Introduction

The persistence of poverty, the high rate of educational failure, and the absence of meaningful “development” among peasants/peasantry in post-independence Zimbabwe necessitate an imperative search for an explanation. Considering that peasants constitute more than three quarters of the country’s population (Moyo & Yeros, 2011; Sadomba, 2011), one discerns the exploitation of these generally simple and law-abiding citizens by the state and its corporate allies. Given the apparent absence of a theory to explain the under-class predicament of peasantry children in higher education, the article uses internal colonial insights and analytics to address the crisis in higher education (unaffordable fees, high drop-out, concentration in disciplines that lead to low pay, poor living conditions, etc.; see Students Solidarity Trust, 2009) of children from peasant background. The article will demonstrate how the political, economic, and social conditions of peasant children since the year 2000 are essentially colonial. The use of the internal colonial perspective, despite its vagueness and lack of clear universally agreed definition (Wolpe, 1975) is deliberately meant to initiate and stir a debate on perennial educational inequalities and underachievement of students of peasant upbringing.

Contemporary educational policies in sub-Saharan African countries, such as Zimbabwe, have been perceived as geared toward the promotion of Western values and not local cultures. Summative national examinations at Grade 7, Form 4 (equivalent to Grade 11) and Form 6 (which could be the equivalent of Grade 13/university entrance level) consistently indicate that students from rural schools struggle and underperform (Mbanje, 2012) and consequently affecting those who get access into university education and what degree programs one enrolls into. The objective of this article is to utilize the thesis of internal colonialism to analyze the educational underachievement of students of peasantry background in Zimbabwe. The article uses anti-colonial perspectives and critics that unmask modern hegemonic forces and refuses the notion that colonialism ended with the attainment of national independence (Escobar, 2004; Fanon, 1963; Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 2000) to

a. describe the living and learning conditions of students from peasantry background;

b. examine the education experience of rural peasants in Zimbabwe and expose how it is structured in a way that reproduces the peasantry as an under-class; and

Education of the Peasantry in Zimbabwe as Internal Colonialism

Munyaradzi Hwami

Abstract

This article utilizes internal colonial analyses to explore and understand the difficult educational conditions students from peasantry background experience in Zimbabwe’s universities. The article proposes that the subordinate position and related educational experiences of peasantry students since the year 2000 are exploitative and to the advantage of the elite to such an extent that peasants are an internal colony. The analysis is informed by critical anti-colonial perspectives that observe the hegemonic tendencies of global and local capital in collusion with dictatorial elite nationalists. By use of a critical interpretive case study of purposefully sampled students and other relevant members of the university community from one public university, disturbing student experiences were excavated. Student narratives and experiences were analyzed using the constant comparative method and led to the conclusion that there is internal colonialism in Zimbabwe where an alliance of the state and the local and global corporate world are colluding to maintain their economic and political dominance. The article challenges those in education and academics that there is need for the decolonization of education by first identifying contemporary hegemonic forces and recognizing students from the peasantry as victims of the emerging kleptocratic capitalism.

Keywords

internal colonialism, global/local capitalism, elite nationalist dictatorship, education, peasants, anti/colonialism

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c. assess the experiences of university students from peasant background in the context of contemporary struggles against national and global hegemonic forces.

Different forms of domination and exploitation have continued to be manufactured by those with political and economic capital, and alliances of the elite are continuously formed that are intended to maintain hegemonic political economies at the expense of the vulnerable groups such as peasants. The analysis in this article is therefore in the context of research sensibilities that critique the structures of elite nationalist capitalism and neo-colonial Western racial and class hegemony (Apple, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) with the explicit objective of contributing toward what Quijano (2007) terms “epistemological decolonization or decoloniality” (p. 177) or “decolonization/deconstruction as a critique of Western hegemonic constructions” (Mignolo, 2000, p. 323). The scholarly analysis aims to expose the internal colonial nature of the peasant situation by addressing the immizerating conditions of their children in universities.

It is widely shared that “internal colonialism” (Blauner, 1969, p. 394; Calvert, 2001, p. 52; Casanova, 1965, p. 27; Epstein, 1971, p. 188; Wolpe, 1975, p. 229) entails that “components of the normal imperial-colonial relations are to be found within the borders of a single state” (Wolpe, 1975, p. 229) and is characterized by “the use of state power by one section of society (the Control Centre) to impose unfavourable rates of exchange on another part of society (the subordinate remotes)” (Gouldner, 1978, p. 13). A structured relationship of domination and subordination is established or maintained to serve the interests of all or part of the dominant group (Gouldner, 1978; Gutiérrez, 2004; Hind, 1984; Hughes, 1995; Love, 1989; Welch, 1988). “In internal colonisation, the analogue of the colonial power is an elite and not a country” (Calvert, 2001, p. 54) and this elite or “core is seen to dominate the periphery politically and to exploit it materially” (Hechter, 1975, p. 9). These internal or domestic colonial relationships have been observed and analyzed along race/ethnic perspectives in the New World, with Gutiérrez (2004) labeling it an American theory of race, widely employed by many to explain and understand the perennial under-class status of Afro-Americans in the United States of America (Blauner, 1969; Calderon-Zaks, 2006; Hind, 1984). A similar framework has been utilized to expose the continued existence of underdevelopment among indigenous groups in settler nations such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand (Hughes, 1995; Welch, 1988) and as a critique of the racist separate development of apartheid South Africa (Wolpe, 1975).

**Review of Literature: The Peasantry as an Internal Colony**

Any definition of peasants generally should be according to their form of production. Peasants are traditionally defined as people involved in agriculture and have direct access to the production of their means of subsistence (Araghi, 1995). This may or may not involve direct ownership, although for Marx it was ownership that fundamentally separated peasants from the proletariat (Archetti & Aass, 1978). What is definitive about the peasant form of production is that, regardless of ownership, the logic of production is subsistence. Henry Bernstein (1979/2008) argues that peasant production is distinguished from capitalism because there is no appropriation and realization of surplus value or accumulation of capital. The object is the satisfaction of family needs, not profit (Araghi, 1995). It is different from proletariat production because the individual retains some control. Therefore, the notion of subsistence and the maintenance of some control over the means of production are the two central components marking peasantries production. In Zimbabwe, the land distribution program since the year 2000 has created different classes of rural dwellers. Some have become capital producers and are therefore not the focus of the discussions in this article.

Memmi’s (1967) portrait of the colonized vividly reveals a human being denied human dignity and subdued by force and violence. Following Calderon-Zaks’s (2006) analysis, colonialism is not narrowly defined as a relationship between “nations,” or at least the colonizing power being a “nation” . . . but is concerned with a colonized people rather than a colonized nation (pp. 39-40). According to Pinderhughes (2011), internal colonialism is identifiable by the presence of features of “subordination and oppression, not on majority/minority numbers ratios, geographic distance, capital export, foreignness, and legal distinctions” (p. 236) and by analogy the current socio-economic and political conditions of peasants in Zimbabwe are colonial. They are characterized by massive educational inequalities between urban and rural areas (Hwami, 2011; Share, 2009; Shizha, 2006; Students Solidarity Trust, 2009; Zeilig, 2008; Zimbabwe National Students Union [ZINASU], 2010), state and ruling party suppression, intimidation and violence (Blair, 2002; Hager, 2007; Hammur, 2008; Hammar, McGregor, & Landau, 2010; Hwami, 2010; Krigger, 2008; Mambani, 2008; Ranger, 2004; Sadomba, 2011), systematic economic subjugation and infrastructural underdevelopment (Bond & Manyanya, 2003; Gono, 2008; Moore, 2008), and profound health disparities (Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, 2009; Tren & Bate, 2005; World Health Organization, 2010; United Nations Development Program[UNDP], 2000; Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency & ICF International, 2012). Access to paved roads, electrified schools, and hospitals, and consumer goods vary directly with proximity to a town. Rural schools are poorly equipped compared with urban schools and summative Grade 7, Ordinary and Advanced levels results are consistently better in urban schools than in rural areas (Gregson, Terceira, Mushati, Nyamukapa, & Campbelle, 2004; Mbanje, 2012), and there is a restriction in terms of disciplines rural students can study as most schools do not have necessary facilities especially access to power/electricity.
These processes have witnessed with policy consistency elite nationalists of predominantly urban domicile and party leaders fortifying themselves in the towns and cities against rural poverty and diseases. One observes since the demise of British colonial administration a heightened differentiation of town and country, urban-centered power elite that has firmly set out to dominate a largely rural society to which they relate as an alien power. Sadomba (2011) posits that since the year 2000 “the elite grabbed the opportunity for heightened primitive accumulation” (p. 215) by hijacking the Black empowerment and indigenization programs, particularly land reforms that were spearheaded by war veterans with the mass support of the peasants. Traditional leaders, such as chiefs, have been given administrative authority to discipline their people and in the process paving way for unopposed state/corporate penetrations into their traditional lands for mining and dam construction (Hawkins, 2009; Madebwe, Madebwe, & Mavusa, 2011; Manyanhaire, Svtowa, Sango, & Munasirei, 2007; Mwonzora, 2011; Rusinga, Muvendo, & Zinhiva, 2012; Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association, 2012), programs that have led to displacement of the peasants to give way for irrigation and mining adventures whose benefits have not been observed by the affected people.

It is in this sense that the term internal colonization is used here to designate the processes by which large parts and sections of Zimbabwe are being colonized by their own ruling elite (across the political divide) for both political and economic reasons. Internal colonialism is associated with the manner in which certain sections of society exercise their hegemony (Hind, 1984). In the eyes of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and other elite groups in the country, including opposition parties, they are simply making use of the power the international market affords to consolidate their own position as an urbanized elite. The indigenization and Black empowerment programs, driven by the elite and accompanied by economic and political exploitation of the peasants, and gradually transforming the whole peasantry into a legally feudal (controlled by traditional leaders most of them with no knowledge of a fair justice system especially in relation to gender rights and other facets of modern minority inequalities) and factually discriminated class, the lowest in the social ladder, is precisely what this article terms internal colonialism.

It should be acknowledged that critics have pointed out that there is no attempt in the theory of internal colonialism to identify the specific mode of exploitation and domination that differentiates it from class or race exploitation and domination (Wolpe, 1975). They have seized on the idea that certain individuals in identified under-classes have made it to success; for example, the rich Afro-American, the successful from indigenous First-Nations and from peasant backgrounds. However, by viewing colonial as wider and encompassing “anything imposed and dominating” (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001, p. 300), including race/ethnicity, culture of poverty, geographical underdevelopment, political and economic domination, gender inequalities among many others, one can appreciate the utility of the concept or theory of internal colonialism in gaining an understanding of the subordinate status of some groups in modern societies.

**Method**

This was a critical interpretive case study of a public university in Zimbabwe. Critical interpretivism involves critiquing power. In education it considers the politics of education and when used together with postcolonial perspectives as was done in this study, it develops an activist prong on behalf of historically colonized people, who continue to be neo-colonized and oppressed (Apple, 2009). Issues to do with neo-colonized peasants should be approached utilizing critical inquiry methods that challenge neoliberalism and nationalism, simultaneously. Consequently, the goal of this case study was to develop a holistic picture of the educational experiences of selected students from rural peasantry background (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). The exploratory nature of a case study allows the researcher to investigate and report on complex, dynamic, and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships, and other factors in a unique instance (Creswell, 2007). The researcher had the opportunity to identify living conditions, learning conditions, and academic experiences and pursued opportunities for in-depth analysis of the phenomenon as they unfolded. Yin (2009) describes a case study “as an examination of specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, an institution or a social group” (p. 25). Case study is particularly useful in studies that seek to uncover observable patterns in organizations, institutions, and countries. Case studies are also heuristic in the sense that they “illustrate the readers’ understanding of the phenomenon under study . . . they can bring about discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience or confirm what is known” (Creswell, 2007, p. 18). There are however, several limitations to case study design, a major one being lack of generalization and time-consuming nature of the analysis, Patton (2002) argues, however, that generalizations can take several forums, from the features of a single case to many others with similar features or from part of a case to the whole of that case is possible. Therefore, the emerging findings can be applied to other students of similar peasantry background throughout the country.

**Sources of Data**

The study adopted purposeful sampling techniques, selecting participants from peasantry background. Utilizing official university records from the assistant registrar’s office, 50 participants were surveyed or interviewed from a public university in Zimbabwe. No other variables were considered important. For ethical reasons, the name of the university will not be mentioned. Initial contacts were made at the insti-
tution where face-to-face interviews were conducted \((n = 20)\). This was followed by questionnaires sent to individuals suggested by those previously interviewed \((n = 30)\). The interview was developed following the suggestions of Mouton (2001), namely, design, construction, and piloting. The final interview instrument combined different kinds of questions dealing with family background, university living and learning conditions, academic performance, and participants’ level of awareness of their circumstances. Questions were both semi-structured and unstructured giving room for greater latitude in asking broad questions in ways that the interviewer deemed appropriate and probing for clarification and deeper understanding of interviewees.

Document analysis as a research method involved the process of examining and understanding contents in documents from sources internal and external to the research, in this case official university publications, student and faculty union newsletters, and government policy documents. The study tried to minimize the pitfalls of document review as a non-interview strategy which are accuracy, relevance, authenticity, and outdated information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Yin, 2009). The researcher guarded against these challenges through a thorough evaluation of the authenticity and relevance of the documents in terms of the sources, dates, and accuracy. Miles and Huberman’s (1994) methodological approach was used to analyze and interpret the data for the study. According to Miles and Huberman, data reduction is the first step in the process of data analysis, and . . . “it refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in writing of field notes or transcriptions” (p. 16). This advice informed the research.

** Emerging Themes (Findings)**

The underdeveloped and difficult living conditions of the peasants in rural areas were inherited from British colonial administration and are continuing in post-independent Zimbabwe. Two strong hegemonic forces, namely, elite nationalism and neoliberalism, appear to be the dominant policy frameworks. The victims of the consequent system are the peasant communities that are integrated and subjected to the logic of imperialist expansion (Amin, 2011b). The ineffective and backward nature of social services is clearly manifested in the education system. Statistics from the national examination board, the Zimbabwe School Examination Council (ZIMSEC) consistently show that better results come from urban and boarding schools compared with rural day schools (Mbanje, 2012). This is mainly explained by the poor resources found in most rural schools that have resulted in experienced and qualified teachers shunning serving in such schools. Most rural areas do not have access to electricity and students attending rural secondary schools do not study disciplines such as physics, chemistry, and biology, and consequently cannot take up university courses/programs that require a natural science background. Rural students are therefore found restricted in the humanities and in a way leading them to low-paying careers.

It has also been observed that in internal colonialism, “the underdeveloped condition is reproduced and maintained by the same mechanisms of cultural domination, political oppression and economic exploitation” (Wolpe, 1975, p. 229). One approach of cultural domination has been the continued use of English as the language of instruction and the associated requirement of a pass in English at Ordinary level if one is to proceed to post-secondary education. The urban are generally better in understanding the English language compared with the rural people and this gives them a clear advantage. Furthermore, under internal colonialism the nature of education is governed by authorities outside the “colonies” (Epstein, 1971, p. 192). Currently in Zimbabwe, there is a blatant bias toward a mono-narrative of nation building that reifies nationalist historiography under what is termed patriotic history (Ranger, 2004; Tendi, 2008). Patriotic history is compulsory throughout the education system in various forms. It stresses political history and does not tolerate “disloyal” issues raised by historians of nationalism (Ranger, 2004). Not only does it destroy critical thinking among students; it also constructs a picture of sovereignty and independence that is largely partisan and not national.

**Peasant Education as Internal Colonialism: Students’ Living Conditions**

The colonial conditions of students from peasant background can further be demonstrated by their living and learning conditions that make meaningful education difficult to attain. As all universities are in urban areas, the living conditions of most students with no relatives in cities were found to be challenging. According to a recent study on the University of Zimbabwe:

The halls of residence have been shut, students eat from informal roadside caterers and students’ vocational loans are not available. It emerged early this year that 28% of students had dropped out of the UZ. Students have been struggling to raise fees of between US$300 and US$1 500 in a country where civil servants earn less than US$300 per month and unemployment is pegged at 90%. (Muzulu, 2010)

Students who endure such conditions do not have relatives who can provide them with accommodation in the cities in which universities are located. These observations are corroborated by sentiments from university students that were interviewed.

The conditions outside campus are pathetic. I am staying in a garage and we are 13 in that room. We now have slums developing within the Mount Pleasant area. Those staying outside Mount Pleasant have to board two buses to get to
campus. That is expensive. We pay $US25 a head. (Interview notes, Student leader, August 2010)

Similar observations were highlighted by a politically charged study commissioned by the national student body.

At the University of Zimbabwe over 5000 students squat in garages in and around Mt Pleasant while their hostels have become safe havens for rats and bats. The closure was ruled illegal by Justice Hlatshwayo at the High court in July 2007 in case the of Trevor Marai & Ann vs Director of Accommodation & Catering Services University of Zimbabwe & 3 Ors HC 3592/07, but the order has been ignored by the Nyagura administration. It is clear that the closure is a blatant political move aimed at demobilizing the students of Zimbabwe by some uncouth politicians fearing to lose their positions to a student led uprising. (ZINASU, 2011)

Such administrative policies and actions negatively affect students from rural areas more than any other groups and tend to drive them into anti-social behavior, risky political activity, or passive compliance to authority or views incongruent with university culture (Hwami, 2014). Internal colonialism involves the subordination and continuing domination of the peasantry in Zimbabwe. As was noted by Welch (1988), education often serves as an instrument of internal colonialism by socializing the colonized into an acceptance of inferior status, power, and wealth. The higher education finance support mechanism known as the cadetship system has been exposed as a political instrument to pressurize students to support the ruling ZANU PF party.

The Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology said a probe it conducted recently found that the country’s so-called cadetship programme was highly politicised, benefiting mainly Mugabe sympathisers. Parliament said the cadetship programme’s criteria for selection were discriminatory, ranging from political affiliation to faculty preference. It said that proof of the partisanship of the cadet scheme was the recent withdrawal of the funding of 12 students, on the grounds that they supported the Movement for Democratic Change, a rival party to Mugabe’s ZANU PF. (Mushininga, 2011)

Earlier, the largely opposition aligned national student body had made similar observations.

It remains the state’s responsibility to provide quality and affordable education to all its citizens; the cadetship scheme must be revisited, particularly its conditions of bonding, it must be administered by an independent body, which is non-discriminatory, no-partisan . . . (ZINASU, 2009)

It is therefore evident that the university education system is unfriendly to children from peasantry background. The educational experience from rural schools up to public universities appear to develop an inferior graduate who ends up unemployed, in low-paying public service career job or a “border jumper” (people who leave the country, mostly by illegal methods, to South Africa, Botswana, and other neighboring countries). A contrast should be made with children from dominant classes, mainly from urban areas who attend well-established and resourced schools, boarding schools with highly qualified teachers, and the rich whose children attend exclusive private schools with almost all modern educational facilities. Students from the latter category are found dominating hard sciences faculties that generally lead to assured and better-paying careers and some go abroad for university studies. What is being observed is “the existence and persistence of an academic underclass” (DiGiacomo, 1997, p. 96) that serves the political and economic objectives of the elite.

Peasant Education as Internal Colonialism: Students’ Learning Conditions

The learning conditions of students from peasantry background have equally been deteriorating and challenging. It is common knowledge that most students from rural areas are poor and cannot afford to pay university fees without government support. According to one study,

In February 2005, the government scrapped off the loan system for students and introduced payment of fees directly. This plus the dollarization of the economy (use of the United States dollar as the official currency after the Zimbabwean dollar became useless in 2009) mean education has become fully privatised. This scenario has left many students stranded with no options but to drop out of college or to quit education and go abroad to explore other options. (Students Solidarity Trust, 2011, p. 12)

One student told me that

In the past you could be allowed to sit for examinations before paying up fees, but now we have security guards stationed at examination venues to bar those who have not paid up. (Interview notes, Student leader, July 2010)

A university administrator further confirmed these disturbing observations:

I can tell you that we are facing a lot of challenges. What quickly comes to mind is the scenario where students cannot afford paying for tuition and government is also not in a position to support students. So the greatest dilemma is to carry on with university education with no one funding it. Students are asked to apply for loans/cadetship funds, which they do, but the government does not have the money, does not release the money but expect university education to continue. (Interview notes, University administrator, August 2010)

All these processes have culminated in some students completely failing to complete their studies. These narratives and experiences portray the difficult educational conditions
being experienced by mostly peasant children. Some students have joined student and national politics mainly under the auspices of the ZINASU, but the response of the state has been vicious. Student activists have been arrested, beaten, and many suspended or expelled (see Hwami & Kapoor, 2012; Students Solidarity Trust, 2011). Some have argued that the contemporary suppression of student activism resembles the Rhodesian system and corroborates the conclusion that in some post-independent nations, “a version of colonialism is being reproduced and duplicated from within” (Kapoor, 2009, p. 4).

**Discussion of Emerging Themes**

The challenges peasants’ children are experiencing should be understood within the wider context of crises emerging from attempts by governments in the periphery to catch up with the modern or developed (north) capitalist world. Modernity is viewed by many as Westernization. It is “exclusively a European product and experiences” (Quijano, 2000, p. 542). Unfortunately, it is also equated to development. The drive toward modernity is seen going against the cultural and traditional living styles of the peasant and government policies are seen as largely informed by the functionalist sociology of modernization-culture affects the character and logic of economic operation. According to Amin (2011a),

> The second intuition is that economics or more precisely economic (and social) changes, induces the phenomena of acculturation and deculturation, namely changes the culture. The relationship between culture and economics is dialectic rather than functionalist or structural. (p. 144)

The level of opposition the government has encountered since the introduction of modernity inspired policies from university students has increased (Hwami & Kapoor, 2012) and the consequent heavy-handed reaction from the government constitute an important aspect of the political crisis in Zimbabwe (Danzereau, 2005; Hwami, 2010). Global economic policy frameworks such as privatization and commodification of education as they are being implemented in higher education since 1991 and more violently from 2000 should be understood as government’s role in spreading capitalism and attempts to change the cultures of the peasants in line with modernity demands. This further implies that the internal colonial system developing in Zimbabwe and its attended devastation of the education prospects of peasant children should be analyzed within the context of contemporary global coloniality. This implies the reproduction of coloniality (relations of subordination and exploitation) at a global scale under neoliberal values and principles of education (Mignolo, 2003, p. 99) that are being driven by local elites. The emergence and rise of the “black bourgeoisie” (Moyo & Yeros, 2011, p. 94) in Zimbabwe and the rabid adoption and implementation of market reforms in all sectors of the country including social services shows that they are in collaboration with global capital. Across societies bourgeois thought is viewed as modern thought (Amin, 1997, p. 134). He further observed that

> Governing classes generally formulate the visions and aspirations within the perspective of really existing capitalism; willingly or not, they subject their strategies to the constraints of global capitalist expansion. The state is the unilateral mouthpiece of the interests of transnational capital, or its subaltern comprador allies. (Amin, 2011b, p. 327)

As student narratives have illustrated, the implementation of modernity principles have had deleterious consequences on their university careers and their responses have included demonstrations and joining political activity with opposition political groupings (Chikwanha, 2009; Hwami, 2012). In response, the government has been ruthless as seen by student arrests and beatings, and hence widespread accusations that it has become dictatorial (Raftopoulos & Mlambo; 2009; Tendi, 2010). The authorities in Zimbabwe are aiding the spread of market values by use of force, further giving credence to the internal colonial explanation of contemporary Zimbabwe.

By enforcing neoliberal policies in universities, as was illustrated above, the biggest losers have been students from rural (peasant) areas who find adapting to life in the urban areas very difficult. Besides their concentration in disciplines that will make it very difficult for them to be gainfully employed, access and completion rates continue to drop (Students Solidarity Trust, 2009). Such cases then join the unemployed in cities and rural areas or the popular trend of exiting to neighboring countries. This system of peasant education and the general living conditions of the peasantry can sufficiently be conceptualized by utilizing internal colonial analytics. It is colonial as its achievement to date is the consistent subordination of the peasantry as they are demanded to provide cheap labor and political support.

**Concluding Remarks**

Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people’s culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. (wa Thiong’o, 1981, p. 16)

According to the thesis of this article, the existence of colonialism (internal) explains the unfavorable educational circumstances students from the peasantry are experiencing. Against such an observation, there is need for education that challenges the hegemonizing systems. In line with Ngugi wa
Thiong’o intelligent analysis captured above, the university or the academic community must realize the existence of colonial relations in “independent” Zimbabwe. This has proved to be a daunting task for elite and mostly Western educated academic members. Contemporary education curriculum in Zimbabwe largely espouse a Euro-American culture, and the more educated (formal schooling) one is, the more one is associated with European style of living and distances oneself from Zimbabwean way of living (largely peasantry). It is therefore an established fact that higher education institutions are more European than African/Zimbabwean in cultural outlook (language, official norms, for example, office manners, classroom behaviors, etc.). This has largely been analyzed as neo-colonial or colonial hangover that was expected to end. Along this observation, A. Mishra Tarc (2009) notes that

Postcolonial studies are slow to come to education, in part because postcolonial studies threaten to undo education, to unravel the passionately held-onto thought and knowledge of the modern Western-educated student and scholar. (p. 195)

It is disturbing to ignore the plight of the poor, that is the peasants, and to view the education of this group as normal, is equally pathetic. There is need for the academe to identify with struggling peoples and hence focus research and scholarship toward ameliorating the suffering of ordinary citizens. There should be a realization that “that the iniquitous phenomenon of exploitation can assume a black face” (Fanon, 1963, p. 94). Student arrests and beatings exemplify exploitation and as Fanon further noted, “people must learn to give up their simplistic perception of the oppressor” (p. 94).

Fanon (1963) argues that there can be no authentic liberation without decolonization, whereas Dei (2010) suggests that “decolonization must be complete and must overcome exploitation, alienation and oppression, and dehumanization” (p. xvii). This is the call the academic community is being called on to confront and further highlights the need for decolonizing education, that is one that

Brings to the fore questions of power relations among actors and different players in the school system while at the same time upholding the agency, resistance and local cultural resource knowledge of all learners . . . is about change, it is about a particular way of knowing that emerged through bodies of difference, it is about embodied knowledge, it is a particular process that encounters the foreign and the local of imposition. It is about resistance and the fight for social justice. (Dei, 2010, p. 6)

Progressive scholars throughout the world have been advocating the use of homegrown indigenous solutions to modern challenges. This article corroborates the search for solutions to the crisis students from poor rural backgrounds are facing. The concept of unhu would be in line with what Said (1994) to offer a suggestion that

Academics/intellectuals are expected to speak truth to power; insiders promote special interests, but intellectuals should be the ones to question patriotic nationalism, corporate thinking, and a sense of class, racial or gender privilege. (p. xiii)

The article acknowledges the difficulties of achieving this in the current politically volatile Zimbabwean climate but provoking a discussion is a significant step toward this progressive objective. By calling for the decolonization of the academe, the article is encouraging conceptualization outside the framework of the oppressive forces of global capitalism and local government political and economic dictatorship. It is “border thinking” and “double critique” of the two colonial forces that ultimately lead to “an another thinking, a thinking that is located at the border of coloniality of power” (Mignolo, 2000, p. 67). It is liberative epistemology aimed at ending global and internal coloniality as currently played out in Zimbabwe’s higher education leaving peasant students at the mercy of social evils and political opportunists. In another sense, a double critique as advocated in this study is “the criticism of the imperial discourses as well as national discourses asserting identity and differences articulated in and by imperial discourses” (Khatibi, 1983, p. 39). This critical border thinking is the epistemic response of the colonized (Grosfoguel, 2005), that is “contributing to academic efforts to defend the public sphere from its further integration into the neoliberal and imperialist practices of the state and of global capitalism” (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2005, p. 131). Thus, in a way this article is corroborating efforts of many other scholars to give back value to local liberative epistemology in the fight against colonizing forces.

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