

**THE CHANGING SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND
FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY: THE CASE
OF CHILDREN'S HOMES IN ZIMBABWE.**

By

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Social Studies in fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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June 2014

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated

to the

President of Zimbabwe,

Cde Robert Gabriel Mugabe, because of his

dedication and commitment to the

well being of the people of Zimbabwe.

His efforts have made a difference to their livelihoods.

I dedicate this study also

to my

special adopted children at Mazowe Children's Home

and all other

orphans throughout Zimbabwe.

*I hope that in due course, society will embrace them as equal human
beings.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The dynamism of society shall forever be the basis of any sociological research. Therefore, without society to assist in many various research aspects, there will be no study to carry out. Accordingly, my first and most profound gratitude go to the societies that enable us to study them because of their dynamism and diversities.

My heartfelt thanks also go to my supervisor, Prof Mararike, for his invaluable tutorship, patience and guidance.

Secondly my thanks also go to those orphanages which opened their doors to us and made immense contributions to the data gathered for use in the process of producing this thesis.

Chief Charumbira, Chief Negomo, Police Commissioner General Chihuri, Commissioner General Prison Services, Zimondi, Chief Magistrate Guvamombe, Registrar General Tobaiwa Mudede, the several families and all those orphanages which participated in group discussions, your contributions deserve my acknowledgement. Mr Justin Tandire, my research assistant, was a pillar of support. He was able to be in those places I could not be. Mr Tizora who provided the material support and encouragement, I thank him warmly.

Finally, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to my Husband, President Robert Gabriel Mugabe, our children and my dear mother for being a source of great inspiration and moral support during the course of my study.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of changes in the structure and functions of the family, using Zimbabwe as a point of departure. Also included in the investigation was to determine whether such changes might have contributed to the emergence of children's homes in Zimbabwe, why, when and how.

The study assumed that children's homes had a role to play in the development of orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children. A further assumption was that there were effective legal and administrative frameworks which governed the welfare of children in place.

Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, secondary and primary sources. The study was guided by a number of methodological approaches. However, a naturalistic and participant-oriented approach was more appropriate for the study than others. The approach falls under the qualitative paradigm. The main emphasis was on the interpretive analysis where the principal concern was the way in which research participants created, modified and gave meaning to their experiences, particularly with regards to causes of changes in the structure and functions of the family.

The research exploited the strengths of triangulation data gathering techniques which included interviews, focus group discussions and secondary data. The study noted, however, that each technique had its strengths and weaknesses. For example, some interviewees tended to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear.

Data reveal that the values of indigenous people were affected by colonization, urbanization, and modernization. The organization and functions of the family were affected by schools and churches. Today's social complexities require that formal education of children be delegated to schools and churches, thus causing families to lose some of their functions.

The study also established that there were links between parental loss and baby dumping, conflict and the subsequent emergence of children's homes in Zimbabwe. The research has implications on policy issues, political processes, economic and social matters. A call is therefore made for further research in the area of the welfare of children particularly the role of children's homes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Defficiency Virus
AU	African Union
BEIP	Burcharest Early Intervention Project
BSAC	British South Africa Company
DDF	District Development Fund
OAU	Organisation of African Union
ZPS	Zimbabwe Prison Services
ZimStat	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police

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