

**INFORMALITY, DECEIT AND THE CONSCIENCE: A SURVEY ON ETHICAL DILEMMAS  
IN HARARE**

By

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**ABSTRACT:**

*The engagement by households in the informal economy is not only a headache to local authorities in the developing countries but also heartache to the households themselves (comprising students, full-time street vendors, and formal private or public officials. This paper maps the diversity of ethical dilemmas which households and practitioners undergo. Doing something contrary to one's belief and value systems 'pricks' conscience; they have but acted against their wish. From a spatial viewpoint, the whole urban Harare, is somewhat littered by a host of urban dwellers who are acting contrary to their life goals, at least in light of their career planning and personal aspirations. It is a sphere with destabilized personalities. One then wonders the kind of overall urban milieu that results from this development.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This paper explores the survival coping strategies by Harare residents - including informal traders and those practicing it within the formal sector terraces. This is in the period of economic and social hardships in the city and the country as a whole. The idea is to get insight on the sustainable development debate which has topped academic and think-tank circles in the recent years. The author argues that if ever informal trade engagers should be examined ethically, whatever portrait they give outwardly; it is less the reality of what they feel, think, or perceive. The majority feel betrayed by life. They are acting in deceit, in hypocrisy – the drama of life. The paper is largely a product of informal interviews and interactions with informal traders (street vendors, squatters) and formal employers in both the public and private sector in Harare. An anecdotal approach was adopted which, in turn, gave way to some content analysis of the stories told. Literature review and scanning of news briefs was found critical to the understanding of a number of concepts.

## **INFORMAL SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN HARARE: AN OVERVIEW**

The informal sector continues to surge in the urban sphere of Harare, like most cities in any country of the developing world (Chirisa, 2007, 2008; Hlohla, 2008). The principal reason cited is the lack of formal employment alternatives (Matsebula, 1996; Chirisa, 2007; Hlohla, 2008). In Zimbabwe, the percentage of unemployment rate has, of late, been pegged at eighty percent (Hlohla, 2008; <http://www.indexmundi.com>). Profoundly speaking, it is not that jobs are non-existent, but that the existing jobs are not commensurately remunerated. This gives us a clue that employment is not about the availability of jobs in a given setting, but the notion and practice largely hinge on the benefits attached to the available job. A job is, therefore, an antidote to stoic sacrifice for duty. In this case, employment is only employment if it allows a household to meaningfully maintain itself, that is, if it promises some kind of surplus - income - which allows the household to keep itself to the next day with a minimum number of shocks.

In Zimbabwe, in the period around 2005 to 2007, the private sector employee was still better off than the public (civil) servant, in terms of remuneration. During that time urban poverty was synonymous with public servility (Chirisa, 2007). Now, even the private sector - including the banking sector - is

complaining about meagre salaries and allowances. Most households have concluded that it has become more profitable to be outside the working bracket than to be in it; as well as to be in the Diaspora than in the country. For this reason, a great number of Zimbabweans have left the country for greener pastures, particularly in South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana, to name these three. The migration also extends to countries outside the region, especially in the United Kingdom and other countries in the West. This is typically the voting by feet, quite elaborated by Gaidzanwa (1999), with reference to nurses and doctors during the era of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme - ESAP. Now the pace and impact has intensified. Life has become harder for the ordinary Zimbabwean than ever before, hence the option for questing respite elsewhere.

Stories are told everywhere about former teachers and headmasters who left the country and have begun doing menial jobs in the neighbouring countries. Yet, now without the white collar title, they are now earning a thousandfold of what they were earning in Zimbabwe. This, in the terms of MacCann (2001), is quite explicable in the disequilibrium model of migration which postulates that a place with a shrinking economy will lose out its labour force to that with a vibrant one.

If ever there has been a point in time when Zimbabweans have been ‘scattered’ across the globe, it is this epoch. Table 1 indicates how the unemployment rate in Zimbabwe has grown and stagnated from 2003 to 2008. This implies the growth of the self-employment sector.

**Table 1: Estimates Of Zimbabwe’s Employment Rate, 2003-2008**

YEAR	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	RANK	PERCENT CHANGE	DATE OF INFORMATION
2003	70.00 %	2		2002 est.
2004	70.00 %	3	0.00 %	2002 est.
2005	70.00 %	192	0.00 %	2002 est.
2006	80.00 %	198	14.29 %	2005 est.
2007	80.00 %	195	0.00 %	2005 est.
2008	80.00 %	195	0.00 %	2005 est.

SOURCE: [http://www.indexmundi.com/zimbabwe/unemployment\\_rate.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/zimbabwe/unemployment_rate.html)

Nevertheless, not everybody has left the suppressed-salaried formal employment sector. What seems to surprise everybody is why these employees still hang in their positions and places of work. If, for instance, one gets paid a salary with allowances of two hundred billion dollars (about US\$3 but his budget for a month gets to two hundred trillion Zimbabwean dollars - about US\$250, real time gross settlement –RTGS rate) the big question is: why go to work at all? Is it adroit optimism? Is it some kind of naivety or foolishness? One answer given is that things will one day get better; it will not be difficult for one to continue in his position. This, we might call, *speculative hang-around*. But another reason is cited, that of getting other means of survival using the present office or position. This, we shall call *going to work to find work or survivalist snowballing*. In this arrangement there are a host of quandaries and dilemmas. It is based on informal networks or there is what can be termed *informalisation of the professional conduct*. This is the reality of most of the people still going to work under the difficult times in Zimbabwe, especially those with pronounceable fringe benefits like houses and cars.

## **THE RISE OF ECONOMIC FALL AND EXPLANATIONS**

It should be pointed out that it has never been well for the country since 1997. The country began experiencing conspicuous economic doldrums during 1997. It was the date when a marked number of mass stay-aways, sit-ins, go-slows, food riots, and the first tectonic slide of the Zimbabwean dollar were noted. Yet, again, one can point out that these were nothing but repercussions of the shift by the nation from hardcore socialism of the 1980s to the market economy of the 1990s (Chirisa, 2007). The shift was dramatic. Discontinuities and ideological shifts (in this case, from socialism to capitalism) are usually synonymous with social upheaval and suffering, especially if they relate to ideology.

Economic hardships brought about by the structural adjustments of the economy coupled with inflationary cycles and reduced productivity produced a socio-economic miasma. The ejection of white farmers by the instrument of the fast track land resettlement programme (FTLRP) at the turn of the decade into the new millennium also had colossal ripple effects so cross-sectional to the entire economy that both the rural areas and urban areas felt the same pinch alike. Folks then engaged in informal activities by either deliberate design or default. A hard-pressed household had no choice but to devise survival coping strategies (ibid). This has ranged from street vending, making market of the home, cross

border trading, conducting ‘extra lessons’, and opening up some briefcase consultancy firm, to name but a few.

A psycho-social analysis of the problem would reveal that the informal traders (Chirisa, 2007) are faced with a number of ethical dilemmas. This is because most of the time these actors are nothing but victims of circumstances. What a dramatisation of victimhood in the urban centres – needless to talk about the rural communal sphere and the newly resettled areas!

Imagine a poor HIV and AIDS widow with a small market stall where she sells vegetables and earns only about the equivalence of US\$30 per month (after a hard sweating). Her landlord demands that she pays some equivalence of US\$40 dollars in hard currency for rent (refer to Box 1).

**BOX 1: LANDLORD ARRESTED FOR RENTALS IN FOREX**

A Westlea landlord has been arrested for charging rentals in foreign currency as police step up their war against unscrupulous property owners who charge rentals in foreign currency. The landlord, Charity Chidau was stunned when a letter she wrote advising her tenant that rentals had been revised to US\$60 with effect from one August was produced as evidence. According to the letter, the tenant who is renting two rooms was supposed to pay US\$60 as opposed to 200 Rand that she had been paying. Speaking off camera for fear of victimisation the tenant said it is not fair to demand hard currencies from someone who is earning Zimbabwean dollars. Police spokesperson Superintendent Andrew Phiri said the police force will keep alert and bring to book anyone found breaching the law.

SOURCE: ZBC Newsnet (Tue, 29 Jul 2008): <http://www.newsnet.co.zw>

The landlord gives an explanation that things are getting harder on his part. He stresses that he must live by the proceeds of rent from the extra rooms that he built as outbuildings that he lets. He argues that he cannot receive the rent in the form of the Zimbabwean dollar because it is fast losing its value. What would such a poor woman do? Such is the kind of reality faced by urban Zimbabwe in the contemporary times. Meanwhile the National Income and Pricing Commission (NIPC), established to rationalise prices and incomes in 2006, continues to promise the public that it is making frantic efforts to rectify such distortions (The Sunday Mail, 2008). The same stance is shared with the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (see Box 2).

**BOX 2: NEW CASH MEASURES ON WAY: GONO**

*From Bulawayo Bureau*

RESERVE Bank of Zimbabwe Governor Dr Gideon Gono is set to announce comprehensive measures anytime this week that will see maximum cash withdrawals being upped to figures that will end the cash crisis. Later in a hastily organized Press conference, Dr Gono took the opportunity to warn businesses and individuals who were charging for their goods and services in foreign currency. He said such people risked getting arrested either by the police or RBZ officials.

"Conducting business in foreign currency is illegal. No rentals or goods should be charged in forex. Dollarisation — that is using the currency of another country — is not a position that we have taken. We are not in that situation yet. Report all such persons, including those who are selling cash (Zimbabwean dollars) to the nearest police station or RBZ officials," he said.

Due to restriction of cash withdrawals to only \$100 billion for a long period of time, some dealers with access to cash through corrupt bank officials and those in the liquor business were selling cash to desperate Zimbabweans. The money was sold at rates that range between 20 percent and 50 percent and the figure would be upped depending on how desperate the customer was.

SOURCE: Sunday Mail (Sunday, July 27, 2008): <http://www1.sundaymail.co.zw>

It is important to look at the issues more closely after conceptualisation. This is critical for one to appreciate the many dimensions of the thrust of this paper and have an insight of what the contemporary Harare is like.

## **A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

This section gives explanations and meanings to terms and concepts used in the construct of this paper. Ethics and ethical dilemmas are discussed at some great length, as well as the aspect of deceit. A snapshot approach is applied, hence no exhaustiveness of the conceptualisation is assumed.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04268a.htm>) defines ethics as "...conduct or regulated life". Sidgwick (1967: 296) asserts that ethics can be "...constituted of nothing but moral ideas and rules which the social organisation in any period has evolved." Robinson and Yeh (2007:3) outline some five dimensions of morality, namely:

- Morality as responsibility: i.e. acting in accordance with other people's concerns, rights, and expectations. That means not only refraining from doing things that cause harm to others, but also actively pursuing their welfare – it implies the imperative to do as we say and believe.
- Morality as concern for others: i.e. understanding how others experience a loss; for example, this compels us to not want to impose a loss on another.
- Morality as reason: i.e. they should be justifiable according to an objective set of criteria.
- Morality as consistency: i.e. similar cases are treated similarly without double standards.
- Morality as universality: i.e. the same conditions must be applied to all concerned.

Rules and ideas constituting ethics and morality are relative to any given society and have value or validity only with relation to it which idea points to the notion of norms and standards (Sidgwick, 1967). These are ‘instruments’ by society, or a fraternity, to direct its people’s lives and conduct. “If the standard is wrong, then the conduct itself will also be wrong, for it will be wrongly assessed” (Bromiley, 1948:25). This brings about the notions of deviation vis-à-vis conformity.

Yet, Bromiley insists that the standard of conduct is the outcome of belief, which in turn is the result of aim. The concept of aim can be taxonomised into social aim, religious aim, and Christian aim. Social aims, according to Bromiley, are fourfold, namely altruistic (the desire to be helpful to others), utilitarian (a quest to promote the greatest possible benefit to the greatest possible number), social (ordering life in such a way that nobody gets harmed), and legal (fulfilling the duties or obligations owed to the social group, family, city, state, or even humanity as a whole). All these augur well to the doctrine of the ‘public interest’, which is a pinnacle idea of social science. The religious aim has it that the “...unifying principle is always God, although God is thought of in different ways” (Bromiley 1948: 18). It includes the evolutionary thought of pantheism (the view that God is the spirit active and manifested in the things of the world yet without any higher independent existence), aestheticism (the thought which starts off with a conception of a God as perfect beauty, goodness, and truth), and ethicism (which relates to general Theism, the idea of God as a Person, who rules, and makes demands). The Christian aim sees God as the Creator and Redeemer of all creation and desiring ever to establish a permanent relationship with humanity. It sees humanity as subsisting of a “fallen nature” whose restitution to the ‘space of glory’ is doable only through the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. When humanity realises this and craves to ‘walk that path’ then it has “a reasonable aim”

(Bromiley 1948). This, to many theologians, is the foundation of true ethics because it works with the 'heart of the heart' – conscience, which they say is more of 'the police' within humanity than anything else.

“Act from a principle or maxim that you will to be a universal law” (Sidgwick (1967:299). This statement shows the transcendence of actions from heart conviction. Thus, a heart conviction translates into action. This brings about the element of culture. Culture is the product of homogenisation of individual acts and practices in a given community at some given time and place. As the group or community dances to the fashion and fads of their beliefs and actions, they develop rules, norms, and standards to govern their conduct. These are the hallmark of ethics. They develop ethics in a bid to establish the sacrosanct standing of themselves. But, usually, they do so within the sphere and framework of universal law.

White (1993) defines ethics as that “...branch of philosophy that explores the nature of moral virtue and evaluates human actions.” He opines that philosophical ethics differs from legal, religious, cultural, and personal approaches to ethics by seeking to conduct the study of morality through a rational, secular outlook that is grounded in notions of human happiness or well-being. Further, he points out that the major advantage of a philosophical approach to ethics is that it avoids the authoritarian basis of law and religion, as well as the subjectivity, arbitrariness, and irrationality that may characterize cultural or totally personal moral views. Moreover, White asserts that, in general, there are two traditions in modern philosophical ethics regarding how to determine the ethical character of actions. One argues that actions have no intrinsic ethical character but acquire their moral status from the consequences that flow from them. The other tradition claims that actions are inherently right or wrong (for instance, lying, cheating, stealing). The former is called a teleological approach to ethics, and they are result-orientated, and the latter, deontological (act-oriented). Having said that on ethics, it is important to try and define what a dilemma is.

A dilemma is defined by the Webster Collegiate Dictionary (1948:282) as, firstly “... an argument presenting an antagonist with two or more alternatives (or “horns”), but equally conclusive against him, whichever he chooses; and, secondly, “...a situation involving choice between equally unsatisfactory alternatives”. The synonym is cited as a “predicament”. The definitions are rich in that they point out



that there is a player/actor/character who is guided by some standard. He/she is confronted with a situation that requires choice. The circumstances have lethal and toxic implications to his/her belief systems or what is expected of him/her. Thus, the antagonist is nothing but like a cornered rat; escaping from the unhealthy situation is a mammoth task. Ethical dilemmas are also referred to as 'ethical paradoxes'. They involve a lot of intrapersonal (and also interpersonal) conflict. To resolve the dilemma White (n.d.) suggests three steps, namely analysing the consequences, analyzing the questions, and making the decision.

Boyle (n.d.) categorises common ethical dilemmas into a fourfold distinction, namely truth vs. loyalty, which is about personal honesty and integrity versus promise-keeping and obligations to others; individual vs. community: interests of the one or few weighed against those of the more or many; short-term vs. long-term: real concerns of the present weighed against investment for the future; and justice vs. mercy: fair and equal application of the rules vs. compassion for the individual. One would also observe that ethical dilemmas are often spoken of in light of professionalism or the business discourse. It is, thus, almost taken as an anomaly to speak of the subject with reference to the informal or extra-legal sector. Note well that extra-legality is not the same as illegality though the proneness of the latter in the former can be very high. The issues are tied to the aspect of deception, which is a kind of hypocrisy with inter- and intra-personal underpinnings.

According to Anolli *et al* (2001), deception is "...a kind of miscommunication and a chance in communication terms, since deceptive miscommunication greatly enhances the degrees of freedom at the communicator's disposal." They point out that it represents another route to express the speaker's sensations, thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and desires; likewise, at communication level, it may be really advantageous to have the chance of hiding, omitting, concealing or, simply, blurring information. "After all, truth is not a matter of black or white, and deceptive communication may be an opportunity both in a Machiavellian, opportunistic sense and in an everyday relational situation" (Anolli *et al*, 2001). Further, they assert that deception, as an articulated and complex miscommunication act, is emblematic of adaptive behaviour in interpersonal relational management, with the aim of influencing others' beliefs.

Bermúdez further observes that the philosophical discussion of self-deception aims at providing a conceptual model "...for making sense of a puzzling but common mental phenomenon." He asserts that

the models proposed fall into two groups – the intentionalist and the anti-intentionalist. He highlights that the intentionalist approach to self-deception analyses the phenomenon on the model of other-deception - what happens in self-deception is parallel to what happens when one person deceives another, except that the deceiver and the deceived are the same person. Anti-intentionalist approaches, in contrast, stress what they take to be the deep conceptual problems involved in trying to assimilate self-deception to other-deception. Bermúdez (n.d.) goes on to show that many of the arguments appealed to by anti-intentionalists suffer from failing to specify clearly enough what the intentionalist is actually proposing.

Having outlined some explanations of the key terms to the paper, an elucidation of them is necessary using the developments and manifestations in Harare as case examples.

### **CASES OF INFORMALITY IN HARARE**

As noted earlier by Chirisa (2007), the number of cases of squatting (and other informality) in Harare has been on the increase despite the attempt by the government to ‘annihilate’ the sector by way of Operation Murambatsvina (OM) in 2005. The negative ripple effects have had a wide variety of social, economic, psychological, planning, and environmental implications. For example, the following questions can be asked: What is the meaning of uncollected garbage on a premise or in a neighbourhood when everybody cherishes the aesthetic beauty of a place (for example, as portrayed in the preamble of the Regional, Town, and Country Planning Act, 1976, revised 1996; or the Environmental Management Act, 2004)? What can be done to lighten the burden of the poor (the homeless, the unemployed, to name these two) when in effect, the help himself is struggling with life to make ends meet? How are pressures of life and the available means (most of the times labelled as illegal, informal, and unconventional) to be made congruent? How is balance to be achieved between universal expectations and individual pressure realities? Trying to answer these questions is very difficult. In Harare, the plight of the poor is very patent and clear.

### **Accommodation and Conditions of Living**

Regarding accommodation, the problem in the city has worsened by day since 2005. For this reason, one can argue and say that low density residential areas (LDRAs) no longer maintain their disposition as low density areas. This is because of the spongy nature that these areas have exhibited in the past three years. They have absorbed population numbers greater and greater than ever before. The density has reduced from about one person per three hundred square metres in the past to as low as one person per forty square metres. These areas (LRDAs) have assumed a ‘refugee holding’ status. Most of those sections who could not leave the city for rural areas, during and after Operation Murambatsvina, decided to be accommodated here.

It should, retrospectively, be noted that the government, in the course of OM, made recourse in its demolition spree of unplanned buildings and extensions in the LDRAs. This saved a lot of outbuildings and like structures, not only in the LDRAs, but also in the middle density residential areas (MDRAs). High density residential areas (HDRAs<sup>1</sup>) were, thus, the single worst affected zone of the city of Harare by OM. Apart from OM triggering urban-rural migration; it also fuelled this diffusionist form of intra-urban migration. Typically, dozens of once HDRA households flocked to MDRAs and LDRAs<sup>2</sup>. In this wave, the migrants were faced with higher rents, relative to those of HDRAs, but to be paid in local currency (cp: Box 3).

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<sup>1</sup> These were movements from places like Mbare, Highfield, Mufakose, Kambuzuma, Rugare, Mabvuku, Tafara, Sunningdale, etc.

<sup>2</sup> These are areas like Greendale, Avondale, Chisipite, Highlands, Mount Pleasant and the like

**BOX 3: OUTCRY OVER HIGH RENTALS**

Unjustified residential rent hikes in the urban areas by landlords, have sparked sharp outrage from tenants who are now struggling to meet the bills threatening to erode their meagre incomes. Rentals for tenants in the urban areas have shot through the roof, a situation which has left tenants with nothing to save. A survey made by Newsnet in Harare revealed that rental charges for a single room are ranging from six thousand dollars to twenty thousand dollars per month. Some house owners have gone to the extent of illegally evicting tenants in order to accommodate those who can pay. In the low density residential areas, a modest three-bedroomed house can cost up to one hundred thousand dollars monthly. Landlords argue that the practice of reviewing lease rentals on an annual basis is no longer economically viable due to inflation, prompting them to review rentals periodically. Observers say there is however, a real danger that those who can not afford existing rentals may end up joining squatter camps that pose health hazards or may share accommodation to lower the cost per family. With an estimated housing list of about one million two hundred and fifty thousand people there are not many options for tenants except to lobby for the intervention of the responsible authorities. The Zimbabwe Tenants and Lodgers Association recently told the property Gazette that it had petitioned the government to institute laws that would protect tenants from unscrupulous landlords.

SOURCE: ZBC Newsnet (Mon, 09 Oct 2006): <http://www.newsnnet.co.zw>

Yet, not many ‘landlords’ were prepared to improve the living conditions of the rooms or outbuildings that they were letting. Thus, ‘tenants’ stayed in squalid and compromised conditions, sometimes with five to ten households on the same premise sharing one bath and toilet.

In areas like Mount Pleasant, Cranborne, and Sunningdale, where an excess of university students seek alternative accommodation in these nearby suburbs, landlords and custodians to residential premises always have a ready market for some of the rooms on their premises. They let this space to the desperate students – commoditisation of residential space. Some even provide bunk beds for students, albeit not paying attention to public health standards. This is tantamount to trading one’s health for cash.

## University Students and the Problem of Commuting

Some university students who live in the far away suburbs from campuses have devised all forms of strategies to manage the expensive trips to and from home and campus. One mode is collective movement to town. There is a case of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) students who have called themselves University (UBA<sup>3</sup>) Footers' Association (UFAs). These students come together and walk the five kilometre distance together into the city centre and then disperse to their various places of residence from there. This strategy is *social and collective* in its approach towards the high fares. Its main problem is that of fatigue it brings to the walkers which may affect the students' performance in their academic endeavours.

The second strategy by students is that of getting to a place where they can be picked up by private cars or commuter omnibuses. Usually they ask on the level of the fare before getting in. If it is too high for them, according to their arbitrary judgement and discretion, they do not get in and vice versa. Sometimes, in the case of pick ups and open lorries, they jump in; connive amongst themselves to pay very lowly or not to pay at all. When they get to town some may jump out without paying or may pick on a quarrel with the driver and get away without paying. This strategy can be termed the *open trick approach*. It ranges from germane negotiation to rascal irrational conduct.

The third group are those students who disguise as University employees. They get onto the staff bus, which most of the times is so loaded that there is hardly any sound breathing space. Off the bus, the student puts off the mantle of university staff membership (the mantle of deceit) and becomes a student once more. This is *changing face to suit a situation*.

The questions that stem from this analysis are: Why do they do so deceitfully or shrewdly? Are they rascally bad as they portray? Should the university lower its enrollment so that the existing facilities equal the number of students that are given place? How shall the screening be done when they all qualify? How possible is it to promote electronic learning (e-learning) so that these students learn in their homes without having each day to face transport challenges? When they do what they do (putting

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<sup>3</sup> University students call themselves UBAs, if they are male, which they say is: University Bachelors' Association; and, USAs - University Spinsters' Association, if female.

on stone faces, challenging drivers, deliberately collaterising for a walk), what do they feel inside? What is the state of their conscience? It should be borne in the mind that about half the student population that join the university every year are from a peasant background. The author was one such. The poor student finds himself placed in a totally hostile milieu which he or she must stoically face sometimes without any adequate resources or urban based relatives to help. What motivates he or she is the conception that the three, four, or five years between him and his fortune is a conquerable wall. So, he endures!

### **Informal Sector Enterprise and the Central Business District (CBD)**

In the CBD, a number of observations are also notable. Informality has even invaded the formal sector (Chirisa, 2007). Hlohla (2008) notes that foreign currency exchange (forex) dealers in the CBD are concentrated in three sites, namely Roadport, Zimex Mall, and Dulys Motors complex. At each and every mentioned site the population density is in excess of 100 'entrepreneurs'. Operators at Dulys Motors are attracted by the nearby Meikles Hotel and the ever busy Eastgate Complex. It can be argued that Roadport operators want to take advantage of crossborder traders coming in or going out of the country. The Zimex Mall concentration is probably explained by clustering of different quasi-formal businesses in the complex. The dealers have also left the tradition of trade stringency and adopted diversification. Thus, one has the versatility that allows him or her to be dealing in forex while also dealing in cellular phones, computer accessories, clothing, etc. Important to note, also, is the linearity that dealers place themselves in position to attract and serve customers.

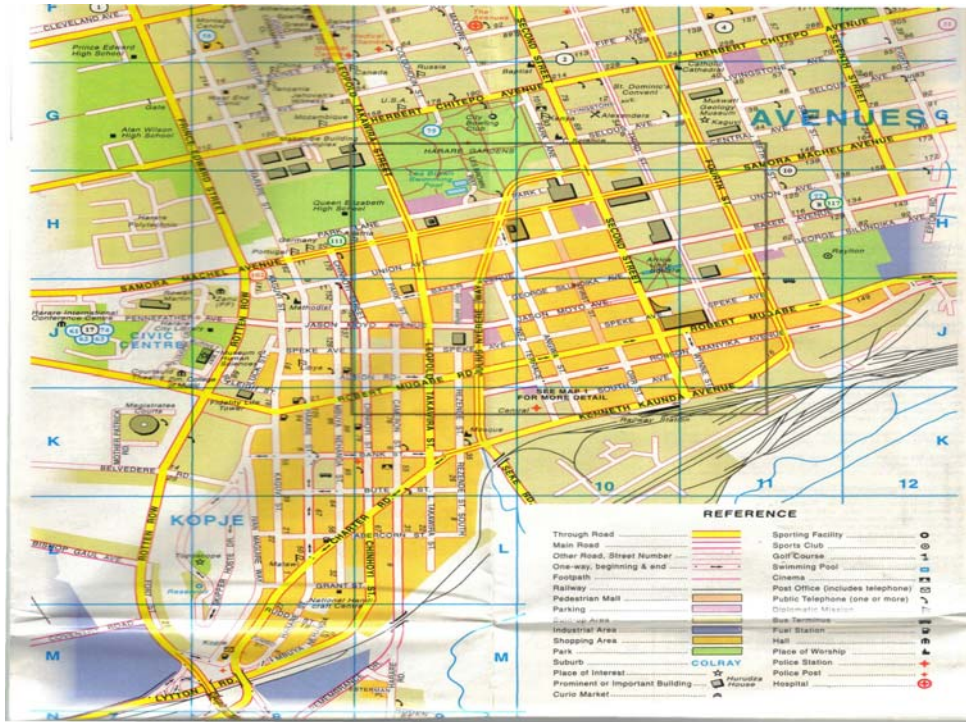


Figure 1: Map of Harare CBD and the Avenues

Hlohla observed that in a small area constituting the CBD, there were on average 1,014 vendors, irrespective of age or sex, operating on daily basis. His survey also indicated that the most congested site (in terms of informal entrepreneurial activities) is Fourth Street Bus Terminus (at the edge of the CBD). He mentions that it is probably because of the heavy volume of commuters coming to and going out of the CBD, using public transport. Furthermore, Hlohla noted that vendor numbers burgeon along Robert Mugabe Way and Jason Moyo Street, especially after four o'clock in the afternoon. This is the time the municipal police knock off, the time a great number of office workers dismiss for home; hence, a time vendors 'hunt after customers' (Table 1). Moreover, the survey revealed that there are those vendors involved in selling items, such as perfumes, watches, belts, clothes, footwear, just to mention few, highly populated in fronts of shops, chiefly situated along First Street (particularly, departmental and specialized shops such as Greatermans, Meikles, Barbours, Clicks, Topics, and Edgars). These sell high order goods. The exception of the shops includes Meikles, which is along Robert Mugabe Way and Greatermans corner Second Street and Jason Moyo Avenue.

**TABLE 1: SHOWING THE DAILY AVERAGE NUMBER OF INFORMAL VENDORS IN THE CBD OF HARARE**

ACTIVITY	Location or Site in the CBD									TOTAL
	4TH STREET TERMINUS	ZIMEX MALL	EAST GATE	N. MANDELA	R. MUGABE ST	SPEKE AVENUE	J MOYO STREET	G. SILUNDIKA STREET	5TH STREET	
FOREX DEALING	192	90	80	56	36	30	-	43	85	612
TAX TOUTING CAR PARK CONTROLLERS AND CAR WASHING	3	-	-	15	-	7	12	20	-	57
JUICE CARDS VENDORS	17	3	2	10	4	2	2	1	3	44
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES VENDORS	32	3	2	19	35	2	12	2	5	112
BOOK MAGAZINE VENDORS	-	2	1	6	6	1	7	2	-	25



PHONES/HANDSET DEALERS	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
MAPUTI, BUNS, CIGARETTES, SWEETS,	25	5	2	8	6	2	2	5	4	59
SHOE POLISHING	-	-	-	3	7	2	4	-	-	16
WALLETS, BELTS, SPECTACLES	3	3	2	12	5	-	10	-	-	35
ARTISTS - SIGN WRITING, DRAWING	-	-	-	2	2	8	1	-	-	13
CARRIER BAGS	-	-	-	-	6	-	5	-	-	11
TOTAL	272	136	89	131	107	54	55	73	97	1014

SOURCE: Hlohla (2008:31)

In light of the preceding paragraphs, one can note that not only do we have vendors in the streets but also vendors in homes. Focus, however, remains largely on the street vendor who faces a number of challenges and threats in daily operations. These have, of late, refined their survival strategies in informal sectors in which the operating environment is risky because the sector is not well catered for in terms of laws and regulations governing urban centres (Chirisa, 2007; Hlohla, 2008). Some of the strategies are:

- Starting operations early in the morning before municipal police officers begin work and remaining on the streets when they knock off (*early rise and late keep strategy*);
- Using signals and cues to alert one another of any police ‘danger’ or enemy presence during their course of work (*the antagonist communicative strategy*);
- Displaying ability-to-do to anyone who asks for any service (shoe repair, cellphone fixing, computer servicing, etc). Thus, the vendor masks himself/herself as having the ability to meet the demands of the help-seeker. Then he/she goes to find the real serviceperson (electrician, cobbler, or the required technician). He/she makes the help-seeker wait, gets in some inside space/room, negotiates for the price and fixing of say the help-seeker’s gadget, then goes back with the sorted item or deal. This is part and parcel of the *game theory*. What he/she does is to make sure the help-seeker never gets direct help from the professional or technical specialist. He/she intermediates and manages in keeping the ‘gap’. Such a strategy can be described as the *deceptive intermediation strategy*. It maximises on the ignorance of the help-seeker and the problem-fixer.
- Displaying posters advertising goods in stock, like textbooks, while hiding the merchandise in underground holes, back offices, pockets, or other covers (*the deceptive commodity and merchant hiding strategy*); and
- Not putting all eggs in one basket, in terms of activities done or businesses conducted (*the general dealership or diversification strategy*).

In a nutshell, the informal sector in the city centre takes a number of forms. How ‘business’ is conducted by the players leaves a lot to be desired in terms of ethics, legal codes, and conscientious guide. As conflicts might increase in the business, the actors may become hardened in conscience. No-one cares about his or her ‘neighbour’. But street vending is also on the increase in all parts of the street. One can observe roadside stalls in many areas including Borrowdale, Marlborough, Msasa,

Highfield, Sunningdale, Budiro, Glen Norah, Glen View, Mufakose, to name but a few. This signals the re-emergence of the pre-Murambatsvina arrangement.

### **Corruption, Religiosity, Bureaucracy, and Professionalism**

The aspect of corruption in Harare, like in any other place, is linked to professionalism and bureaucracy. Matovu (2002), referring to World Bank (2002), asserts that corruption involves the misuse of private services for private gains. He shows that it manifests in different forms, including acceptance, soliciting of bribes, nepotism, theft of public goods, and embezzlement. Corruption is noted as one of the major obstacles to good governance. With increased economic hardships, the cases of corruption have increased daily as noted in the media, especially the independent newspapers including the Zimbabwean, Financial Gazette, and the Standard, to name these three. But the actual numbers of cases are not recorded. This is because the independent press that has been outlined is largely biased towards 'unearthing corruption' by political figures, senior government officials, and business tycoons (Box 4).

#### **BOX 4: 1000 CASES OF CORRUPTION DEALT WITH THIS YEAR**

As the country joins the rest of the World in commemorating the International Anti-Corruption Day, government says the Anti-corruption Commission's Investigation and prosecution Division this year received one thousand and eighteen reports on corruption. Dr Samuel Undenge said despite limited resources his ministry is operating with, during the year 2007 under review 1018 cases on corruption have been received and referred to other agencies for further investigations. He said the Prevention and Corporate Governance Division of the Anti-corruption Commission endeavors to nip corruption in the bud hence the quick reaction on all reported cases. The International Anti-Corruption World day is commemorated on the 9th of December. Corruption has of late emerged as one of the greatest threats to socio-economic development the world over. It creates a distorted economy where a minority becomes filthy rich while the majority sinks into abject poverty.

SOURCE: ZBC Newsnet (Mon, 10 Dec 2007): <http://www.newsnet.co.zw>

Without delving much into the politics of the issue, the following rhetoric questions are posed regarding professionalism, corruption, and bureaucracy in Harare, which can equally be said of most places according to the country's settlement hierarchy:

- How do we explain a planner, architect, engineer, or land surveyor (to name these few) who works in a local authority department who draws plans or diagrams for a client, assesses the same, and approves them all in the same office? How valid is that assessment in light of the 'who will police the police' argument?
- Why does it take longer to approve one document and shorter for another, but of the same quality and nature?
- How do we describe a teacher who deliberately 'confuses' his class so that those who need 'real explanations' must hire him out for 'extra-lessons' at a fee.
- What does it mean to have a medical practitioner who recommends that a patient undergoes a surgical operation because without such surgical operation the income to the hospital or surgery will be low? Or, that doctor who writes a prescription addressed to his friend's pharmacy (though the patient might not know it)?

- What about the lawyer who keeps on giving his client hope even in a case that he has concluded to be, by all description, lost for him?
- What about a poor white garment apostolic sect believer, with all her definitions of sin, who sell cigarettes to her customers literally 'sending them to hell', according to her religious doctrine? Is that not true hypocrisy, malice, and debauchery?
- There is also the shopkeeper who sells one percent of the goods he receives to customers who come by the counter and sells ninety-nine percent by the backdoor at a price ten times higher than the 'actual' price (which can be the market price).
- What of the banker who cues his friends to come and withdraw their money form his office leaving the rest of the other bank customers on the queue for the rest of the day?<sup>4</sup>

One could go on and on citing these rather awkward examples. What one discovers is a socio-economic fabric where a good number of professionals are working in an unethical manner for them to meet day to day their needs. They are the worst of all peoples because society expects them to be of a certain high status. By investing in education, it was 'promised' to them, at least by society and life, that it would be well with them. Suddenly they find themselves in gross poverty....no option but to indulge in corrupt practices, grand and petty, chaotic and organised, business and administrative, to name these few.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS: WHICH DIRECTION TO TAKE THEN?**

The trend in the cityscape of Harare in 2008 shows that there has been a growing demands by dealers, landlords, etc. that payers should do so in hard currency. This is against the law yet the law has been so naïve to be effective in protecting the poor urbanites. The situation has been exacerbated by the stagflation the country is going through; especially that mid-2007 there was a war against shop owners over price hikes. This produced distrust between the Government and the Business community. In the countryside, farms failed to yield crop due to a floods followed by drought produced famine. The thwarting of the non-state sector, particularly Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), has meant an increased expectation on the urban sector by the rural sector. This is also partly explained by the 'politics of elections' that have obsessed the country since the beginning of the year 2008. This adversely affected rural-urban linkages during this time. In all of these circumstances it has been the

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<sup>4</sup> Cash shortages have been experienced in Zimbabwe from 2003 and these have be produced most of the bank queues, especially in city and town centres in the country. Harare as the primate and capital city has been the hardest hit of the problem

poorest of the poor who have had to suffer chronically. They have been macerated and pulverized beyond recognition. Because of the surmountable pressure, many have lost the discipline of the conscience and practiced what is a menace to their thinking, feeling, and professional standards. What a situation of ethical dilemma! What then would be required to deal with the atrocity of the situation: religion, policy, statutory instrument, repentance, philosophy...?

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