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FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN COMMUTER TRANSPORT
SYSTEM IN ZIMBABWE. A CASE STUDY OF HARARE'S MUFAKOSE HIGH
DENSITY SUBURB (1967-2017)**

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to Midlands State University for acceptance, a research project entitled: *The Historical development of urban Commuter transport system in Zimbabwe. A case study of Harare's Mufakose high density suburb*, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts in History and International Studies Honours Degree.

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RELEASE FORM

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DECLARATION

I John Takuranahoushe Matamba declare that this Dissertation entitled *The Historical Development of Urban Commuter Transport System. A case study of Harare's Mufakose High Density suburb*, is based on my own research and reading and has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university. All the sources consulted and quoted have been acknowledged as complete references.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God who is my source of power, excellence and competence. (Psalm 23: The Lord is my Shepherd....)

LIST OF ACRONYMS

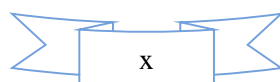
AA	-	Automobile Association
AVM	-	Associated Vehicles Manufacturers
BRT	-	Bus Rapid Transit
BSAC	-	British South Africa Company
CBD	-	Central Business District
CMED	-	Central Mechanical and Equipment Department
COTTCO	-	Cotton Company of Zimbabwe
ESAP	-	Economic Structural Adjustment Program
HUOC	-	Harare United Omnibus Company
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
NAZ	-	National Archives of Zimbabwe
PSC	-	Public Service Commission
SUOC	-	Salisbury United Omnibus Company
UTA	-	United Transport Africa
UTG	-	United Transport Group
UOC	-	United Omnibus Company
ZANU PF	-	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZOC	-	Zimbabwe Omnibus Company
ZRP	-	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZUPCO	-	Zimbabwe United Passenger Company

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ABSTRACT

The historical development of the urban commuter system in Rhodesia was as result of improved road infrastructure and the failure of the Salisbury City Council to create a bus system resulting in the sector being operated by a private company. Several factors led to the establishment of Mufakose and earliest developments in the commuter transport system were greatly linked to economic growth. The commuter transport system prior to the establishment of the suburb was under the monopoly of a private company which operated under a franchise of the Salisbury City Council. The bulk of the transport users was the working class and the sector was subsidised which led to the effectiveness of the bus system before 1980. After independence, two major policies of nationalisation and deregulation greatly affected the public transport. These policies accompanied by macro-economic challenges resulted in various changes to the public transport by the beginning of the twenty-first century marking the end of better days in the transport system. Public transport was associated with various changes as well as problems of informality in the system resulting in the government and local authorities initiating several policies in order to improve the urban transport system. Throughout the development of the system, there were several changes in the modes of transport and vehicles. Archival sources and reports were used to come out with this detailed research. Interviews with Mufakose residents (senior citizens, regular transport users, commuter omnibus operators and owners) were conducted. Information from various stakeholders in the transport sector was also used so as to complement the interviews and archival sources.



INTRODUCTION

Developing countries have over the years rapidly experienced the growth of towns, cities, resulting in the increase of vehicles which in turn have a bearing effect on the dynamics of the urban transport system. The study is looking at the urban transport system from a historical perspective paying particular attention to the urban commuter system in Harare's Mufakose high density suburb. When Mufakose was established in 1967, buses were the main form of public transport operating under the Salisbury City council's franchise and the bulk of the transport users was the working class. Nevertheless, the modern urban transport system is mainly dominated by small commuter omnibuses and a variety of smaller vehicles. This is a clear indication that the urban commuter system has undergone various changes, from the time the suburb came into existence up to date.

The availability of better road network and transport infrastructure, population growth and the establishment of early African suburbs such as Mbare and Highfields were the major factors which resulted in the provision of a bus system by the Salisbury City council. The purpose of the study is focusing on the developments in the urban commuter system looking at the origins of the urban transport system in Zimbabwe, the dynamics, changes in the system, types of vehicles that were in use, the factors leading to the modern day urban transport system, government and municipal involvement in the transport system and various problems associated with the public transport. Urban commuter transport system facilitates the movement for people linking origins and destinations within the urban sphere.¹ This study argues that the historical development of urban transport system presents a failure by the government and local authorities to create a sustainable transport system resulting in the sector being chaotic.

Several social, political and economic factors such as economic policies, macro- economic challenges of hyperinflation and erratic fuel supply, the migration of Zimbabweans to the

diaspora, corruption, weak law enforcement and poor management by the transport providers contributed to the changes that occurred in the urban commuter system in Mufakose. In the colonial period public transport system was mainly under the monopoly of the council as there was absence of private cars since most Africans could not afford personal vehicles. The bus service was operated by a private company which had acquired a franchise from the City council. Efficiency of the bus service was as a result of the subsidies and better management.

After independence, two major policies, nationalisation and deregulation positively affected the development public transport in the last decade of the century. The period between 1980-1999 was a period of better days in the history of public transport due to HUOC monopoly and competition in the sector after deregulation. The Harare United Omnibus Company (HUOC) which became Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO) had the monopoly of urban transport. ESAP and macro- economic challenges ushered in the emergence of informal transport operators in Mufakose. With erratic fuel supply resulting in the scarcity of public transport, in 2003, the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) intervened the local transport system.

During the freedom train era there were the remnants of the fleet brought in during deregulation as well as the diasporan fleet on the road. However, with the high influx of vehicles from countries such as Japan, United Kingdom, among others, the NRZ and the diasporan fleet was no match to the new modes of transport which was mainly dominated by small commuter omnibuses and private cars. The end result was the public transport became informal with the proliferation of kombis. Informality of the system was associated with numerous problems resulting in the government and the local authorities initiating some policies dealing with transport woes. Therefore, the urban transport system has a bearing history to its own development since the time the suburb came into existence, and the research is looking at the gradual development of the urban transport system in Mufakose.

Mufakose public transport transitioned from being formal in the early days to informal after deregulation. Formal public transport in relation to Mufakose was a system whereby services were characterised by fixed routes, stops and schedules. Drivers had imposed limits on hours of work and there was the use of the BRT system. Formal public transport was subsidised and its orientation was uniform in nature. However, informal public transport did not always have fixed routes and schedules. The system was not subsidised, there were not limited working hours of the drivers and the informality of the system lacked uniformity.

Statement of the Problem

A comprehensive historical study of the development and role of public transport in Zimbabwe is yet to be written. There has been scarcity of documentation concerning the historical establishment and purpose of early old suburbs in Zimbabwe like Mufakose. This also goes in line with the development of Mufakose transport network. Many primary and secondary sources focus on the development of the urban transport system of Harare in general and there is absence of a continuous piece of work outlining this development. In the suburb of Mufakose, there is presence of infrastructure (bus termini, bus stops, commuter train pick up points) that have remained idle and not functional for some time. Also within the yards of the township, there lie scrap vehicles (buses and trucks) that used to dominate the transport system in Mufakose. Residents from time to time faced some transport problems as well as high transport costs especially during pick hours and the nature of the roads has deteriorated, which has led to several occurrences of road accidents. The urban transport system today is being viewed as chaotic.

Objectives

- To trace origins and development of Mufakose transport network.
- To determine the early forms of transport in Mufakose and efficiency of public transport.

- To examine the transport system after Independence, the better days in public transport.
- To explore problems within the transport system leading to transport woes in Mufakose.

Research Questions

- What were the dynamics of the urban transport system in Mufakose?
- How has the urban transport system changed after attainment of independence?
- Why has the transport system moved from being formal to informal?
- How successful were the government and the local authorities in dealing with transport woes?

Historical background

Mufakose is one of the oldest suburbs of the city of Harare. Established in 1967, it is located to the west of Harare about 15 kilometres from the Central Business District. The suburb is popularly known as *Mfombi*. It is surrounded by Marimba park, Crowborough North and Budiriro residential areas and is home to thousands of the capital's population. The suburb is known for its cultural practices of traditional *nyawu* (zvingure) by some of the locals. A viable home industry once existed in the township of Mufakose offering employment to some of the residents before operation Murambatsvina in 2005.

Mufakose was built by the Rhodesian government in 1967 as a segregated suburb to house predominantly black labourers and their families during the colonial era. Accommodation was mainly for black employees of foreign origin that is workers from Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique. According to Chikumbu, those labourers had come to Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), a large number of them during the time of the Federal government of Rhodesia-Nyasaland 1953-63.² There was need to accommodate these people and this was one of the founding factors of the township. Nevertheless, Mushinga states that Mufakose did not exclusively accommodate people of foreign origin, but some local people were also given the privilege of acquiring accommodation in the suburb under a condition that the claimants should

have been married and prove to be employed.³ Mushinga also further argued that the key reason why the suburb was dominated by people of foreign origin was that the local people had less interests in city family houses.⁴

The establishment of Mufakose followed some of the oldest suburbs of Mbare and Highfields which were established in the 1930s. Colonial buildings known as “msana yenzou” (the back of an elephant) have the make of most houses which accommodated bachelors and small families as most of the houses consisted three, four and five rooms, but with the improving economic conditions, residents are upgrading these buildings to modern structures.

Historically, another reason for the establishment of Mufakose was also due to the African elite whose demand was for the matrimonial private homes. It can be noted that most early African suburbs that existed in the city of Salisbury (Harare) were mainly supporting single men. After the Second World War, there was a sharp rise in job opportunities but adverse lack of houses. According to Scarnecchia, the colonial state concerning the situation then provided a scheme for access to accommodation but African residence was restricted to municipal and government built-townships and for male workers.⁵ African elites before shared houses with the unskilled labourers and they were advocating that their families should not be exposed to the moral dilapidation of the early townships. Scarnecchia argues that African elite united with the state’s goal to provide a steadier African residential area based on married family life, opposed to the existing location which was dominated by male-only single sex shelters.⁶ The new suburbs were then built in the 1950s with the largest being new Highfield. Mufakose was then built in the 1960s.

The history of the urban transport system in Mufakose is significant and to be highly taken into consideration because the township was made to accommodate workers employed in the industrial zones of Southerton, Workington as well as Lyton. Unlike most of the old suburbs

of Harare, Highfields and Mbare residential areas which are located nearer to the industrial zones of Workington, Southerton and Graniteside, Mufakose is located a distant from the CBD and the industrial areas. With the distance, workers from Mbare and Highfields could find easy modes of transport such as walking and cycling, but for the case of Mufakose, a viable transport network was required.

Literature Review

The reasons for the establishment and growth of Mufakose are unique when looking at the urban growth theory. Mbara and Paradza argue that in urban areas of Zimbabwe, the first suburbs that were established, most people lived within a walking distance to their place of work and commerce. Nevertheless, as the urban areas expand rapidly in relation to rural-urban migration and natural growth, the towns responded by growing horizontally.⁷ They further argued the growing of the urban areas resulted in people living far away from their places of work which resulted in increased distances for movement and contact whilst the industrial and commercial zones increased centrally.⁸ Mbara and Paradza based their argument to the development of the old suburbs to natural population increase and the growth of industries. Their argument is a general theory of the establishment of most suburbs in the country and the world at large. The establishment of Mufakose however, was unique. Mufakose was built a distant to the CBD and industries. Some of the suburbs that followed such as Kambuzuma, Westwoods and Warren Park were built closer to the CBD and the industries along the route from the CBD to Mufakose. This means that the reasons for the establishment and purpose of Mufakose are unique when studying the urban growth theory, which was not clearly addressed. Concerning the early development of Rhodesian commuter transport system, Mlambo states that the development of road network in Zimbabwe by the colonial regimes before 1945 paved way for the establishment viable transport system in the country.⁹ When Mufakose was established, the council first serviced the roads and other transport infrastructure. This

development was essential to the provision of a bus system in the urban area. Mlambo focuses on the development of the road network as an essential element which resulted in the establishment of a better transport system. Mlambo's argument however was not based on the urban areas like Mufakose, but on the development of the road network across the country. Indeed, there were some various socio- economic reasons for the establishment of a bus system in colonial Rhodesia by the local authorities in 1939 apart from the availability of transport infrastructure that the research focused on which were not well addressed through literature.

Looking at the provision of Salisbury bus service, Jordan argues monopoly was essential to public transport since passenger transport had a real and vital social significance in the life of modern towns.¹⁰ He further states that public transport system is most efficiently and economically operated under monopoly and the local authority has a duty to provide cheap, continuous and reliable services for all sections of the community.¹¹ Jordan who wrote the history of the early municipal bus system in Harare during colonial regime mainly centres on monopoly as an essential element to public transport system. His article presented the failure by the Salisbury City council to establish monopoly in the public transport and the council invited tenders to run the system putting to effect the monopoly. His work greatly outlines why the early Rhodesian public transport was a milestone. However, the work of Jordan fails to cater for the dynamics of the transport system and also by the time his book was published (1983), there were less changes in the system. Also it fails to outline some other forms of transport that existed in Rhodesia for example cycling and other private vehicles. He also focused on Harare, meaning to say the developments in Mufakose's transport network were partially stated.

Mbara states that changes that took place in the urban commuter system between 1990-2000 was as a result of macro- economic challenges of increase inflation and an unpleasant economic environment which affected the recapitalisation program.¹² According to Mbara, government

participation in ZUPCO was meant to effect policy in particular the purchase of new fleet so as to replace the old age HUOC buses and for operational purposes but the company did not frequently adjust fares to keep up with increases in operational costs and this was worsened by macro-economic challenges and Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAP).¹³ Mbara clearly notes the effects of deregulation on the public transport. He also conducted a survey on Mufakose/Kambuzuma to city corridor to find the initial effects of deregulation. Nevertheless, Mbara did not address other reasons for the coming in of private players into the public transport. His argument was based on deregulation as policy which ushered in for the private players to venture into the transport system, but before 1993, emergency taxis and commuter omnibuses were invading the streets of Mufakose. Therefore, the research also looked at various reasons which led to the coming in of private players apart from deregulation.

Sikwila argues that the introduction of ESAP brought positive changes in the transport sector as there was competition. He based his argument on the line that the commuter system in the capital was problematic as ZUPCO had a monopoly in the system and productivity was sacrificed and thereby leading to poor services.¹⁴ To Sikwila, deregulation of the sector improved the commuter services to which his argument was congruent when explaining the changes of the urban transport system between 1990-1999. However, he emphasises on the positive improvements of the sector but the beginning of the twenty-first century there was serious scarcity of public transport and the situation forced people to travel in all types of vehicles including lorries, pickup trucks, a practice which bargained the safety of the travellers. His works mainly focuses on the positive effects of deregulation neglecting how it negatively affected ZUPCO and how the effectiveness of deregulation was short-lived.

The beginning of the twenty-first century marked the end of better days in Mufakose public transport. There was serious transport shortage in the suburb. According to Mazarire and Swart, the fleet from diaspora managed to fill the gap in the transport system between 2003- 2010.¹⁵

McGregor argues that Zimbabwe's tough decade between 2000 and 2010 and its related political and economic challenges which resulted in a substantial Zimbabwean diaspora abroad.¹⁶ The people from diaspora sought to invest home in property hence there was a vast incoming of the diasporan vehicles into the country during this period. Indeed, the diasporan fleet managed to solve the transport woes in Mufakose between 2003- 2007. However, during this period there were also private players who continued to offer service not using the fleet from diaspora. Commuter train also made up the transport system during this time. Therefore, Mazarire and Swart's work did not focus on the dynamic of the transport system and other transport variables during this period. The research therefore managed to cater for other transport initiatives such as the freedom train.

Golub argues that the proliferation of commuter omnibuses in developing countries presents a failure by the local authorities to create a sustainable urban transport system.¹⁷ Golub mainly argues on the provision of informal public transport and the problems of informality in the system. His work is essential when analysing transport woes in Mufakose. Critic to note is that Golub's thesis was focusing on Brazil as a case study. Also he failed to give other reasons for the rise of small commuter omnibuses which took over the urban transport system. Hence there was need to look at the initial transport problems that Mufakose transport system faced as a result of informality, although similarities can be drawn between Golub's case study and Mufakose in as much as problems of informality are concerned.

These scholars clearly outline the early urban transport system and various explanations to bring about why there was so many changes in the development of the transport system as a whole. However, although these scholars said much concerning the historical development of urban transport system, there are several gaps that the research fulfilled were not answered by the literature. The issue of subsidies and fares is of concern. During the colonial period and the decade after independence, the government subsidised the transport system which in turn had

a positive impact in as much as the fares were concerned. The research looked at the primary sources and interviews concerning how and why were these subsidies paid and what impact did they bring towards the development of the urban transport system.

Mufakose amongst the oldest high density suburbs of Harare is located a distant away from the CBD and the industrial zones. Its location becomes a basic element when studying the historical development of the urban transport network. Nevertheless, the reason for its location is a gap that needed to be filled with this research. This also gave a clear analysis towards the development of the early transport system and how did the public cope to the various developments in the system.

Sources and Methodology

The research adapted qualitative research method in the study. It is a constructive research in discussing the development of the urban transport system, the dynamics and the changes that took place in the system. Sources consulted in this research were written records which included both primary and secondary sources comprising, archival papers, scholarly research papers, journals, books, newspapers and diaries.

Archival sources, that is newspapers, municipality minute books and government reports and gazettes, were essential as they have first-hand information on the policies and initiatives regarding urban transport system during the colonial period and the post-colonial era. These collections are mainly found at the Harare National Archives of Zimbabwe and Mufakose municipality repository. These sources offer a first-hand understanding to the topic as they are essential to the unfolding of history. First hand sources also validate and evaluate both oral and secondary sources to the research.

Secondary sources which include published and unpublished materials were consulted. They also bridged the gap from where primary sources left. They strengthen the argument as

published sources are considered to be a work effort by scholars who would have combined all the necessary information needed to come up with a research paper on the development of urban transport system. In this case they assisted in supporting the study on some of the necessary data which may be included. As such, unpublished sources such as seminar papers, dissertations were used for clarity and diversity purposes. They added information and insights to the researcher. These sources work interchangeably so as to fill gaps that had been left out.

Interviews played a pivotal role to the research. The interviews were conducted from mainly senior citizens, residents of Mufakose who witnessed the growth and development of same as a suburb, most of whom were employed in the colonial economy and are now pensioners. Transport operators and the public commuter users that is residents from Mufakose were also interviewed. Interviews were also conducted from various stakeholders in the transport sector. Interviews are efficient for they allow the interviewer to address any misunderstanding and to ask for clarity. They also enable the respondent to answer as fully as possible.

Dissertation Layout.

Chapter 1-This chapter focused on the origins of the urban transport system in Zimbabwe during colonialism. It traced the development of the road network in Rhodesia and the provision of the municipal bus service. The chapter also outlines the developments of the commuter transport system of Mufakose before independence.

Chapter 2- The chapter explored the various changes and developments that occurred after independence outlining two major policies of nationalisation and deregulation. This period was the time of better days in Mufakose public transport as a result of HUOC monopoly in the suburb.

Chapter 3-The chapter focuses on the downfall of the formal public transport due to various political and economic reasons which resulted in the less existence of public transport. The chapter also focuses on the introduction of commuter train and the diasporan fleet in Mufakose transport network giving factors to their survival and decline. The chapter then finally outlines the proliferation of small commuter omnibuses.

Chapter 4 - This chapter looked at the problems that were associated with informality in the public transport and how successful were the government and the local authorities in improving status of the commuter transport.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER 1 - EARLY RHODESIAN URBAN TRANSPORT SYSTEM

1:1 -Introduction

The chapter mainly focuses on the provision of public transport prior to the establishment of the suburb. The period is from 1967 the time when the suburb was founded, up to 1980, the year that Zimbabwe attained independence. However, the urban transport system of Mufakose developed out of an urban transport system that was already existing, hence the chapter firstly gives a historical overview concerning the origins of transport system in Zimbabwe from the time the settlers set foot in Zimbabwe in 1890, looking at the development of the road network which paved way for the provision of the commuter transport system. Following that, the chapter therefore, focuses on the development of the bus service in Mufakose, monopoly of the municipal bus service, the issues of government subsidies in transport, the efficiency of the monopoly as well as early modes of transport.

1:2 - Origins of The Transport System in Zimbabwe

The history of the development of the urban transport system is directly linked to colonialism. Before 1890, travelling in Zimbabwe was confined to game trails and footpaths apart from the missionaries and traders' roads as well as the hunters' roads. The first colonial era road was a wagon track hewed out of the bush over the route from Tuli through Fort Victoria (Masvingo) to Salisbury (Harare) in 1890.¹ Other roads established were a road from Charter to Salisbury through Marandellas and from Charter to Chimoio via Umtali. The early roads were tracks marked for wagons to follow. The means of transport were horses and ox-drawn wagons and as well by foot. Travelling on these dirt roads was reportedly a veritable adventure.

The first legislation to control road work was the 1889 Royal Charter which authorised British South Africa Company (BSAC) to make and maintain roads. The actual work of road construction was carried out by people or concerns who supplied labour and these were supervised by road engineers. Nevertheless, travelling during the rainy seasons was difficult

due to the nature of these roads and endless delays were often encountered. In the early phases of road transport system, the roads that existed ran parallel to the railway lines which transported goods and people from surrounding farms and population centres to the nearest railway station.² In towns the roads were in bad conditions that the settlers resorted to bicycles. Road transport was mainly for the transportation of goods.

Established in 1895, the Roads Department was given the task of constructing and maintaining roads throughout the country, but the department was poorly organised and for many years it remained underfunded which compromised road construction and provision of a viable transport system in Rhodesia. According to Mlambo, in 1914, the department had a total transport fleet of 39 scotch carts and only 89 mules and due to insufficient funds the department succeeded to build very few earth roads.³ With the poor road situation in the colony, many settlers opted to establish themselves along railway lines so as to have easy transportation.

By the time the company rule ended in 1923, the road and the transport system was still primitive although a number of earth and gravel roads had been established and also travelling was no longer as dangerous as it was in the first two decades of colonial settlement. There was a lot to be done and much work was now left to the responsible government.

The first motor vehicle arrived Rhodesia in 1902 when Charles Duly (an engineer and founder of Duly & Company Limited) owned a chain-driven, single cylinder, six and a half inch horsepower French Gladiator. Following that, Duly's friend Francois Issels, imported the second car, a ford.⁴ Subsequently, more vehicles were then imported into the country as the new means of transport became gradually popular. By 1916, the number of cars had increased to 36. By 1922, the motor car owners had increased enough leading to the establishment of Rhodesia's Automobile Association (AA). Despite this prominent growth in the number of vehicles, the owning of a motor car was still unique in the country by the end of Company rule

in 1923. Nevertheless, by the end of the decade, more cars were being imported and the Ford Model-T was becoming more familiar.

With the increase of the number of vehicles, road construction recorded major improvement in the post- Company period as successive governments made high efforts to improve and expand roads. This was done so as to promote white settlement, the road and transport network as well as economic development. In 1925, Stuart Chandler was appointed Chief Road engineer. The same year also saw the passing of the Roads and Road Traffic Act No.25. The government's policy was to construct roads of variable quality within the road system and the quality of the roads under the control of District Road Councils varied in relation to the economic status of the residents of those localities.⁵ The main purpose of the road department was the building and maintenance of all public roads and bridges throughout the country. According to Mlambo, Chandler managed to only built gravel roads basing on the premise that the volume of cars in the colony was too low for the establishment of major roads.⁶ Nevertheless, the policy changed as there was rapid importation of more and faster vehicles in the late 1920s.

With the growing populations in Salisbury, both Africans and European settlers, Rhodesian urban local authorities became involved in the provision of public transport in the 1930s. According to Jordan, the issue of monopoly and subsidies became the major subject of debate to the provision of the bus service.⁷ In 1935 the Salisbury City Council made a request to the central government to revise the Municipal Act so as to grant councils which had established a bus service the power to prohibit the carrying on by another person other than the one with whom a council had an agreement of any such service.⁸ The revision was finally made in 1936. In 1939, the Council acquired 8 buses from Britain. However, the plan was compromised due to the outbreak of the Second World War as the British government intervened in the war. These buses were never brought to the country. It was until 1942 that the Salisbury City council

was in a position to begin operating a bus service acquiring buses from various sources.⁹ Between 1942 and 1948, the municipal bus service served within the city centre. In September 1948 a private company made a request for the bus service to cover peri-urban areas, but these townships had their own self-governing town councils or management boards. Transrhodes Services Ltd was the private company which had made an enquiry to the City Council as the company had already been accepted by the peri-urban local authorities to serve their area of jurisdiction. The council agreed and services were to be offered between the city and Meyrick Park, Hatfield, Highlands, Ardbennie, Cranbourne, Prospect and Parktown. According to Jordan, the Council agreed on the premise that the company confined its services. Henceforth, the company established a service between the peri-urban areas and a bus stop on Third Stre.¹⁰ Due to the fact that the peri-urban areas had their own independent local authorities, it resulted in the City council operating in the city centre whilst the private company offering services to the peri-urban areas.

In 1951, the Council was aimed at expanding its influence it applied to the Governor for the permission to offer services within the City and the Africans' townships within a radius of 20km from the Salisbury post office. The Governor permitted for the Council to create a monopoly both within the city and the African peri-urban areas but the peri-urban authorities were not in agreement to the suggested African service. This left the Council with a jurisdiction to operate in the City area. By 1952, the Council was in charge of City area whilst the Transrhodes company was operating buses in a circular routine around the CBD. The council was enthusiastic to create a monopoly and as a result the Council and the Transrhodes company were at loggerheads. The council saw a chance when the license of the Transrhodes company services Ltd was about to expire on 31 December 1953 a date the council had planned to effect monopoly.¹¹

Clashes originated from the standpoint that accusations were made that the Company's double decker buses were degrading roads and street trees. In response, the Council refused to improve Third Street bus stop. Company and Council buses at times could race for passengers. Events turned in March 1953, when the council had to effect monopoly. The Council invited tenders for the provision and operation of a bus service. This idea was emulated from both Mutare and Bulawayo City councils bus services. United Transport Africa Ltd (UTA) became the tender. This company had absorbed Transrhodes Pvt and had finance and staff available as a result of the nationalisation of its operations in the West of England.¹² From this, another dimension was taken in the development of the public commuter transport.

Preliminary agreement between the Council and UTA company was reached in October 1963, In September 1964 the government approved by finalising the terms and conditions of the Franchise Agreement.¹³ Generally, the first part of the contract was that the company was to provide service within a 25km radius from the Salisbury post office and the agreement covered the period up to 1975, eight years after the suburb of Mufakose was established. The UTA company was to continue to operate the Transrhodes services, and it purchased the municipal fleet and expanded services within its franchise area.

1:3 - Early development of Mufakose Transport Network.

Mufakose's commuter transport system emerged out of an urban transport system that was already developing. The suburb was built in phases and the Council paid much particular attention to the water system, sewer system, drainage system and the road network. According to Mushinga, the constructors of this suburb had a vision of a viable township as they well serviced this township before the houses were even distributed.¹⁴ When Mufakose was finally completed in 1970, the road network was well in shape and it acted as a prerequisite to a viable transport provision in Mufakose. Four major bus terminuses were constructed at shopping centres Mhishi, Samuriwo, Chidziva (now OK shopping) and at Gwenyambira. Several bus

stops were also established along the route to which the public transport followed. The route cut across the township enabling the population to have easy access to transport and the bus stops and stations were strategically positioned.

When Mufakose was established, the initial transport provider was the Salisbury United Omnibus Company (SUOC), which offered 95% of the services. The bulk of the transport users were the working class. Buses made the bulk of the mode of the transport as the African's income could not afford for personal vehicles. The company began with more ancient type of buses then followed by Albion buses which were semi-automatic. They were nicknamed Dakotas. The company ended up with two types of buses namely the Associated Vehicles Manufacturers (AVM) powered by DAF and the double decker. SUOC operated with an agreement to the Salisbury council and decision making required both parties. According to Jordan, routes and schedules required Salisbury City council's approval as well as fares.¹⁵ This was done so as to create a sustainable transport system. Therefore, Mufakose transport system was operated by a private company with a franchise given by the city.

However, although the SUOC and the Salisbury City council had good initiatives for services to the suburb, the transport initiatives from the onset were welcomed with dissatisfactions by the local people for a number of reasons. According to Mbirimi, the first blacks to settle in the suburb felt that they had been socially deprived as the township was far from the CBD and often referred to it as a 'forest.'¹⁶ Despite creating a bus system in the urban area, by 1968 there were various criticisms to the council concerning the passenger transport. Regardless of the fact that there was extremely well organised and operated passenger services in the urban areas, the situation from the viewpoint of knowledgeable operators was only described as chaotic.¹⁷ The residents felt that the fares were not fair at some point considering the fact that their houses were on rent to buy scheme, meaning some of their income was being consumed by those charges and at the same time they had to incur transport cost which was not favourable. Also

the routes and destinations were not clearly defined. It was completely a bus boycott by the Africans.

These problems were quickly alleviated as the Council, the government and SUOC came up with initiatives to rectify the situation. By 1969, designated routes were set. As noted above, buses mainly served the working class and hence the routes and destinations were created to highly ferry the Africans according to their places of work. There were two major destinations which included Harare (Mbare) bus terminus and CBD Market Square terminus. Workers who worked in the south-eastern parts of city could connect buses at the Fourth Street bus terminus but there was absence of shuttle service to transport people from point A to point B within the CBD, as this was done to avoid congestion in the CBD despite the fact that there were less number of cars. Mufakose- Machipisa route later came, linking Mufakose with other south-western suburbs of the city such as Highfields, Glen View and Glen Norah.

Routes were made in conjunction to African workplace (industries and factories). There were basically two routes that the bus followed. Buses from Mufakose to Harare(Mbare) used Gleneagles road, through Southerton industrial zone. This route was made for easy transportation of workers who worked in Southerton, Willowvale and Graniteside industries. The other route was meant for buses from Mufakose to the CBD via Kambuzuma using Lyton Road. This was done so as to cater for workers who worked in the Lyton and Workington industries. The council which came up with these routes paid much particular attention to the number of transport users which were workers.

The government introduced subsidies following a resistance by Africans. Mufakose' location came with a dissatisfaction to the Africans and according to Mushinga, some Africans boycotted the bus service and most local Africans refused to even stay in Mufakose and other urban suburbs.¹⁸ The key reason for the local Africans said the suburb was far and also local

Africans discredited having two homes, the one in urban area and one in the rural area as they often say *murume chaiye anoita musha mumwe chete, dzimba dzemudhorobha ndedzeshanyani* (a father should have a single homestead from a rural area, the city suburbs belongs to the people of foreign origin for example people from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique).¹⁹ Some local Africans even opted to commute from rural areas as acquiring a house in Mufakose proved to be a little expensive and also the rural-urban transport system was efficient. Private players such as Chawasarira, Muccheche, Matambanadzo, Shiriyekutanga, Kumuka, Mverechena bus companies served the rural areas and they created a very strong transport system that some Africans who had rural homes in areas such as Seke, Chihota, Mhondoro, Mrehwa, Shamva, Mvurwi, Zvimba among others opted to commute on daily basis to the city centre. Some of the Africans opted for bachelor residents and could visit their families over the weekends.

Therefore, for the government to improve the number of the transport users, they embarked on the issue of subsidies. SUOC could now receive a subsidy from the government. This in turn had a positive effect on the system as there were favourable fares gazetted according to distance. Mushinga states that these fares were so cheap that one did not even feel that they were paying for the transport cost unlike what is being done today.²⁰ This maneuver was welcomed as Jordan notes that in 1969 the company had sustained a shortfall with the previous chaotic transport initiatives but with the coming in of subsidies, an increase in bus usage by Africans was reported.²¹

The issue of subsidies in Mufakose in 1969 was not a new phenomenon. Initially, the subsidy of public transport had been viewed as a responsibility of the government in 1958. Through this, there was the provision of the Employer's Levy Bill which was to offer various ways to gather revenue to pay the subsidy. However, before the Governor put to effect the scheme, the Federation collapsed and there came the new government Unilateral Declaration of

Independence (UDI) in 1965. The new government continued with the issue of subsidy and it felt that subsidies were not a government but rather a local responsibility. The proposal made by the previous government had suggested a reduction of subsidy when the return on share capital exceeded 8 percent but the new commission recommended a reduction only when the return exceeded 12 percent.²² The Commission stated that the subsidy should be drawn from residential rates and different rates on industrial properties.

The proposal was however opposed by Salisbury City Council which suggested that the cost of subsidy should be paid by the employers of commercial and industrial labour. As a result, the Services Levy Act was propagated authorising the City Council to collect tax from companies which was used to subsidise transport. Farmers Co-op which had many workers residing in Mufakose was also affected by this initiative. Bus subsidies became effectively a local responsibility and the Salisbury city council paid subsidies to SUOC.

Following the successful initiatives of the subsidies, routes, destinations and fares, the public transport system in Mufakose by 1975 was a milestone. Buses were now the efficient means of transport. The AVM mode was modified and the double decker were being phased out mainly due to the improved infrastructure such as flyovers and as well some of them were being outdated. With better wages of the workers in Mufakose, some of them resorted to cycling as they could afford to own a bicycle. It was also with great advantage that when Mufakose was established, the road network also had the facility of cycle tracks which proved to be efficient and for the safety of the cyclists. The track ran from Mufakose to Rugare residential area and workers from Lyton industries could at times opt for cycling to buses. Mbirimi states that those days cycling was cheaper considering the fact that one worked at nearer industries and the bicycles being made those days were so durable that one rarely faced problems, although cars were the first priority but their salaries could not carter.²³

Fig 1. Salisbury United Omnibus Company (SUOC) buses at the Market Square before independence



Source: *Newsday* 23 April 2013

By 1976, there was the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Mufakose. This name according to Hiroaki et al is a name given to sophisticated convectional bus systems that are associated with their own roads and uses bus stations,²⁴ which was a feature of Mufakose bus system. The system used bus stations and bus stops, an elusive scheme that initially allowed passengers to pay before boarding the bus. This allowed for faster and more orderly boarding. At bus stations there were agents from SUOC where passengers bought tickets and in the event that one boards the bus at the bus stop, payment was done at the entrance to the driver in the bus.

Generally, during the colonial period, a day constituted three working shifts of eight hours per shift. With this, the buses did not only operate during daylight, but also at night due to the different shifts that the workers had. The buses operated under a timetable but during peak

hours when demand was high, more buses could be brought. Rhodesian urban transport to and from African residential areas was much more sophisticated, using radio- contact, patrolling cars, walkie – talkies or telephone communication between bus stations and headquarters with spare buses and crew standing by in depots for dispatch to busy areas.²⁵

1:4 - Conclusion

Conclusively, the early history of public transport system in Harare offers an example in failure by the Salisbury city council's aim to establish a monopoly. The city attempted to establish a bus system that was aimed at guaranteeing cheap and affordable service to communities in central parts of the city. The provision was challenged by private company which offered services to the peri-urban areas but the council managed to contain the situation. By the end of the colonial rule in 1980, Mufakose's transport network was very efficient and effective. The SUOC in conjunction with Salisbury city council created what could be called a masterpiece in as much as the urban transport system in Mufakose was concerned.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER 2- NATIONALISATION AND DEREGULATION OF THE COMMUTER TRANSPORT SYSTEM

2:1 Introduction

The post-colonial period was mainly associated with two major policies of nationalisation and deregulation of the transport sector respectively. During this period, several illegal private players invaded the transport business and hence Mufakose which is home to thousands of the capital's population was also affected by these developments. This chapter analysed various developments in the system the decade after independence. In 1990 Zimbabwe adopted ESAP which resulted in various changes in the transport system. The introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programs with a package of privatisation and deregulation was a turning point to the urban transport system. The chapter explores the effects of the deregulation of the transport sector and also how private players came to play during this period. The chapter also accounts for the variety of reasons that contributed to these numerous changes which resulted in the move from a formal public transport to informal public transport in Mufakose. The chapter is generally from 1980- 1999.

2:2 - Efficiency at its best: HUOC Monopoly in Mufakose

The attainment of Independence by Zimbabwe in 1980 increased the rate of rural-urban migration which resulted in exploded sizes of urban suburbs in particular Mufakose. The high rate of growth of population in urban areas resulted in great pressure on public services and infrastructure. This affected the transport network of Mufakose. between 1980- 1990. The end of colonial rule adversely resulted in the end of the oppressive policies that undermined African mobility for example pass laws and their removal resulted in the increase of African movement.

When Zimbabwe attained Independence in 1980, the transport provider in Mufakose remained SUOC only to be renamed Harare United Omnibus Company (HUOC) after the city had been renamed from Salisbury to Harare. The HUOC continued to operate on the basis of the previous SUOC that is it operated under the franchise by the then now Harare City Council. In 1981, a

year after Zimbabwe attained Independence, the new post-colonial government launched a plan of addressing socio-economic inequalities within Zimbabwean economy. According to Mbara, urban transport was regarded a key sector as evidenced by a number of provisions initiated by the government in the system.¹ Although there was a shift to this, HUOC services remained effective in Mufakose until 1988.

After Independence, when SUOC changed to HUOC, a new fleet of buses was brought to the streets of Mufakose. A deal was reached with Turnall Holdings Group which serviced the fleet belonging to HUOC. The company helped the HUOC fleet moving and throughout the hot, cold and rainy conditions of Zimbabwe and the famous AVM continued to serve the people of Mufakose and Harare at large.² The success of the HUOC in the transport system, in the early years after Independence relied heavily on W Dahmer & Company Limited, the sole manufacturer of such hardy vehicles. Almost every AVM part manufactured by Dahmer was local in content. The major items such as bus bodies, the complete chassis, all the bracketing, the exhaust systems, the air and fuel tanks among other accessories were furnished there.³ African conditions are harsh and considering that buses within Mufakose transport network operated a radius of 15 km which is a short distance for bus operation as there was high rate of stopping and moving and mostly using heavy gears as well the road network was associated with too many humps. The new fleet was made to withstand the rugged conditions and furnishing work demanded of them was welcomed by transport managers for the simplicity of their design.⁴ With this, the company policy of specialised design paid dividends over the years.

In 1988, the Zimbabwean government realised that the transport sector was an epicentre in the country's economy and it attained 51% shareholding of the Zimbabwe Omnibus Company(ZOC) and HUOC founding the Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO). The Zimbabwean government directly intervened in the urban transport system which had a great effect in the public transport. Mufema states that, the intervention by the government into

the transport system was a turning point to the operation of public transport network and it is its intervention that there is this chaotic transport system today in this suburb.⁵ From this, there was a new era in the transport system.

From 1988 onwards, ZUPCO became the monopoly of public transport in Mufakose. The HUOC cream and maroon buses that used to dominate the streets of Mufakose were replaced by the new blue and cream ZUPCO buses. With this development, Mubobo argues that it was only the change in colour but in the early years of ZUPCO, their services were just tantamount to that of HUOC.⁶ Nevertheless, when the government directly intervened in the public transport, fare were being determined by the government and it was no longer the duty of the council to do so. The duty of the City Council remained that of public works through road and other transport infrastructure maintenance.

The government's direct involvement in the public transport was for a variety of reasons. Mbara argues that government involvement in ZUPCO was meant to foster policy which the City Council had been reluctant to implement.⁷ Another reason was that the government wanted to purchase new buses and replace the old HUOC buses and expand the company. However, considering the fact that HUOC buses were well serviced through Turnill Holdings and Dahmer Company, the government's reason was just a point of entry into the transport system which was lucrative. Nevertheless, few buses were bought by the Company through the bus acquisition scheme but the company was failing to meet the demand. This was due to the rise in population of the urban areas which was putting more pressure on the bus service. It was also during this period that the number of transport users increased because the bulk of the transport users was now not only the working class, but a wide range of people unlike during the colonial era when mobility was associated mainly to the working class.

Fig 2: ZUPCO (cream and blue) buses at Machipisa rank 1996



Source: John Veerkamp, “Southern African buses and Coaches”, www.bus-planet.com/bus/bus-africa/Zimbabwe-site/index.html

By 1989, ZUPCO services in the suburb began to slowly deteriorate because of population increase which paved way for the coming in of the informal players, the emergency taxis in 1989. They were mainly the Peugeot 404 and 504 plying Crowborough road in Mufakose to the CBD via Lyton Road using the Copacabana rank. According to Mushinga, the taxis were indeed a success as they were faster than conventional buses hence the name emergency taxis and they had no fixed timetable and very flexible, but they had their disadvantage because they could not carry much luggage.⁸ This marked the beginning of the informal transport in Mufakose, although to the other parts of the city, the taxis had already been introduced.

Despite the fact that the services of the bus company were beginning to slowly decline, the demand for ZUPCO services in Mufakose increased between 1988-1991, whilst emergency taxi usage remained constant during the same period. Due to improved economic conditions after Independence, some Africans residents were now owning personal motor cars and motor cycles. Nevertheless, the usage of both the motor cars and motor cycles diminished by 1991 due to increasing costs of owning and operating motor cars.

ZUPCO problems by 1992 were mainly of financial income because the company at regular intervals did not adjust fares so as to meet the cost of operation. Fares earlier were paid according to distance, but ZUPCO gradually abandoned the scheme and it had a fixed price regardless of the destination from Mufakose. With this bad operation, the illegal private players found a business environment in the transport sector. However, Mushinga is of the view that although the bus company began to offer poor services, much of the population remained using the buses as it was the ones that people had been used to.⁹ Therefore, by 1992, Mufakose's commuter transport was now associated with both formal and illegal private players.

2:3 - Deregulation and Urban Transport Network

Deregulation is the removal of controls imposed by governments on the operation of markets to take away barriers of entry. According to Menard and Ghertman, deregulation is the removal of regulations often in order to adjust competition policy.¹⁰ It can be either partial or complete. Complete deregulation is a process of deregulation that is applied to the whole system deregulated whereas partial deregulation is a process which is incomplete. When comparing the two, complete deregulation is more advantageous as compared to partial deregulation.

In 1990, the country embarked on Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAP). The aim of ESAP was geared towards liberalising the economy by eliminating certain rules and controls impeding competition. This idea was brought by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to the developing nations as a scheme to foster socio- economic development.

Kikeri and Nellis state that the reasons for de-regulation and denationalisation were well established especially in developing economies where state enterprises had proved wasteful and inefficient.¹¹ Hindered from competition, it was a negative to ZUPCO's operations as it was overstaffed and set prices below costs that in the end resulted in financial losses.

In 1993, the government saw it necessary to deregulate the transport sector from the package of ESAP. Following government direct participation in the transport, system service delivery greatly improved years after. However, the financial sustainability of the company's Harare division decreased compromising its ability to effectively operate. The government had to liberalise the transport sector so as to meet the demand of public transport. Matunhu and Matunhu state that the Statutory Instrument 35A entitled Road Motor Transport liberalised the public transport in Zimbabwe at a period when ZUPCO was financially unstable and ill prepared to meet competition.¹² With this, ZUPCO's monopoly and legitimacy was now under threat when focusing on Mufakose transport network which had three destinations, CBD, Mbare and Machipisa meaning keeping up competition serving the three routes was at stake.

Deregulation when implemented, it was partial. Despite liberalising the transport sector, the government was to monitor the system and they had to make sure that vehicles were road worthy and that passengers were covered with insurance.¹³ Deregulation marked an increase in minibuses in public transport in Mufakose which had a positive effect on reduction of waiting time and queues. Mupfumira states that ZUPCO bus system was inflexible with long waiting and travelling time.¹⁴ When the government introduced deregulation, its major aim was to improve service delivery to the increasing urban population prior to urban mobility but the scheme was a deathblow to ZUPCO which had large carrying capacity as compared to the new smaller commuter omnibuses. The transport users had tested the effectiveness of emergency taxis and the new mode of transport was highly welcomed.

The process of deregulation recorded both positive and negative effects when it was implemented. It was a win game to Mufakose transport users and the new legalised transport providers. Competition resulted in the improvement in the quality of service. Operators were granted the routes they wished by government and no restrictions were made to the quantity of vehicles. This scheme enabled vehicles to flourish and public transport in Mufakose was more competitive since it had lucrative routes not only that of the CBD, but Mbare and Machipisa proved to be profitable.

Negatively, deregulation affected ZUPCO on a larger scale. When the sector was partially deregulated, the government kept the responsibility of setting fares, with less fares being set for ZUPCO buses. It was a move by the government which had a 51% shareholding in the company to keep up with the competition. The newly introduced commuter omnibuses with a complete different mechanism threatened the survival of ZUPCO in Mufakose. Since nationalisation, the services offered by ZUPCO declined. Mbara states that prior to deregulation, ZUPCO had a fleet of around 1200 buses serving the Harare urban area, but by 1997, the fleet had depleted by 45%.¹⁵ During the same period, there was a decrease in routes operated by ZUPCO. By 1997, ZUPCO was no longer serving Mufakose- Machipisa route, its monopoly remained to the CBD and Mbare. The survival of the Mbare- Mufakose route was based on the premise that the AVM could carry more luggage as compared to the newly introduced vehicles. Therefore, many transport users who were involved in trading at the Mbare market place could opt for the buses.

Following liberalisation process, there was a rapid increase in both the number and modes of commuter minibus fleet as well as the total public transport carrying capacity in Mufakose. By September 1994, commuter omnibuses represented 30% of urban public transport fleet.¹⁶ The carrying capacity varied greatly with most vehicles having a carrying capacity of 15 to 30 passengers, small omnibuses and minibuses respectively. The introduction and effectiveness

of minibuses resulted in the displacement of the emergency taxis which had become more profitable using Mufakose routes. They began to operate on very short routes and also provided intra-urban services.

Tolerance by Mufakose residents to the new legalised commuter omnibuses was not acute, but rather a gradual process. Transport users in the suburb were now having a variety of transport options between the new comers and ZUPCO convectional buses. Mbara presents that the commencement of the year 1994, minibuses offered a share of 4% in the market, whilst the emergency taxis had 18% whilst ZUPCO had 25% but by September the figures had decreased for both emergency taxis and ZUPCO to 9% and 20% respectively whilst commuter omnibus transport had risen to 16%.¹⁷ The rest of the percentage remained to other means of transport being walking, cycling, motor vehicles and motor cycle. The residents were gradually adopting to the new comers as their services were proving more efficient. By this time, the new commuter omnibuses were clearly replacing the ageing AVMs and the emergency taxis in the streets of Mufakose.

In order to have a clear picture on the effects of the legalisation of commuter omnibuses by the government to Mufakose transport network, Mbara and Maunder conducted a survey of Mufakose/Kambuzuma to city corridor in 1994. These two suburbs are adjacent to each other and just like Mufakose, Kambuzuma is a highly populated residential area, 11 kilometres from the city centre. The survey was aimed at assessing the trends in public vehicle supply, passenger perception on services and service level, average passenger waiting times and fares. A sum total of 2000 passengers waiting times were observed, service headways monitored and information on passenger perception public transport obtained¹⁸ as represented in the table 1.

TABLE 1 – Trends in vehicle supply within the Mufakose/Kambuzuma city corridor

Vehicle Type	July 1993	January 1994	September 1994
ZUPCO Buses	82	71	65
Emergency Taxis	123	240	98
Commuter Omnibuses	22	71	161
Total	227	382	324

Source: T. C. Mbara, D. A. C. Maunder, “The Initial Effects of Introducing Commuter Omnibuses in Harare, Zimbabwe”

From the above table, the number of the supply of vehicles is a clear indication on how the passengers adopted to the new modes of transport. The adequate and continued supply of commuter omnibuses in their numbers shows that passengers were now opting for the new comers at the expense of the emergency taxis and ZUPCO. ZUPCO had cheaper fares as compared to others modes of transport but their services were viewed as expensive and residents as time passed by opted for the commuter omnibuses to ZUPCO regardless of the fares. Emergency taxis services were decreasing as they were facing a strong competitor and they resorted to operating short routes as well intra-urban areas.

Nevertheless, despite the decrease in the operation of public transport in Mufakose/Kambuzuma corridor, the passenger carrying capacity increased as illustrated below.

TABLE 2-Trends in Passenger carrying capacity within Mufakose/Kambuzuma city corridor.

Vehicle Type	July 1993	January 1994	September 1994
ZUPCO Buses	7262	6490	6360
Emergency Taxis	861	1680	686
Commuter Omnibuses	550	1775	3220
Total	8673	9945	10266

Source: T. C. Mbara, D. A. C. Maunder, “The Initial Effects of Introducing Commuter Omnibuses in Harare, Zimbabwe”

From the table above, whilst the carrying capacity of both ZUPCO and Emergency taxis decreased by September 1994, the carrying capacity of commuter omnibuses increased sharply. Although the total carrying capacity increased, credit was much to the commuter omnibuses who were becoming the favourites to the passengers.

In as much as service was concerned, passenger waiting time was also observed. Passenger waiting time and headway is a key measure of service quality whereby the average time a passenger has to wait before boarding a bus and the time taken to transit is observed.¹⁹ Between 1993-1994, there was a decrease in passenger waiting time and headway. Mushinga says that when competition was legally introduced into the urban transport system, service headway improved as most of the time it could take 40 minutes to transit to the CBD but it was now between 15-20 minutes.²⁰ Passengers clearly benefited from the increased quantity of service which was as a result of fleet expansion and increased passenger carrying capacity.

When considering fares, it costed an average of 163c to all modes of transport (Commuter omnibuses, Conventional ZUPCO buses and Emergency Taxis) per trip to and from the CBD. By July 1964 it was 165c and it ultimately rose to 176c by the end of 1994. The increase in average fares in September 1994 was due to ZUPCO fare increases during May 1994.²¹ However, some commuter operators charged in excess of the authorised fare levels during peak times. Also some commuter omnibuses travelling to Mufakose from the city centre could cut the route into two that is City- Kambuzuma and then Kambuzuma- Mufakose, resulting in passengers paying a double fare for a single journey. This was done when there was shortage of vehicles with passengers being left with no other options. At that time, the government gazetted prices and controlled fares but the operators were able to charge what the market tolerated at particular times of the day when demand was high.

With deregulation, ZUPCO faced serious backdrop. To meet the competition from the new commuter omnibuses, ZUPCO introduced their own minibuses the 29- seater Toyota Dyna Mazda T- 3500. This was done so as to reduce passenger waiting time and headway as these new minibuses had smaller carrying capacity matching the fleet of the legalised minibuses. By the end of the decade ZUPCO was decapitalised. Matunhu and Matunhu say that the company experienced low income, faced high levels of irregularity, decrease in staff, rapid occurrence of accidents leading to lack of credibility.²² One of the reasons was mainly due to the fact that conventional buses began to be hired for ZANU PF functions and no payments were being made. The company's low fares were not favourable to maintain competition. Also the company ventured into rural routes which had the monopoly of strong private players already. They had foreign routes like Tanzania and Malawi. Mbidzo decries that the company chewed more than it could consume considering the wide range of service the company ventured into.²³ This was the beginning of the fall of the company as a service provider to Mufakose.

Fig 3 ZUPCO Mazda T- 35 Minibus



Source: J. Walters, "Regulation and Competition in the Land; Transport Industry in Southern Africa Recent Developments," Rand Afrikans University, Johannesburg.

2;4 - Conclusion

The coming of Independence was a new phase to the urban transport system. The survival of HUOC was behind Turnill and Dahmer companies which supplied both the vehicles and services to the company's fleet. Despite HUOC continued monopoly of the urban transport system, the government's direct participation in the sector was an effective scheme before 1991 when ESAP was introduced. The provision of commuter omnibuses in Mufakose was done so as to liberalise the transport sector rather than to totally deregulate the market, that is why they engaged into partial deregulation. The introduction of minibuses resulted in competition in the sector between convectional buses, commuter omnibuses and emergency taxis. Between 1990-1999 there was improved service in Mufakose's commuter transport network. The expansion of fleet and an increase in passenger carrying capacity ensured smooth service as there was reduction in both passenger waiting time and headway. By the end of the decade, the fare advantage was the only means to which ZUPCO was surviving. Nevertheless, the introduction of commuter omnibuses negatively resulted in fare levels rising especially during peak hours of the day, congestion was becoming the order of the day in the CBD and services provided by ZUPCO to Mufakose diminished. Generally, these were the better days in the history of public transport in Mufakose.

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CHAPTER 3 - THE END OF THE BETTER DAYS IN MUFAKOSE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

3:1 Introduction

When public transport was established in Mufakose, the period from 1967- 1999 generally was a period of better days in the history of urban transport although there were several problems associated with the system. This chapter is outlining the total decline of the formal transport system and the end of better days in the public transport which resulted in transport woes. The period is characterised by the NRZ intervening into the transport system. Buses from diaspora became part and parcel of Mufakose commuter transport. Some private players who had a few fleet also filled the gap. Numerous problems occurred which witnessed the elimination of both the diasporan fleet and the NRZ in the system and the coming in of small commuter omnibuses (Kombis) which dominated the streets of Mufakose and Harare at large. These changes created a chaotic public transport system. This is one of the fundamental chapters as it looks at modern urban transport system.

3:2 - The Total Collapse of Formal Public Transport in Mufakose.

Deregulation brought competition to the public transport in Mufakose. The formal ZUPCO conventional buses and the emergency taxis were being challenged by the new comers. The fate of the emergency taxis was brought down as it withdrew services it rendered in the public transport system of Mufakose and found new market in the intra- urban routes and shuttle services in the CBD. ZUPCO survived the competition due to favourable fares, but its services were being compromised by the lower fares. By 2000, ZUPCO's fleet had reduced by nearly 50%. The company tried to cope with the competition in the transport market but the beginning of the 21st century was another dimension in the development of public transport in Mufakose. By 2000, ZUPCO was economically crippled to maintain its urban monopoly.

The beginning of twenty-first century, public transport rapidly declined. Mbara states that most of the vehicles that had been acquired during deregulation period had reached their economic life-time and they needed to be replaced.¹ Zimbabwe faced macro-economic challenges which affected the public transport. According to Walters, with the political instability and inflation of more than 340% annually, the execution of an effective public transport service became problematic.² The country faced the collapse of the local currency in 1997 and by 2000, there was high inflation as well as an unpleasant economic environment. The situation was worsened by erratic supply of fuel. This resulted in a rapid decline in the provision of public transport in Mufakose as the private players could not afford to replace their fleet. ZUPCO tried to re-engage its services with the small fleet that had remained. The train buses and the AVMS were seen in the streets of Mufakose between 2000-2001. The scheme was not successful because the demand was very high. The company tried by all means to maintain monopoly in the suburb but it was all in vain.

In 2001, the public transport rapidly declined. With the declining of fleet and fuel shortages, the peak periods were now associated with very long waiting hours and long queues. Tom, concerning the situation, says that for a person who travelled daily to and from work, there was no public transport to essentially speak about.³ Walters states that the economic situation affected the acquiring of transport fares by the majority of the population to access public transport.⁴ There was a serious shortage of transport particularly during peak times. Mbara notes that the situation forced passengers to walk long distances and commute in all types of vehicles such as lorries and pickup trucks which was a practice that compromised the safety of the passengers.⁵ In Mufakose, people used to connect buses when visiting surrounding suburbs for example Budiriro, Kuwadzana, Glen Norah and GlenView residential areas but with the unavailability of transport, they resorted to walking when visiting such places.

The period between 2000-2002 was a period characterised with non-existence of a viable public transport system. However, it should be noted that public vehicles were not totally absent but the supply was very low and it affected the working class' transit on daily basis. Cycling became a means of transport to some of the workers. This mode of transport was a great disadvantage to workers who reside in the suburb because of its location, cycling was straining. Nevertheless, some people became comfortable to use it as a means of transport. Employers of some security companies even came up with favourable credit schemes for the purchase of bicycles so as to assist their employees to transit.⁶ This was a successful scheme which flourished for the years to come.

The degrading public transport resulted in most people transported by private cars. The people who had their private transport (small cars, pickup trucks and lorries) carried passengers to and from work. Although this was illegal, the law enforcement agencies aptly turned a blind eye to this practice. This was so because some of them benefited through bribery and some of them even used those as a means of transport.

The transport situation during this time did not only affect the formally employed, but those who were involved in informal business in the suburb. Mufakose is home to thousands of the capital's population and it had a business environment. Before operation Murambatsvina, a viable home industry existed in the suburb which was located along Muonde St on the south-western part of the township. Apart from that, vending was also a business which flourished as there were markets that were established at main shopping centres. Due to the fact that the products were perishable, costly and frequent trips to the market were to be made. In one of Harare's high density suburb Mbare, there is a centralised market place (Mbare Msika) where most traders buy products for resale. It is home to all the trading. Public transport was not reliable and it compromised traders to an extent that they had to wake up as early as 0400hrs. One vendor remarked that:

“When I ventured into vending, there were no buses to talk of. I started vending back in 2003 so as to sustain my family since my husband was unemployed, but it was a difficult hustle. Each day I had to wake up very early in the morning around 0330hrs to go to Mbare, and at times it was very dark and scary out there and I put my life to danger. However, with time I got used to the situation because it was the only means of surviving the economic hardship.”⁷

The unavailability of a viable transport system put to halt economic activities in the suburb of Mufakose. The Mufakose-Mbare route was worse in the sense that workers who had private cars to which the public was mostly using, most of them were employed in the CBD, meaning there were less using the Mbare route. This clearly indicates that the period of silence in the transport system between 2000-2003 also affected economic and workers in Mufakose.

3:3 - The Freedom Train

In 2003, the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) introduced the local commuter train to Mufakose known as the “Freedom Train.” The railway company ventured into the local urban commuter system because the market was favourable as there was an ever increasing scarcity of road public transport. In the context of the NRZ giving the name “Freedom Train” it was the government which initiated the name, reminding the people of the freedom that they attained at Independence and how helpful the commuter train was going to be in addressing transport problems in the suburb.

In this context, a very critical question needs to be asked, how free was the freedom train? From the context of the government, the scheme was already a successful scheme aimed at addressing transport shortage problems but to the passengers, it was not the case. Mbidzo a Mufakose resident who often commuted with the freedom train remarked that,

The so called freedom train was not even free, people had to pay a fee although it was little, but the nature of the coaches was not transport friendly because they were associated with poor ventilation, the headway was very long and at times we were overcrowded because it was the only means of transport available during that time for most people.⁸

Therefore, the name itself was a contradictory to the services the NRZ gave although it managed to fill the gap in the transport system.

The NRZ ventured into local transport network of Mufakose in a bid to assist the township with the transport problems that it was facing. Maruve says that the country was facing serious fuel shortages which affected worker's movement and the NRZ decided to engage in commuter transport.⁹ The provision of the local train was to be assisted by ZUPCO which had bought a new fleet of buses (Marcopolo). Four train pick up stations were established along the railway line in Mufakose. At the stations a bus station was also built. This was done so as to create a solidified transport system in the suburb. Since the railway is located at the peripherals of Mufakose, the scheme was that buses were to provide shuttle services within the suburb that is ferrying people to and from the pickup train stations. This manoeuvre showed highest level of poor planning, because the buses were to just reengage in their previous routes that they operated rather than to create a shuttle service within the suburb, causing more chaos and confusion. Nevertheless, the buses never made it to engage the shuttle services as the fleet mainly served longer routes. This left the residents travelling a distance to the train stations.

The NRZ "Freedom train" services were welcomed by Mufakose residents. The coaches were obtained from the long distance commuter train coaches, which had the First Class, Standard class and the Economy (racially designed). The economy coaches often referred to as "Mbombera" made up the freedom train. From the outside appearance, the NRZ commuter train was represented material attained from the metal scrap yard.¹⁰ The coaches were initially discoloured by rust and the trains were undoubtedly post retirement because of the dedicated service. Mushinga says that the coaches' inner look took one back down the remembrance lane to the country's Independence when they were still intact in 1980.¹¹ Initially, these coaches had been phased out only to be rejuvenated during the freedom train era.

From its establishment, the services of the passenger train were highly efficient. Notwithstanding financial and liquidity crisis, the company's freedom train was effective in terms of schedule. From Mufakose the train had a morning schedule of 0600hrs and 0700hrs

and in the evening from the main train station in the CBD it had schedules of 1730hrs and 1900hrs respectively. The headway was between 30-45 minutes. The key reason was that the locomotives were powered by diesel in the new millennium were most trains are powered by electricity. According to Chenga this was as a result that the company received less income and had been affected by ESAP to its operations.¹² Despite that, the Freedom train dominated the transport system of Mufakose at that particular time.

With the increase of pressure on the services of the Freedom train, the company was forced to increase the number of coaches and tripled its schedule. The number of coaches were now between 17-21 as compared to the previous 11-14 each having a carrying capacity of 90 passengers but at times exceeded with standing passengers. Schedules were tripled to 0530hrs, 0630hrs and 0830hrs in the morning from Mufakose and 1400hrs, 1730hrs and 1900hrs from the city centre.

Freedom train indeed filled the gap in the transport system of Mufakose but not ultimately. Routes such as Mufakose- Machipisa were left out as there is no railway line. Mufakose- Mbare route was partially served as the passengers could compromise boarding off at COTTCO flyover and finish the journey by foot. Chirisa argues that travelling with the commuter train signified a mass adaptation to the transport problems being shared by the poorest of the poor.¹³ This serves to show that the freedom train was mainly advantageous to the people who were destined for the Lyton, Workington and Southerton industries as well as the CBD. It also offered services between Monday- Friday. This meant that the services had some loopholes in the urban transport system.

In 2007, services being offered by the freedom train began to deteriorate due to a number of reasons. With the increased rate of the country's inflation, the company was greatly affected. The company's low fares resulted in huge losses in the transport sector. Maruve argues that the

services of the commuter train in the end represented a social welfare as the company was not gaining much profit.¹⁴ The distance from the train station to place of work and from the train pick up points to the residents' homes was also long that in the end people were gradually opting for road transport. The end result was the reduction of the number of coaches to below ten. This resulted in chaos when passengers were boarding the train as some passengers could travel whilst hanging at the doorstep putting their lives in danger. The headway was increasing and the train was no longer on time as it used to be. The services were worse and when the country was hit by the 2007-2008 economic crisis, the freedom train was abandoned as there were new comers in the transport system due to the proliferation of kombis.

3:4 - Wheels on the Road: The Freedom Train Era

The period between 2003-2008, road transport network was not completely shattered. As Chirisa noted that freedom train was a service to the poorest, the population which had better economic income although residing in the suburb continued using the road transport network.

Some private operators who had ventured into the commuter transport prior to deregulation remained offering services to the suburb despite macro- economic challenges. With their small fleet they successfully filled the gap. The freedom train mainly served the working class. this left a vacuum during day times and weekend days. These private players then offered a continued service to Mufakose residents. Example of such players included Keystone Technologies, Mazungu and Tugenze which operated City route whist Bonga transport operated Mbare route.

There were also the new modes of public transport, the diasporan fleet. The term, diasporan fleet, according to Mazarire and Swart refers to the buses which originated from the United Kingdom's bus operators, tour operators and the nurseries, imported into the country to fill the transport gap.¹⁵ The buses became part and parcel of Mufakose public transport.

With the ESAP, there was high rate of retrenchment of workers and brain drain. This was as a result of removal of subsidies in almost every sector of the economy which affected the normal salaries of professional workers who migrated to the diaspora in search of greener pastures. The desire by the people in the diaspora to invest at home was complemented when the transport sector needed various stakeholders to fill the gap. With deregulation, a favourable business environment was created in the urban transport to private players.

The people from the diaspora bought buses in a bid to earn profits as well as to fill the gap which was left by ZUPCO. The government slashed import duties and the buses found their way into the country, so as to fill the gap. The buses were European brands such as Dennis, Mercedes Benz, Bedford and DAFs. The buses were associated with advanced technology which were not user friendly and the buses were too expensive to maintain.¹⁶ They filled the gap in the road transport of Mufakose between 2003-2008, but with the scarcity of the supply of fuel and expensive maintenance of the fleet, the prices did not meet the masses who opted for the freedom train to those buses. With the humps, severe stopping and moving, lack of proper service, the buses became scrap in the most yards of Mufakose.

Mazarire and Swart say that the unsuccessful venture of the bigger buses forced the diasporans to opt for smaller vehicles.¹⁷ The streets of Mufakose were filled with the Ford Transit series and the Iveco. Japanese made Toyota Civillian, Nissan Coaster also founded their way into the public transport. Such vehicles were cheaper and they allowed regeneration of income before the vehicles reach their life span. The coming in of the diasporan fleet also marked the advent of commuter rank touts in the CBD better known as *Mahwindi*. In the CBD, the pickup point where vehicles to Mufakose operated remained the Harare market square, although some vehicles were slowly moving to Copacabana rank.

The period between 2003- 2008 was associated with the remnant of the deregulated fleet, the freedom train and the buses which originated from Europe. By 2008, these transport providers became a total failure in providing services to Mufakose although the buses remained functional and were to be totally phased out by 2010. The diasporan vehicles failed to succeed because of their mechanical challenges. The vehicles failed to endure the rough environment of Zimbabwe and the potholes of Mufakose. In fact, Mufakose road network was deteriorating. The development of roads was very rapid in the past years but unfortunately the lessons to be learnt from other countries which had passed through exactly the same troubles at various stages of development were ignored allowing the situation of the roads to deteriorate.¹⁸ The state of the roads was in bad shape.

The issue of mechanical challenges which faced the diasporan fleet however laid on the issue that the vehicles had gone past their economic lifespan together with the expensive and unavailability of spare parts. Most engines in the country had American and British make such as Cummins and Perkins.¹⁹ These engines powered most vehicles in Zimbabwe before 2003 from buses, trucks and farmers' tractors. The engines models were similar to the diasporan vehicles (Dennis, Bedford, Volvos). Mazarire and Swart argue that it is pointless to say that the engines of the diasporan fleet were not as good in comparison to the local fleet as they were powered with the same engine.²⁰ The answer basically lies on the fact that due to macro-economic environment, their spare parts remained costly and scarce and they were an additional to the local vehicles which needed the same services.

Some of the vehicles were not meant for public transportation. Some of these vehicles were delivery vans manufactured for the purpose of lighter jobs only to be modified to suit in the public transport. This resulted in suspension failures. The trouble with failure of suspensions was as a result of the tendency to overload not mechanical.²¹ Therefore, the fact that some of

these vehicles were not meant to carry passengers and at the same time they were being overloaded, the foreign vehicles deteriorated.

The period between 2003-2008 indicates a period of poor and lack of knowledge in the transport system. Various individuals who ventured into the business were aimed at maximising profits, but lacked real knowledge of how the sector operated. The ability of any applicant to enter the passenger transport industry without any knowledge of the costs involved or the responsibilities of a provider of public transport coupled with the length of many buses resulted in widespread uneconomic competition and state of chaos and confusion in the transport system.²² Transport system during this period was survival of the fittest, but all in all the provisions declined by 2008.

3:5 - The Proliferation of Kombis

Small commuter omnibuses existed prior to deregulation. However, they were mainly consumed by the much bigger minibuses, hence their existence was shadowed. They had the carrying capacity of 15 passengers but despite their carrying capacity which reduced passenger waiting time, they were not highly accepted by passengers because they were small as compared to the minibuses. Mbirimi remarks that “yes the kombis were there, but no one would want to travel being squeezed. Everyone wanted to travel freely and hence the minibuses offered such services.”²³ The minibuses had a passage to which when boarding the vehicle, the passengers moved freely unlike the kombis which were associated with a series of folding seats. The minibuses had the make in the interior to that of the 76 seater buses, only to be reduced in the sizes. Many passengers opted for the minibuses. This was one of the reasons why between 1993- 2007, kombis were on low profile.

In 2006, the number of kombis in Mufakose’s transport network began to gradually increase. The kombis replaced the freedom train and the diasporan fleet which had failed to create a sustainable urban commuter system in Mufakose. Kombis found their way into the urban

transport system in Mufakose. Because of erratic fuel supply, some local people started selling fuel on the 'black market' whilst some were involved in foreign currency exchange. These people acquired foreign currency which enabled them to venture into the transport business since there was a vacuum in the sector. Another reason put forward by Mazarire and Swart is that foreigners based in the country, who accessed large amounts of foreign currency, ventured in the business of importing and selling Japanese used cars and they began to supply vehicles and parts.²⁴ They ventured in the business so as to maximise and spin their profits.

The local people who acquired foreign currency expanded their fleet of kombis. Ex- Japanese vehicles became the new wheels in Mufakose. The operators chose vehicles with low fuel consumption, which had readily available and cheap spare parts and low maintenance costs. Despite the economic hardships, the people found the source of these cheap vehicles in Japan and Asia. The famous of these kombis were the Toyota Hiace, Toyota KZ, and the Nissan Caravan.

After 2009, when there was the introduction of dollarisation, the number of kombis began to increase rapidly because the transport system was being viewed as a lucrative business. The economy was in a better shape as compared to the period between 2000-2008 despite the fact that Zimbabwe was still facing high inflation rate. The adoption of the US dollar resulted in the availability of some basic commodities such as fuel which in turn had a positive effect to the urban transport system. In this regard several individuals became owners of private vehicles. According to Mbara, vehicles were largely imported in Zimbabwe after the introduction of the US currency.²⁵ This meant that Mufakose transport system became composed of kombis and private cars.

Commuter omnibuses after the dollarisation period made the bulk of Mufakose public transport. They served all the routes (CBD, Machipisa and Mbare). The Mbare route however

service was being offered by both kombis and old minibuses. During the early hours of the day the old minibuses operating Mbare route transported vendors to and from Mbare because they had the advantage of their size which attracted passengers who had luggage. The rest of the day the kombis serviced the route.

The commuter operators set high targets and, as an incentive, they introduced ‘take homes’ which was a system that allowed their drivers to keep the vehicles at home after they had reached their agreed targets between the owner and the driver. This resulted in the drivers working for long hours to maximise their trips, picking up passengers at undesignated points. When the kombis proliferated the urban transport system post 2008, they operated smoothly. In the CBD, Mufakose rank remained at Market Square where there was the use of a log book by the rank marshals. Each commuter omnibus entering the rank was logged in, giving each other a chance to load passengers and creating a chaotic free environment. However, the rapid increase in the number of vehicles in the system resulted in commuter omnibus crew beginning to compete for “gaps” instead of giving each other a chance.

Route authorities were given to the commuter after the commuter omnibus operators met the requirements to be given the Operator’s Licence System (OLS). Each vehicle was supposed to serve its route, that is a kombi operating Mufakose- Mbare route was supposed to stay confined to its route only. Nevertheless, the situation got out of hand. Firstly, the kombis illegally relocated from Market Square to Copacabana. Later on, they relocated from Copacabana and created a rank at corner Albion street and Chinhoyi street. Another rank was also formulated less than 100 metres from the previous rank at corner Robert Mugabe and Chinhoyi Street popularly known as Agribank. Secondly, route permits were also abandoned as the kombi crew could operate any route they felt lucrative within Mufakose transport network. The transport system began to be chaotic. Mushinga remarks that the coming in of kombis into the public transport created a whole new environment.²⁶

An increase of fares during peak periods were also re-introduced. The normal fare for all the routes (Mbare, Machipisa and City centre) was 50c. For Mbare and Machipisa, fares remained constant throughout the day whilst for the city centre the fares rose to US\$1 during peak periods and as well during bad weather conditions especially when it was heavily raining. In Mufakose new routes were also created within the suburb in a bid to attract more people and to avoid the poor road conditions. Mufakose commuter system can toady be referred to as chaotic despite the fact that the kombis are offering a huge service by transporting thousands of people each day.

Apart from the kombis and the private vehicles which are associated with the public transport, other transport initiatives such as company's private buses and government buses carrying workers also formulate urban public transport. Several private companies provided several other means of transport to transport their workers to and from the suburb. The government of Zimbabwe through Public Service Commission (PSC) and Central Mechanical Equipment Department (CMED) also engaged in the provision of a public transport transporting the civil servants living in the suburb. This scheme by both private companies and the government was carried out so as to provide cheap, affordable and reliable transport to their workers.

3:6 Conclusion

The period between 2000- 2017 was a drastic period in the development of transport system in Mufakose. The beginning of the century witnessed low scale in the transport as the new commuter omnibuses which had threatened the existence of conventional ZUPCO buses had reached their economic life span and they were not replaced due to economic challenges. Passengers had to resort to any mode of transport available. When the situation worsened, the government introduced freedom trains and they operated alongside with the diasporan fleet. These were later replaced by the kombis which have dominated the urban commuter system up to the present day.

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CHAPTER 4 - DEALING WITH TRANSPORT WOES IN MUFAKOSE

4:1 - Introduction

Mufakose transport network in the twenty-first century was greatly characterised by informal small commuter omnibuses and other private cars which offered transport service to the public. The informality of the transport system was associated with many problems. The chapter seeks to outline and analyse the nature of the problems associated with informal transport (kombis). The chapter then gives initiatives by the government and the local authorities and assessing their effectiveness towards alleviating such problems to a better sustainable transport system.

4:2 - Problems of Informality in the Transport System.

Safety

Safety is highly considered in the public transport as people are transported daily. Golub argues that safety in public transport is affected by the behaviour of drivers, lack of proper driver training, lack or poor vehicle service and the use of unroadworthy vehicles.¹ Commuter operators in Mufakose exercised safety to a lesser scale. Kombi operators practiced the system called *kuburukira*. This system, according to Mazarire and Swart, meant a driver could become a *hwindi* allowing unemployed colleague to drive.² One passenger remarked that

The driver that you came with from town is not the same driver that you ended the journey with. What these kombi drivers did is when they arrived at Magandanga (the first bus stop in Mufakose) they exchanged drivers. The vehicle would be handed over to a very anonymous person who at times was half drunk, and the nature of driving with the rapid potholes in the streets was unbearable.³

This system was widely practiced by most of the kombi operators in Mufakose. This compromised safety because the person given the kombi was at times overzealous and some of them lacked driving particulars that is why they only drove in the suburb which was police free. Improper vehicle inspection, behaviour of commuter operators, public transport misadministration is a common feature in most African countries.⁴

Overloading became a phenomenon that even passengers themselves became comfortable with this abnormality. The normal carrying capacity of these small commuter omnibuses is 15 passengers but the standard carrying capacity became 18 passengers. However, during peak periods the number rises to between 22-24 passengers. Some passengers sit on the engine cover space, behind the front seat, the place better known as *Pakadoma*. Most of these vehicles were not designed to carry excessive passengers. With this practice, most vehicles lost their stability as suspensions were damaged. Most of the vehicles from the diasporan fleet to the kombis were not roadworthy despite the presence of the police road traffic department and the Vehicle Inspection Department (VID). The key reason for their continued existence as put forward by Mazarire and Swart was that the VID officers received bribes for the issuing of fitness certificates and the police roadblocks were corrupt.⁵ Maintenance issues resulted in breakdowns and others problems in the provision of service. All these compromised safety of the passengers within the public transport of Mufakose.

Erratic Scheduling and Service

Unlike the formal public transport, informal public transport had no schedule and headway was not predictable. It depended on the nature of the vehicle, availability of passengers and the time of the day. Erratic scheduling resulted in poor service.⁶ In Mufakose, commuter omnibuses to Machipisa usually had the longest headway because of their mechanical nature whilst those to the CBD are often referred to as “Go Faster” because of better headway. The formal conventional buses adhered to 15-20 minutes’ headway and during peak periods there was radio communication so as to ensure that demand was always met. With the informal transport, it was a matter of arriving at the destination.

Competition in the Market

Another problem associated with informal public transport was the competition. Operators usually competed for passengers. Operators in Mufakose, when commuter omnibuses were

introduced, used route permits which created an orderly and smoothly public transport environment. This scheme was later abandoned by the commuter omnibus operators as there was high demand and high influx of commuter omnibuses. Kombis began to engage into any route depending on demand. Also the fact that income was raised in relation to the number of trips, the operators could fight for passengers. Some of the touts could drag a person into a vehicle that one wishes not to board. One commuter remarked that:

“As you will be trying to board the kombis, the touts will be pulling you and you end up seeming stupid and confused, mostly end up run over by cars. Touts would surround and confuse passengers and many particulars would be lost or stolen because of panicking.”⁷

They created a chaotic system in the city centre which resulted in the number of robbery cases especially at the city ranks. Safety was compromised due to aggressive maneuvering at the city ranks and the probability of accidents between vehicles, as well as dangers to the passengers and pedestrians. The kombis often raced each other for passengers. The kombi driver could cut other vehicles and anonymously exchange lanes, putting the lives of the people in danger.

Lack of Capacity

The carrying capacity of the smaller commuter omnibuses was a burden to the passengers. With the practice of overloading, the kombis were often associated with uncomfortable sitting, and passengers could not carry much luggage. The conventional HUOC and ZUPCO buses were big enough to accommodate luggage for none or a very little fee. However, with the kombis it became difficult to carry much luggage. This is the reason why most of the vendors who visit Mbare Msika opted for the minibuses to kombis.

Lack of adherence to the law.

Commuter omnibuses caused serious chaos in the urban public transport. Although the kombis made the bulk of the public transport vehicles in Mufakose, they created a disorderly environment. The kombi crew paid very little attention to road traffic laws, a practice to which the passengers became more comfortable as it was the order of the day. This was exacerbated

by the fact that law enforcement agencies were corrupt. Chinhoyi street used by Mufakose commuter omnibuses in the city centre was made a one-way traffic, but at times the kombis could operate it as a two-way traffic. Lyton road from both Mbare and CBD to Mufakose has four railway crossing lines but less number of the kombi drivers paid attention to these crossings. It is the fact that the NRZ was not highly functional that is why there was absence of road accidents at railway crossing lines. Traffic control lights were not observed especially the one at Rugare. What some of these kombi drivers did is that they could just look if there was an oncoming vehicle on the other side of the traffic light. If it was clear, they just proceeded regardless of the traffic light signal.⁸ The kombis posed a serious problem to the adherence of the law.

Despite these problems of informality in the public transport in Mufakose, kombis offered a continued service of transporting passengers from Mufakose to the three destinations. Their service became of paramount importance.

4:3 - Strategies initiated by the Government and Local Authorities.

The government in 1993 deregulated the transport sector paving way for the coming in of the informal public transport. However, by 2000, there was scarcity of vehicles in the public transport and there was need for the government to intervene so as to address this situation. A new source of vehicles emerged from the United Kingdom, when a new fleet of buses was being imported to the country by several individuals who were venturing into the transport system. According to Mazarire and Swart, the government of Zimbabwe removed tariffs on public transport vehicles imported with the aim of stabilising chronic transport woes.⁹ This scheme was successful in addressing transport shortages as more buses penetrated the streets of Mufakose although the buses were short-lived.

Several mechanisms were provisioned by the government so as to improve the informal urban transport system to a sustainable transport system, safeguarding and upholding the interests of

the passengers. The first issue to be considered was the issue to do with noise pollution in the city centre mainly due to the behaviour of *Mahwindi* (touts). In 2011, city termini were furnished with billboards notifying passengers and the omnibus crew of their ranking place. Mufakose rank was relocated to Market Square. This was done to reduce the noise and the behaviour practiced by touts. However, this was not successful as the ranks were later abandoned and the touts relocated to their former places causing even a more chaotic environment. In as much as the government implemented the scheme, it was poorly monitored.

Safety is one of the fundamental principles that the Ministry of Transport aimed to provide to the passengers. National Transport policy in 2012 was aimed at improving the supply of public transport services without compromising passenger safety and comfort.¹⁰ In order to ensure safety to the passengers, several policies were put in place. The driver was supposed to have a retest after every five years and to always produce a retest certificate. The driver was required to have regular medical check-ups. Drivers details were supposed to be displayed at a position that every passenger had access. Apart from driver's details, the vehicle was supposed to pass a road and fitness test. The requirements of any vehicle were supposed to be met by the passenger vehicles. In addition to the standard features, commuter omnibuses were supposed to have bumper, continuous reflectors and white number plates. These were done so as to ensure safety to the passengers and to demarcate between commuter and private vehicles.

These were the measures that the government initiated so as to stimulate public safety in the transport system. Nevertheless, when looking at the nature of both the drivers and the kombis in Mufakose, the government initiatives were followed to a lesser scale. Some of the divers continued to practice *kuburikira* system with the *hwindis*. Minibuses which operated Mbare-Mufakose route were not even roadworthy. What these commuter omnibus operators did was when the vehicle was new, it operated City centre route because it was a cream route, but when the vehicle reached its economic lifespan, the route changed to either Mbare or Machipisa

because there were low numbers of enforcing agencies.¹¹ The issue then goes back to law enforcement in Zimbabwe. Corruption in the police force especially traffic police was so rampant. Therefore, in as much as the government wanted to improve the transport system, it was not successful because of lack of a vibrant enforcement. Although the commuter omnibuses were legalised in 1993, some of them after 2009 operated illegally because of lack of the operating requirements.

In 2014, the government of Zimbabwe, through the Harare City council introduced parking bays. This was a move to reduce congestion that was becoming a disease in the CBD. A holding bay for South-western suburbs including Mufakose was constructed in Workington near Colcom Company. Commuter omnibuses were to drop passengers in the CBD and then proceed to the holding bay waiting for their turn to load passengers. This was however unsuccessful because some operators failed to adhere to the scheme causing further chaos. Dziruni noted that the holding bay was a good scheme but there were some “poachers” who disrupted the whole scheme as at some point one could only move a few metres for hours in the holding lane.¹² The plan of the government in the end failed to decongest the city, instead the situation was even worse. Mbara states that due to the fact that the government’s failure to deal with the situation, the *kombis* parked willy- nilly picking and dropping passengers at undesignated points, causing further chaos.¹³ The government was not successful in decongesting the city.

Following the failure of the holding bays, both the municipal police and the Zimbabwe Republic Police engaged into a more radical policy. They introduced spikes and button sticks campaign. Firstly, it was the button sticks that they used. When a vehicle was caught picking up passengers at undesignated points, a police officer was supposed to stop the vehicle and apprehend the operator and when the driver tried to evade, the police officer was supposed to smash the windscreen of the omnibus. This was done for two purposes, firstly not to escape the police since replacing the screen was viewed as expensive than paying the fine and secondly

the car was supposed to be impounded if it reached any roadblock since a smashed mark was visible. However, the issue of button sticks was abandoned because it put the lives of the passengers and unsuspecting pedestrians in danger. At one point a police officer smashed a kombi from Mufakose on the passengers' side, leaving the passenger heavily injured.¹⁴

The button sticks were later replaced by spikes. When a commuter omnibus was found at the wrong spot, a spike was placed under the vehicle and the car was impounded. This initiative became popular from 2015- 2017. Commuter omnibus operators began to operate with high caution. They at times collaborated, giving each other signal if there were traffic police nearby and they could evade their usual picking up point. However, the purpose of this initiative of maintaining order in the CBD was abandoned as it became a source of revenue acquiring scheme by the police details. Instead of the vehicle to be impounded, the operators could pay a little fee to the officers and they could resume their normal operations. The spikes also put the lives of the passengers and other pedestrians at risk. When there was a signal of the police coming over, the drivers could just speed off regardless who or what was ahead of the vehicle. This policy was abandoned in December 2017 when it was viewed that it was causing more harm than good.

Police roadblocks were also put in place so as to ensure a sustainable transport system. The route from Mufakose to CBD and Mbare had mainly two roadblocks along the way. The first was at Marimba Police station along Mupani Avenue and the second was just after traffic lights at Rugare. The duty of the roadblocks was to monitor both the vehicles and the operators if they were meeting the requirements to operate that is driver's license, medical report and retest certificate. The vehicle was supposed to be roadworthy and had a route authority. However, Bwanali is of the view that with what the commuter omnibus was required to operate, almost 50% of the minibuses operating did not meet the requirements.¹⁵ This was the case of vehicles operating in the streets of Mufakose, and the question remained how they passed through the

roadblocks and the answer clearly showed how corrupt the traffic police had become. The kombi driver was issued a ticket by the traffic police which became their passport to operate throughout the regardless of the condition of the vehicle. The revenue raised was never remitted to treasury. The police officers were given a target of amount of money to raise by their superiors. Despite mounting roadblocks, the government failed to contain the problems within the transport system.

In February 2018, the Harare City Council in a bid to address problems caused by kombis, banned all commuter omnibuses to enter the CBD. The initiative was meant to remove all the commuter omnibuses in the city centre and they were to operate from ranks that had been established in the peripherals of the city. The government planned to have all routes coverage at three outside city centre holding centres and passengers transferred to shuttle buses that would carry them into the city centre.¹⁶ This meant that the passengers could now pay a double fare. From Mufakose to city centre the fare was 50c and the passengers were to pay another 30c for the shuttle service making the journey to the CBD 80c. The policy showed highest level of poor planning by the Harare City Council. The senior officials who proposed the scheme lacks the knowledge and experience of the public transport as they travel with their personal cars.¹⁷ However, the government on the 23rd of February removed the barn. The Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, July Moyo said that the council took decision without first providing a practical and alternate for commuters.¹⁸ The commuter omnibuses returned to their previous areas of operation.

With the situation that the kombis were posing in the public transport systems versus what the government and local authorities initiated, one tout concluded that “It all does not make sense, they should just let us be, there is nothing anyone can do about this situation. They should just leave us alone because we are here to stay.”¹⁹ This proves to show that dealing with transport woes posed by the kombis is not an overnight thing.

4:4 - Conclusion

The government and the local council proved unsuccessful in dealing with problems associated with the public transport. Several initiatives were made to improve the status of the public transport, but the policies proved to be more efficient on paper rather than when they were implemented. This was due to the fact that law enforcement agencies the ZRP and the VID were corrupt and hence little attention was paid in the sector. The state of the roads deteriorated to a greater margin. The government's success in the sector was to a lesser margin as the result was that the public transport system became more chaotic.

Endnotes

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CONCLUSION

The historical development of urban commuter transport system of Mufakose is dynamic. Mufakose transport network developed out of a system that was already existing. A well-constructed transport infrastructure was essential for the provision of a viable public transport. Since 1890, the BSAC government and other successive governments established better roads and railways lines which later positively affected the development of the transport system.

Population growth and establishment of early African suburbs such as Mbare and Highfileds in the 1930s resulted in the need by Salisbury City Council to establish a municipal bus service by 1935. The provision was greatly affected by the outbreak of the Second World war and the politics between Salisbury City Council and peri-urban independent local authorities. The council was left a jurisdiction to operate the city boundaries only. The Salisbury council emulated other city councils' bus systems of Bulawayo and Mutare, giving a franchise to a private company to operate bus service. As Mufakose was established a distant from the city centre, the place left between the suburb and the CBD was for industrial growth although later it was given up for residents founding Kambuzuma and Warren Park. With the distance a very efficient and effective public transport was required. SUOC offered a monopoly and its success was mainly because the system was subsidised.

After independence, two major policies of nationalisation and deregulation affected the urban transport. SUOC which was renamed to HUOC offered public transport services to the suburb and the success of the company was behind the companies which supplied and serviced the fleet. In 1988, the government acquired 51% of ZUPCO shares and the government participation was to foster growth of the transport company. The company failed to adjust fares to meet cost of operation which resulted in the company failing to meet the demand. This resulted in the sprawling of emergency taxis. In 1993, the government was left with no option

but to deregulate the sector, paving way for the informal commuter omnibuses. ZUPCO was facing competition and by the end of the decade its services rapidly declined.

The twenty- first century public transport took a new twist. The beginning of the century was associated with scarcity of public transport due to macro- economic challenges, erratic fuel supply and the commuter omnibuses acquired during the time of deregulation had reached their economic lifespan. There was new form of commuter transport, the freedom train and the diasporan buses. They filled the gap but their existence was short-lived. The key reasons were that NRZ faced liquidity crisis which compromised their services. The diasporan buses were associated with mechanical fault and there was scarcity of spare parts. They were replaced by the small commuter omnibuses which presented a chaotic transport system. The beginning of the twenty- first century marked the end of better days of Mufakose public transport. Passengers faced serious transport problems an adhering to the public transport lies on the fact that passengers had not option than to cope with the transport woes mainly as a result of the operational nature of kombis.

The government and the local authorities put to place several policies to improve the transport system but the implementation was less successful. The chief reason was that the mechanisms were not closely monitored and corruption within the traffic police resulted in the failure to contain the situation. The commuter transport system has remained informal and is associated with numerous problems. The state of the commuter system was as a result of its developmental history.

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