present financial circumstances. It does not have enough money to disburse for education.

It also displays how the NACZ helped and is still helping to implement government agenda in culture in the absence of financial resources. In that regard the NACZ plays the role of an advisory body and a trusted arm of the government. It facilitates and provides framework, values and regulations, an environment in which theatre operates.

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APPENDIX 1

List of Interviews

Cuthebert Muziwa, National Arts Council of Zimbabwe Programme Officer, 04 January 2008.

Maureen Matubu, Programme Officer, Harare Provincial Arts Council, 02 January 2008.

Munyaradzi Chatikobo, Programme Director of Chipawo until February 2006, Harare, 29 December 2007.

Stephen Chifunyise, the former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture of Zimbabwe and the Principle of CHIPAWO, Harare, 03 January 2008.

Samuel Ravengai, University of Zimbabwe Lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, Harare, 12 September 2007.

Titus Chipangura, National Arts Council of Zimbabwe Director, 04 January 2008.

Walter Mparutsa, Global Arts Trust Director, 10 November 2007.

William Ndinde, Director of the Harare Provincial Arts Council, 02 January 2008.

APPENDIX 2

Introductory Letter

Wits School of Arts
Division of Arts, Cultural and Heritage Management
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa, Fax +27 11 339-7601 Telephone +27 11 717 4654 Telegrams: 'Unigrams'

Dear ----------

I am a student at The University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg, studying for a Masters in Arts, Cultural and Heritage Management and am undertaking research on **the role played by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe in the development of theatre since its establishment in 1985 to the present day with reference to the Harare region.** I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you for not more than 40minutes to do an audio recorded voluntary interview on the subject. I have come to you specifically because you fall into my sample that I got using a random sampling method. I have scheduled the interview dates between the 26th and the 30th of December 2007. Please confirm to the undersigned the date and time convenient to you.

I will use my research findings to write a research report to be submitted to the afore-mentioned university in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the awarding of a Masters Degree only and I will not disclose any names under whatsoever circumstances unless with your permission. If you have any questions you can direct them to me or my supervisor Brett Pyper on Brett.Pyper@wits.ac.za

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

Florence Mukanga
florencemukanga@yahoo.com
0027 11 358 266

APPENDIX 3

Letter of Indemnity/ Participants' Interview Consent form

I ----------, hereby agree to voluntarily participate in the research. I am willing to provide any knowledge pertaining to the role played by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe in the development of theatre since its establishment in 1985. I have also agreed to have the interview recorded on an audio tape.

I have read and understood the procedures in the information sheet that participation is voluntary; the interview will be recorded and I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer particular questions. I have also been informed by the researcher that all information provided will be treated as confidential and that I have the freedom to remain anonymous this research.

Participant's Signature----------Date----------

Researcher's Signature----------Date----------

APPENDIX 4

Letter of Indemnity/ Participants' Consent to recording of the interview form

I ----------, hereby agree to voluntarily participate in the research. I am willing to provide any knowledge pertaining to the role played by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe in the development of theatre since its establishment in 1985 and to have the interview recorded on an audio tape.

I have read and understood the procedures in the information sheet that participation is voluntary; the interview will be recorded and I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer particular questions. I have also been informed by the researcher that all information provided will be treated as confidential and that I have the freedom to remain anonymous this research.

Participant's Signature----------Date----------

Researcher's Signature----------Date----------

APPENDIX 5

Sample questions for NACZ staff.

1 What were the circumstances around the formation of the NACZ?
2 What is the role played by the NAC in the development of theatre in the Harare region?
3 Does the NAC have any institutional strategy regarding theatre education in the country?
4 What about strategies to deal with challenges facing theatre such as artists' little incomes?
5 What are the challenges that the Council is facing in working with theatre artists?
6 What are the areas that you feel need to be improved in terms of the manner in which the council is delivering its services in theatre?

Sample questions for Artists and Academics.

1 How have you been interacting with NACZ since its formation in 1985?
2 How has you organisation benefited from the NACZ since its formation?
3 Do you think NACZ is relevant to the development of theatre in this region?
4 Given an opportunity to advise the NAC what recommendations would you suggest and why?