Britain and United States' influence on opposition politics in Africa: A Case of Movement for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe

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Abstract: **The purpose of the study was to analyse the influence of Britain and USA on opposition politics in Africa: A case of MDC in Zimbabwe. Literature reviewed from various sources showed that a number of opposition parties in Africa lack a strong financial base thus rely on foreign financial and technical funding. The Liberal Democratic and the Rational Choice Theories were employed as the theoretical frameworks to guide this study. The qualitative methodology was adopted to conduct the study. Questionnaires, documents and interviews were used to collect data. The target population was party members from the MDC and ZANU PF. A sample of 60 members and key informants identified through purposive and snowballing sampling techniques was used. The research found out that financial sources of political parties are membership subscriptions, individual donations, state allocations, party investments and business sector. No foreign funding was evident. Technical support and capacity building programmes are provided to all political parties by international agencies and local NGOs funded indirectly by Britain and USA. The impact of capacity building programmes is strengthened parliamentary committees and improved level of understanding of legislative procedures. Based on research findings, the research concluded that there is no influence of opposition parties' policies due to financial, technical and capacity building support provided by Britain and USA. Recommendations were that political parties should encourage payment of membership fees and individual donations and the amendment of the Political Parties Finance Act to allow a certain percentage of foreign funding. An area for further study would be a comparative analysis of opposition political parties' electoral performance in Southern Africa.**

Key words: influence, political party, opposition political party, democracy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Wagner (2013) points out that from the time the Cold War ended, the political party system has become an established feature in democracies. In the current era democracy is seen as the only form of power with more international focus supporting the running of political parties as a key mainstay of good governance, the rule of law and the safeguarding of individual privileges (Shella, 2013). According to Rye (2014) more people in the world over are governed by rulers of their choice through multi-party elections. Shella (2013) argues that political parties exist mainly to challenge and seize government control preferably in a non-violent manner. These non-violent ways include

parties' competition for control through consistent multiparty elections.

The origins of African political parties can be traced back to the undemocratic setting of colonial rule as they agitated for independence (Dutton, 2014). This change led colonial masters to allow Africans to establish political parties to oversee the development of a legislature albeit under stringent political scrutiny (Sule, Sani, & Mat, 2018). As a result, most African political parties evolved from the decolonisation process through nationalist or liberation movements which mobilised citizens for independence. In modern democracies political organisations are normally related with democracy itself as democracy is regarded as a collection of competitive political parties hence existence of opposition political parties (Rye, 2014).

According to Bayeh (2015) Britain and the United States of America (USA) influence many events in most Third World countries. The duo's influence is more pronounced in sub Saharan Africa due to the region's continuous struggles with periods of political, philanthropic and economic chaos evident from the time when colonialization was terminated. The two countries promote good governance, individual privileges and healthy economic plans in Africa and according to statements posted on United Kingdom/United States (UK/US) embassy website (www.uk.usembassy.gov) "USA has no closer ally than Britain". The USA and British foreign policies emphasise close coordination and bilateral cooperation between the two states, constantly consulting on foreign policy and international challenges thus sharing key external security and strategic goals (Sibanda, 2012).

Sibanda (2012) posits that the association between the USA and Britain and Zimbabwe has changed since the 1980s from friendliness to utter resentment from the late 1990s going forward. Britain continues to influence its overseas territories that were once the domain of the colonising power (Bayeh, 2015). Raftopoulos (2013) argues that Britain had massive investment in Zimbabwe and is keen on ensuring that this is maintained in the country which historically was the crown's sphere of influence. According to Sibanda (2012) since 1976 USA has backed efforts aimed at bringing majority rule in Zimbabwe. USA supported the Anglo-American proposal for a peaceful settlement as it reinforced Britain's determination

to pass and implement the December 1979 Lancaster House Agreement.

The African Union (AU) 2063 vision is premised on devising African resolutions to African challenges hence together with Southern African Development Community (SADC) they have shown continuous support for the Zimbabwean government and all its efforts (Masango, 2018). They further acknowledge that the Zimbabwean economy is being negatively affected by sanctions imposed by the west and USA and calls for the lifting of these sanctions (Maodza, 2017). Pan Africanism and Afro optimism fiercely look down upon puppetry, neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism thus the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has found it difficult to garner support from these institutions in their regime change agenda (Masango, 2018).

Sule et al., (2018:92) observe that opposition in Africa is perceived as a "threat, enemy, distraction and an immoral activity that should not be tolerated". The emergence of opposition politics in general has never been taken lightly by the incumbent ruling parties in most parts of Africa and reports abound of torture, harassment, intimidation, victimisation and imprisonment of the opposition party members and leaders (Jongwe, 2018). In spite of this maltreatment and emasculation of opposition political parties, Lekalake (2017) observes that SADC has experienced the shift from single party to multiparty political dispensations. This is evidenced by the increased number of opposition political parties participating in governance activities in SADC countries.

The MDC was formed in 1999 due to rising discord against the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) administration which was then led by President Robert Mugabe (Masaka, 2012). MDC believes in social democracy and is inspired by western democracy which promotes freedom of association, common law, media autonomy and liberty of movement among other items (www.mdc.co.zw). Maodza (2017) posits that the failure by the MDC to seriously engage and respect the decisions of the AU and SADC have further alienated the party from the principles of pan Africanism. This has led to its portrayal by Themba Mliswa (a Zimbabwe independent parliamentarian) as a "Trojan horse of imperialists and sanctions mongering lot who lack direction and send their leadership to America to lobby for electoral reforms" (Maodza, 2017).

It is within this context that this research seeks to comprehend the level of influence that Britain and USA exert on the MDC in light of their financial, technical and capacity building support to the party. The proposed study has been necessitated by the need to evaluate the keen interest shown by Britain and USA in the policies of the MDC and the MDC's affinity towards these two countries through the continued support they render to MDC.

The study is important as it seeks to contribute to information of how Britain and USA influence opposition political parties in African democratic countries and will benefit scholars of politics by contributing to the existing body of academic knowledge around. The MDC party's reputation is tainted with a stain of being western aligned, pushing neo-imperialists agenda and negating the ideals of pan Africanism. The study will thus contribute in examining whether this is true or not. The study is also important to other contesting opposition political parties other than the MDC and the voting public who will be able to make an informed choice that is grounded in proof instead of mere opinions. The study is significant to Britain and USA in that it will help them evaluate the impact their aid and support have had on African postcolonial era politics. The study is important in that it will come up with recommendations for the transformation of MDC in order to reposition itself as a home grown entity worth the support of all Zimbabweans from different walks of life.

The study was limited to only one opposition political party (the MDC) in Zimbabwe amid the existence of over twenty opposition political parties in the republic because since its formation the MDC has displayed a stern polling contest to ZANU PF whereas other opposition parties have been unsuccessful. The study was carried out in Harare metropolitan province which is the stronghold of the MDC party. The target population were the MDC leadership and ordinary party members, democracy and human rights NGOs and CSOs, ZCTU officials, ZANU PF leaders and ordinary members, political analysts, academia as well as Britain and USA embassy officials. It was imperative to include members from ZANU PF in the research to ensure that the data collected would present a balanced picture of the topic under study. The study was limited to assessing the impact of Britain and USA influence only on MDC excluding a number of other important western and eastern countries.

Theoretical framework

The two theories which guided this study were liberal democratic theory and rational choice theory.

According to Rye (2014) scholars of liberal democratic theory believe in the equality and freedom of everybody and that all have the same rights and choices as anyone else. Rational choice is about choices made by individuals. Thus Wittek, (2013) argues that rational choice theory is about an individual formulates a sound choice to suit their individual likings. The main ideas under liberal democratic theory include freedom of press, assembly, movement, multi-party elections, participation by citizens, regular holding of elections, use of secrets ballots and avoidance of dictatorial tendencies (Rhoden, 2015; Sorensen 2013; Rye 2014). Anton (2017) notes that the development of liberal democracy goes back to the 18th century when it originated in Europe as a type of administration and has since then spread in many countries around the world including Zimbabwe. Rye (2014) points out that under liberal democratic theory the general populace respects their leaders while the leaders are bound by the law to revere civil liberties. Etyang & Nhlengethwa (2016) postulate

that governments in Africa have made efforts to institutionalise and strengthen democratic tenets since the second wave of democratisation that engulfed most part of the continent in the 1990s. Critical gains have been made to embed democratic principles in post-independence African states and these efforts have been met with varying degrees of success with the most success recorded in the introduction of multiparty elections and redrafting of constitutions (Etyang & Nhlengethwa, 2016). According to Segrillo (2012) political parties in a liberal democratic country work together within the national legal frameworks. Liberal democratic theory fits in well within this study as it is aligned with tenets of democratic conditions and recognise the importance of opposition political parties to stimulate competition in elections. Both Britain and USA are proponents of liberal democracy hence their relationship and perceived support to MDC to propagate democratic tendencies in Zimbabwe.

In order to comprehend individual conduct and decision making processes, social experts utilise the rational choice theory (Ogu, 2013). The model intends to explain collective experiences by supposing that an individual formulates a sound choice to suit their individual likings (Wittek, 2013). The theorists argue that the global situation defines measures to be taken by nations in their individual assessment processes. The process of making an evaluation by a nation can be regarded as if it was a solo entity crafting a resolution. As a solo player each nation constructs varieties by choosing an alternative it believes brings about a social outcome in line with the state's preferences and that maximises the state's payoff (Ogu, 2013). Conduct that is considered sensible is that behaviour that is appropriate for the comprehension of particular aims having taken into consideration the restrictions that the situation inflicts (Hodgson, 2012). Ogu (2013) writes that every political party will always take part in events that will eventually result in the achievement of their benefits thus rivalry among parties can be accepted as logical. They will come up with strategies and engage in activities meant to manipulate voters to ensure party welfare is taken care of first before anything else. Ogu (2013) states that values, individual beliefs and attitudes affect the reasoning capacity and judgements practices forcing people to make do with what would be currently available. Struggle for inadequate supplies, power and its privileges characterise politics (Bondt, 2012). Hedstrom & Stern (2017) contend that man is selfish, goal orientated and profit seeking and political conduct is well described through the claim that it is biased. The rational choice theory was used in this study to analyse Britain and USA's influence on MDC policies through their provision of financial, technical and capacity building support. This will help to explain why MDC has made a rational choice in choosing to partner with Britain and USA and sticking with its choice over the years despite widespread condemnation regionally and locally of this partnership. By choosing this course of action the MDC is consistent in pursuing its goal of regime change in Zimbabwe and after weighing the costs and benefits of alternative partnerships, it has rationally settled for these two partners who happen to be vocal advocates of promoting democracy in Zimbabwe.

Brief historical background of the MDC

The MDC evolved from the labour movement as effects of the economic structural programmes of the 1990s introduced by international financial institutions were taking a toll on the general citizenry (Masaka, 2012). Vibrant membership of the party was drawn from the workers' network, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and its affiliate unions and university students' unions. Ironically MDC emerged during the period that the Labour Party was in power in Britain under Tony Blair. This might be the reason for Britain being sympathetic to the MDC cause (Asuelime & Simura, 2014). Two distinct ideologies exist within the two major political parties in Zimbabwe: ZANU PF preaches the gospel of black empowerment and maintaining the gains of the liberation struggle while the MDC's emphasis is on the democratisation of the country through alignment with western principles (Mukhulani, 2014). Since its formation in 1999 the MDC has presented a serious electoral challenge to the ruling party. The party clinched 57 out of 120 Parliamentary seats in the 2000 elections (Jongwe, 2018). Its initial funding was provided by a cluster of white large scale farmers intending to safeguard their farms from the ex-combatants who were leading in farm invasions. Initially the MDC received funding from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) and British corporations who were in favour of the MDC's commitment to the liberalisation of the economy and return of land to their erstwhile owners (Asuelime & Simura, 2014).

The MDC went on to contest both in the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2005 and 2006 respectively. In the 2005 elections MDC was affected by the split within the party and won fewer seats compared to the 2000. The party also lost in the presidential elections but went to dispute the results without success. Then in 2008 harmonised elections MDC won more seats in parliament and even won the Presidential vote but failed to assume power as it was said that he failed to get 50+ 1 % so were supposed to have a rerun. The re-run was characterised by violence which forced MDC candidate, M Tsvangirai to withdraw from race but elections just went ahead. The mediation by the then South African President, Thambo Mbeki resulted in a Government of National Unity from 2009 to 2013. In the 2013 Harmonised Elections MDC-T lost both the Presidential and Parliamentary elections to the ruling party. As usual the party complained of uneven electoral field and alleged rigging but the contest did not bring any change. The Harmonised Elections of 2018, which were held after the fall of the long-serving President R G Mugabe, were again won by the ruling party now led by E D Munangagwa. The MDC was also led by a new leader, Nelson Chamisa, after the death of founding President, M. Tsvangirai at the beginning of 2018. The elections' results were strongly disputed by Chamisa and his party but lost the challenge in the Constitutional Court which said there was no evidence to prove electoral cheating.

The nature of African opposition political parties

Over the last few decades, political parties have emerged as a key pillar of decent governance, the rule of law and the safeguarding of individual liberties in developed democracies such as Australia and United States of America (Dermikol, 2014). An opposition political party is a "government in waiting" ready to assume control of the nation and this is done through free and fair polls when the party in power no longer satisfies the voters (Rye, 2014). Adeola (2016) defines an opposition political party as an organised political group that is opposed primarily ideologically to the government or party in political control of a country.

Sule et al., (2018) posit that over the last three decades there has been some progress towards institutionalising multiparty democracy in Africa. In Zimbabwe there are currently over twenty political parties showing a growth in multiparty politics activities (Jongwe, 2018). Despite this, Lekalake (2017) observes that elections in the Sub-Saharan region rarely result in changes of government even though there is widespread support for multiparty politics. Opposition political parties' performance has not been high enough to unseat them due to the fact that they are not trusted as much as governing parties and that very often they are not seen as a viable alternative to the dominant ruling party (Lekalake, 2017).

Shella (2013) describes African opposition political parties as weak and divided which limit their ability to challenge governing parties in democratic and authoritarian states in African states. In Zimbabwe for example, the persistently weak and divided opposition parties limit electoral competitiveness, likelihood of electoral turnovers and the uncertainty in electoral outcomes (Jongwe, 2018). Raftopoulos (2013) highlights that the MDC party has unaccountable management, not well advanced structures, internal aggression and philosophical limitations.

The opposition political parties have neither the capacity nor the means to nurture structures at all district or local levels in the country (Sule et al., 2018). There is high degree of factionalism due to strong personalities dominating the party hence party policy becomes a reflection of that ego's beliefs and visions (Wagner, 2013). The MDC is no stranger to factionalism as observed by Nkala (2018) who cites that in 2005 the MDC suffered its first split that saw a grouping of the party led by the late Gibson Sibanda and Welshman Ncube pull out to form their own MDC-N. Tsvangirai remained with the original MDC outfit which became known as the MDC-T. Jongwe (2018) postulates that since then the MDC-T party has continued to experience splits (in 2014 and 2017) which has weakened their position and limited their ability to challenge the governing party. Another problem is the unwillingness of the ruling party to relinquish power even if it loses elections like what happened in 2008. ZANU (PF) lost elections but used a technicality to force a rerun in which violence was used to intimidate voters.

Foreign funding to opposition political parties in Africa and influence on policy

Alleged funding of opposition parties by foreign parties has long been an accusation made by ruling parties in Africa. Sule, et al., (2018) observe that foreign support of opposition parties is an extension of the solidarity movement to post-independence foreign connections but with redefined parameters, emphasising a capable opposition. The role of foreign support is to ensure a democratic move by promoting a swing in control away from the long standing party to a new one (Wagner, 2013). Rogers (2019) asserts that donor money had poured in to the MDC in the years leading up to the 2008 elections with the belief that then Zimbabwean president Mugabe would be toppled by the opposition. By 2013 election there was no much money as donors became exhausted with no opposition win in sight hence funds dried up and the party lost its steam resulting in leaders splitting up once again to form splinter groups (Rogers, 2019).

Wagner (2013) postulates that there is a perception in most African countries that the ruling party uses states funds to support its activities to the disadvantage of opposition parties which do not have access to such resources. According to Adeola (2016) weak funding and financial resources ultimately determines the failure or success of opposition political parties to meet their full potential or to achieve their goals of getting into power. External or benefactor assistance is what many African opposition political activity is reliant on for survival (Sule et al., 2018). Jansen & Molleda (2014) corroborate that the majority of political parties in developing nations are not functioning well mainly due to financial constraints. Mangwana (2015) also attributes the lack of a strong private economy in many African societies which means that opposition political parties cannot rely on contributions from wealthy supporters to make up for any resource advantage which the ruling party may have. This study is seeking to unravel the influence that Britain and USA exert on MDC through financial, technical and organizational capacity building support in their endeavour to capacitate opposition political parties.

Zimbabwe is guided by the Political Parties (Finance) Act of 2001 which was originally passed in 1992. It primarily exists to obligate the state to finance any party that acquires at least 5 percent in the ballot. The money is paid in each parliamentary year according to the overall figure of ballots won by its contestants. The Act also prohibits funding of political parties in whatever form by foreign states and individuals. The Act caters for other internal sources of political financing like membership subscriptions and other contributions or donations by individuals and corporates. Chikwawawa (2019) has however criticised the state for providing insufficient funds to the political parties and failing to disburse it on time over the past three decades. Daka (2016) postulates that in Zambia for instance, sources of financing include levying a certain percentage of parliamentarians' government salaries and conducting fundraising activities like

selling party regalia. In Croatia political parties' sources of funds come from their engagement in economic activities like establishing party newspaper or newsletters, investing in property, forming profit making companies and giving out loans (Augustine, 2013). In mature democracies, business and corporate entities form the majority of political parties' funders (Mangwana, 2015). British political parties can also receive funding from companies and businesses who are registered in the UK and conduct business in the UK. Michael (2013) indicates that in the US and Britain individuals on the electoral registers are allowed to donate as well to political parties of their choice and the donation itself should be registered. This is an attempt to restrict externals from manipulating local politics (Mangwana, 2015).

USA's policy on foreign political parties funding

Wagner (2013) highlights that the USA emphasis is on the creation of a strong and capable opposition in a political system characterized by dominance of a single party that the public has created and consistently validated through free elections. According to Chikwawawa (2019), the attitude of USA is that democracy is an American identity in the global arena hence their support of opposition politics in Africa. Assisted democratisations projects are an ever changing component of US policy accommodating the Carter policies of human rights through democracy (Sibanda, 2012). Critics of the USA democratisation projects view the processes as opportunistic in nature with USA supporting opposition political parties if they are deemed to advance American interests and gains in a particular country (Wagner, 2013).

The USA Constitution under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 Section 116 (e) authorises development assistance allowing financial support for democracy and administration and political party aid to other countries. However, the section concludes by forbidding the use of any of these funds either openly or subtly to manipulate poll results in any state (Sibanda, 2012). The research aims to interrogate the feasibility of this concluding statement and assess whether the assistance granted to the MDC makes Britain and USA influence the operations and decision-making processes of the opposition political party and ultimately the election outcome in Zimbabwean electoral processes. The MDC has been castigated for being a recipient of external sponsorship and a partner of capitalist agents aiming at domineering over Zimbabwe again as well as representing continued imperial and settler influence in Zimbabwean politics by the former president Robert Mugabe (Raftopoulos, 2013).

Britain's policy on foreign political parties funding

According to Sibanda (2012) Britain in its foreign policy uses the pragmatism approach. This approach allows Britain to follow realistic ways to achieve its goals and benefits without being held back by creed or doctrines. Furthermore, British strategists are quick to assume a new direction in their overseas dealings to ensure the nation's progression (Sibanda, 2012). Thus in 2000 they sought refuge in the opposition

political party MDC in its attempt to dislodge Mugabe and secure its interests after the land reform programme which dispossessed white commercial farm owners (Asuelime & Simura, 2014).

USA and Britain's technical support to MDC and influence on policy

According to Kumar (2004), technical assistance in developing nations has been given to governments, political parties and legislative bodies to strengthen democratisation processes. Technical assistance is provided in regards to a specific problem, equipping parties with resources that address their needs to help them become more effective. Bilateral government agencies and many organisations which execute sponsored plans focus on supporting political parties with technical assistance (Amundsen, 2013). Donor countries appreciate the sensitivities surrounding interfering in domestic political processes hence they offer funding which is delivered through an implementing agency. Donors have realised the importance of political parties in the democratic administration course hence technical support has widened to include electoral processes in its entirety and to developing approaches that political parties can utilise in the period when there are no polls (Hamilton, 2013).

According to Ohman (2014) political parties too often devote all their resources and energy to short term elections without placing much value on investing in developing and maintaining a solid and democratic party. Customary handbooks are available to present common background information and peculiar skills by foreign experts. However, the difficulty with the majority of these global specialists is that they operate with technical handbooks detailing US practices in areas such as basic party organisation and functions of office bearers, meetings procedures and membership building and enrolment (Amundsen, 2013). Little attempt though has been made to relate the training manuals to the realities of specific countries and this undermines the overall impact of such trainings.

NGOs and opposition politics

USA and Britain governments have financially and morally invested in the opposition MDC directly and indirectly through different NGOs fronting or pursuing the opposition agenda (Masango, 2018). This support shows that they are discreetly concerned about the strength of African political parties and the democratic culture. USA institutions such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Centre for Democracy and Governance, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and British organisations like Department for International Development (DFID) and Westminster Foundation (WFD) provide financial, technical and capacity building support to African political parties.

A short review of the above mentioned institutions' mission statements indicate that they facilitate democratic processes in Africa, Latin America and Asia with a goal to set up and

promote well organized, competitive and vibrant democratic parties at all levels that offer electoral choices to citizens (US Bureau of African Affairs, 2018). Wagner (2013) postulates that USAID and its implementing partners are highly involved in supporting Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Masango (2018) writes that in 2000 the Zimbabwe Democracy Trust (ZDT) was set up to agitate for former president Mugabe's ouster from power and to be replaced by the opposition MDC leader Mr Tsvangirai with the aim to democratise the country. The patrons and trustees of this board were members of British and American bureaucrats and politicians who played a role in funding of the MDC and setting up of NGOs and CSOs which became fronts for pushing the regime change agenda. Masango (2018) quotes one board member Chester Crocker who called for making the Zimbabwean economy "scream" in order to separate the people of Zimbabwe from ZANU PF.

The US Institute of Peace (USIP) and the NED both were tools for the promotion of political parties, labour unions and media voices deemed acceptable by the US establishment (Maodza, 2017). NED distributed one million United States Dollars to democratisation bodies such as Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights in 2006 (Masango, 2018). In 2007 the then MDC president, the late Tsvangirai led a delegation of CSO representatives to America to make presentations on the progress made in the democratisation of Zimbabwe (Maodza, 2017). At the height of the regime change drive in the 2000s, it became difficult to make a distinction between MDC and NGOs due to their intricate relationship (Mukuhlani, 2014).

Diplomatic missions and opposition party politics

Bassuener (2013:404) highlights that Britain and other concerned nations "had a more expansive idea of what it wanted to see and do in Zimbabwe." To assist the democratic establishment in Zimbabwe, diplomats have sponsored CSOs and democratic organisations with aid (USAID, 2013). Diplomatic missions have also been involved in connecting local leaders with outside groups or individuals in policy centres and universities who might be helpful in capacity building of these leaders. For instance, each year Britain's Chevening Scholarship programme sends about 20 Zimbabweans for one year of graduate training in the UK and the USA also does have a similar programme (Bassuener, 2013). However, Bassuener (2013) is quick to point out that embassies refrained from direct support to the MDC since any evidence of this would be used to prosecute opposition leaders.

USA and Britain's capacity building support to MDC and influence on policy

The strengthening of the particular party structures on all levels and advancement of democratic tendencies within the party is what capacity building is primarily all about (Travis, 2014). The process involves how things get done within an organisation by equipping people with skills and knowledge to perform effectively and at a greater capacity. This sharpens the development of human and institutional resources to improve their way of doing things by enhancing their ability to function and continue to stay relevant in the fast changing world (USAID, 2013).

Role of USAID in capacity building of political parties

The USAID works with governments which support free and transparent polls and do not stifle democratic contestation by other parties to organise and mobilise political support (Beyani, 2015). Shaiko & Feierstein (1999) note that USAID technical assistance and capacity building training activities for political party development has three goals which include the creation of developed organisations at all national levels, support of candidates and assisted democratic administration of all political parties.

Wagner (2013) observes that USAID avoids meddling in local dealings of autonomous territories and provides training activities that addresses the functions of all political parties in in a uniform way without favour and unfair distribution of federal assistance. Emphasis is placed on implementing training programmes targeting all political parties in a fair manner and not giving out money openly or material support to individual political parties (Shaiko & Feierstein, 1999). This is an attempt to ensure that the assistance is not labelled as unwarranted involvement in local political matters of independent states (Beyani, 2015).

According to Masango (2018) diplomatic missions like the US and British embassies have not remained quiet in the wake of harassment incidents of rivalry members in Zimbabwe. They have financially supported efforts to encourage engagement of stakeholders, strengthen the respect of individual liberties and pushed for equal representation of men and women in local political processes (Ncube, 2014). Britain's Andrew Pocock and his counterpart Christopher Dell were involved with the opposition party MDC and they were called out by Mugabe as gunning for regime change through their cordial relationship with opposition leaders in March 2007 (Hungwe, 2018).

Statement of the problem

Since the formation of the MDC in 1999, the ruling party ZANU (PF) has accused Britain and USA of financially and technically assisting opposition party by backing its operations and decision making processes. The alleged influence of Britain and USA on MDC negatively impacts the party's ability to convince the totality of the electorate of its independence as a home grown entity that has the Zimbabwean people's interests at heart. This has undermined the watchdog role of the opposition which entails it to hold the government to account in its service to the citizenry within the confines of the laws. Resultantly, this puts the opposition

party in a weaker position to ably offer itself as a reliable substitute to the reigning leadership which is not healthy in ensuring that democracy thrives.

Aim of the study

To analyse the influence of Britain and USA on opposition parties in Africa using a case study of MDC in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2018.

Objectives of the study

(i) To analyse how Britain's and USA's financial contributions influenced MDC between 1999 and 2018.
(ii) To evaluate how technical expertise provided by Britain and USA to MDC influenced the party.
(iii) To assess the influence of capacity building programmes provided by Britain and USA on MDC.

Research questions

(i) How did financial aid from Britain and USA influence MDC from 1999 to 2018?
(ii) How did technical expertise from Britain and USA influence MDC?
(iii) What is the impact of capacity building programmes provided by Britain and USA on MDC?

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The study used the qualitative approach for collecting, presenting and analysing data in order to answer questions of the research. The qualitative approach was best suited to this study as it is an approach which focuses on the valuation of individual outlook, thoughts and behaviours which the study also aimed to do (Cresswell, 2014). Data about people's perceptions and opinions is not easily quantifiable since it is based more on the feelings and experiences of the respondents who are directly involved in the situation under study (Mware, 2018). According to Rahi (2017) the qualitative methodology is an approach that allows the detailing, studying and trying to discover the hidden meaning and importance of individual conduct and practise as well as differing beliefs, behaviours and feelings. Open-ended questions found in the questionnaires and interviews to understand the influence that Britain and USA exert on MDC through their financial, technical and capacity building support provided in-depth answers.

The study used the case study research design to analyse how Britain and USA influence opposition politics in Zimbabwe. The case study was appropriate to use in order to collect relevant information about the present status, past encounters, and ecological factors that add to the personal conduct of the unit (Atmowardoyo, 2018). Through the use of the case study, a thorough examination of the unique experiences of the MDC was uncovered by getting information from the participants themselves. MDC as a case study is the one that provides a broader understanding of opposition politics in Zimbabwe. Also it has vast membership and has been a formidable

challenger to the ruling ZANU PF party since its formation in 1999 (Jongwe, 2018).

The target population of this study consisted of party members from MDC and ZANU PF parties and key informants drawn from the MDC and ZANU PF leadership, British and USA embassies, ZCTU, academia, political analysts and CSOs/NGOs representatives. To avoid bias of the data collected and results, members from ZANU PF were also included in the research to ensure that the data collected would present a balanced picture of the topic under study.

A sample of 60 party members from MDC and ZANU PF and 12 key informants were used in this study. Purposive sampling was used in sampling key respondents and these included leaders of the MDC, ZANU PF, human rights and democracy NGOs and CSOs, ZCTU officials, Britain and USA diplomatic staff, political analysts and members of the academia. The key respondents were identified based on their perceived level of understanding of politics and ability to articulate issues around the study topic. Snowballing sampling was used to identify MDC and ZANU PF ordinary card holding members to administer questionnaires as well as key informants to interview. The subject matter under discussion in this study is considered sensitive by some quarters of the society hence the danger of failing to reach supporters especially of the opposition MDC due to fear of victimisation and harassment.

The research instruments that were used in the study were questionnaires and interviews which provided primary data. Self-administered questionnaires were designed with questions to elicit information from ordinary party members and these were filled in by the respondents on their own. A total of 60 questionnaires were distributed at an individual level to both MDC and ZANU PF ordinary members within the Harare Metropolitan Province. Fifty-two questionnaires were returned.

The researcher conducted interviews with 12 key informants who were selected based on their technical and positional abilities in their institutions to provide factual and in-depth information on the research matter. The interviews were semi-structured, with the interviewer having a list of key questions in order to guide the discussion towards specific objectives.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background of respondents

The major respondents to the study were general party members from both the MDC and ZANU PF parties. An equal number of 30 questionnaires were distributed to each party. Fifty-two questionnaires were returned giving a total response rate of 87%. Twelve key informants' interviews were conducted with officials from the MDC and ZANU-PF leadership, CSOs and NGOs, the academia, ZCTU and political analysts. No interviews were carried out with British or USA officials as planned as they were not forthcoming.

The majority of respondents who answered questionnaires 36 (68%) were males while 16 (32%) were females. Most of the respondents 21 (42%) were aged between 21-30 years. years. The majority of the respondents 40 (77%) had attained university or college education. Most of the respondents 21 (41%) were employed in the private sector. The majority of respondents 33 (63%) had been party members for 11-15 years. The background of respondents indicates that they covered a variety of characteristics of citizens in the country which suggests that the study is likely to benefit from a diverse of views.

Financial support and its influence

The first objective of this study was to analyse the influence by Britain and USA on MDC policies due to their financial contribution from 1999 to 2018. Respondents were asked about the sources of funds of their parties, their awareness of foreign funders to their party, whether their parties should receive foreign funding and the implication of receiving foreign funding on their party policies.

Sources of funds for political parties

The question sought to establish the sources of funds of political parties and concerns of such funding.
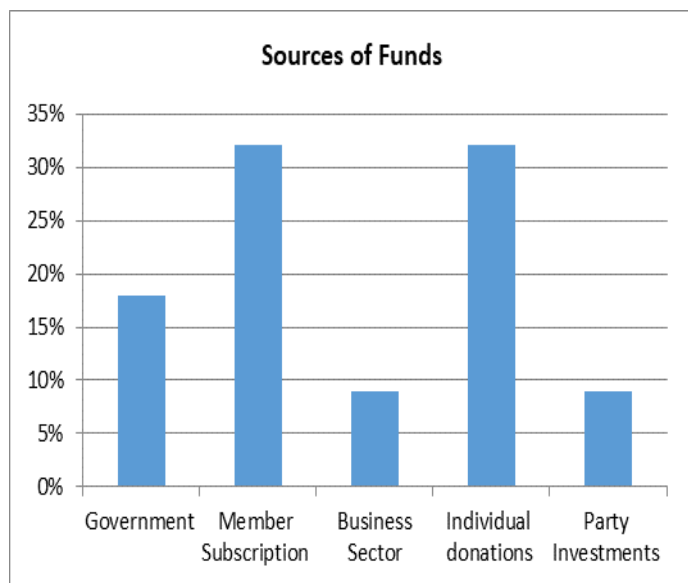

Figure 1: Sources of funds (No. 52)

Member subscription

Sixteen (32%) respondents pointed out that member subscriptions is the main source of funds for their political parties as shown in Figure 1. Key informants shed more light on membership subscriptions:

A key MDC informant (A) said that:

> Card bearing members are supposed to pay monthly subscription fee towards the funding of party programmes and activities. Membership fee is $1. A separate system has been established for female card

bearers to pay an extra dollar per month towards women's programmes though it is still yet to take off. (Interview with MDC informant, 2019).

A key ZANU PF informant (B) said that:

> Member subscriptions is one of our main source of funding and a strong pillar that supports party programmes and activities. Party members also buy party cards. Our monthly individual subscription fees are as follows: at cell level the subscription fee is $1, district level fee-$2, provincial level fee-$5, Central Committee-$20 and Politburo-$50. The party card costs $3. Party members especially those in the rural areas are finding it hard to keep up with the monthly payments and during times of conferences to meet their transport costs. (Interview with ZANU PF informant, 2019).

Individual donations

As shown on Figure 1, sixteen (32%) indicated that individual donations is also another source of funds for their party. Concerning individual donations, a ZANU PF key informant (B) observed that:

> We are also able to fundraise from our members towards a particular cause if need be such as for conferences and hampers for the less privileged. However, revenue collection from individual donations has gone down as times are hard. (Interview with ZANU PF informant, 2019).

State allocations

Ten (18%) of the respondents (Figure 1) said that money allocated to their party by the state is a source of funding. On state allocations, a key informant of the MDC indicated that:

> I am aware of the Political Parties Finance Act of 2001 and that it regulates the amount of money our party receives from the state as well as that it prohibits foreign funding. As MDC we got 3.4 million dollars in 2019, 1 million dollars in 2017 and $700 000.00 in 2016. The cycle of each parliamentary year runs from the 1st of January to the 31st of December but the treasury has been disbursing money later in the year. We feel that this delay is a deliberate move by the treasury to sabotage our operations as we are unable to meet the costs of our programmes which we will have scheduled for the beginning of the year hence failing to honour our promises to the generality of our members (Interview with MDC informant (A) 2019).

Addressing the same issue, a ZANU PF key informant (B) pointed out that:

> As ZANU PF, we received 8 million dollars in 2019, 5 million dollars in 2017 and 2.3 million dollars in 2016. The money is not adequate to fund our

operations and activities.. The money is never disbursed on time and this derails the implementation of our planned programmes. The state treasury owes us some money which are balances from previous allocations. (Interview with ZANU PF key informant, 2019).

Investments

The least number of respondents 5 (9%) as shown in Figure 1 noted that party investments as a source of funds for the party. On party investments, a key informant of ZANU PF (B) highlighted that:

> *Our party has properties which we rent out, we own farms, hold shares in companies and also act as brand ambassadors for vehicle companies like Ford who donate vehicles to our parliamentarians as a marketing strategy. Let me hasten to say that revenue generated from these ventures has been on the decline mainly due to rampant corruption and mismanagement in some of our business entities.* (Interview with ZANU PF key informant (B), 2019).

Business sector

Only 5 (9%) of the respondents indicated business sector as a source of funding as illustrated in Figure 4.5. In regards to business sector as a source of funds, a key informant of MDC said that:

> *We receive donations from the business sector like fuel coupons or office space. For example in one town we are currently paying $1 per year as office rent as the premises are a donation from a local businessman. Some business people meet the cost of delegations travelling abroad for party business and also make donations towards conferences. Unfortunately, most of our well-wishers from the business sector are also struggling to fund us due to the poor economic environment. Only a few in the diaspora are still able to fund us occasionally.* (Interview with MDC informant (A), 2019).

The key sources of funds for political parties indicated in this study are membership subscriptions, business sector, individual donations, party investments and state allocations. Political parties funding remains a challenge in times of poor national economic performance as revenue realised from membership subscriptions, donations from individuals and business sector as well as returns from party investments are limited and unable to fully sustain the financial and material needs of the party. In such a scenario, parties become more and more reliant on state funds which are inadequate and usually disbursed late..

Findings of the study show that membership subscriptions and well-wishers donations remain fundamental sources of political parties' funds though revenue generated from these sources are not significant. These research findings are similar to what Augustine (2013) and Daka (2016) found out in their studies in Malawi and Zambia respectively. Just like in Zimbabwe, Zambian and Malawian political parties receive subscriptions from their members, sale of party cards and regalia. In addition not much revenue is generated from membership subscriptions and individual donations to sustain a party because of outright poverty rendering the membership fee to be a mere symbolic gesture (Daka, 2016).

State allocations is one of sources of funds for political parties. Similarly, in Algeria according to a study done by Hartani (2013), the state provides financial aid annually to political parties. State aid is fixed by law through the Finance Law and the total amount to be allocated to parties is stipulated in the budget and is premised on the amount of seats obtained in parliament and the number of the party's female members elected to the assemblies. What differs however from research findings is the distinct separation of the financial aid. Whereas in Zimbabwe, state allocations are not towards specific activities, in Algeria the state provides money for meeting the operating costs of parties and parliamentary groups as well as organising of their national conferences on an annual basis. State aid specific to an occasion such as for financing electoral campaigns (which is provided when elections are due) is another financial package provided by the state to political parties (Hartani,2013). The MDC has been on record admitting that the party was broke and finding it difficult to embark on massive election campaigns or host its national conferences over the recent past years due to lack and delayed release of state funds (Jongwe, 2018).

Findings of this study revealed that individual donations and business sector as sources of funds for political parties in Zimbabwe differ with the practice in Mozambique. According to TIZ (2010:22) political parties' funding in Mozambique is controlled by Act 7/91 which "prohibits state bodies, corporate persons governed under public law, public utilities governed by private law to finance or subsidise political parties." From this study, political parties in Zimbabwe are allowed to receive donations from local individuals or well-wishers from both the private and public sectors as well as from public and private entities.

General party members' awareness of foreign funders to their parties

Participants were asked if they were aware of foreign funders who provide financial aid to their parties.
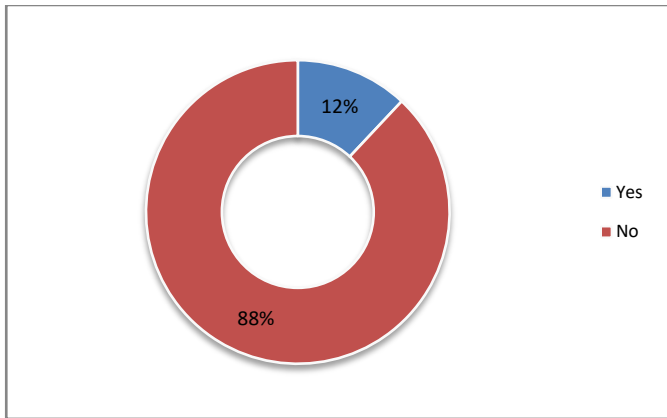
Figure 2: Awareness on foreign funders to political parties (No. 52)

The majority of respondents 46 (88%) were not aware of any foreign funders who provide financial aid to their political parties while only 6 (12%) said they were aware of these funders as illustrated in Figure 2 The names of the foreign funders listed by the members are USAID, DFID, China, Russia, the European Union, USA and Britain. The existence of foreign funding was also revealed by key informants. For example, an MDC key informant (A) differed with what the majority of respondents said:

> We also get indirect financial support from Swedish and Germany institutions such as OLOF Palme Centre (OPC), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAD) and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung-FES). (Interview with key MDC informant (A), 2019).

Similar sentiments were also said by a key informant (B) of ZANU PF:

> We receive material assistance from China and Russia who happen to be our long time sponsors dating back to the country's liberation struggle in the 1970s. (Interview with key ZANU PF informant (B), 2019).

A key CSO informant (E) added that:

> Soon after the re-enactment of the 2001 Political Parties Finance Act prohibiting foreign funding, my organisation was tasked by an international NGO resident in the country to manage on its behalf funds it intended to disburse to the MDC to circumvent the law. (Interview with key CSO key informant, 2019).

A member of the academia (F) shed more light on foreign funding:

> In reality foreign countries do fund political parties using covert budgets that are domiciled in the president's office and these budgets are not publicly audited. These funds are used for strategic purposes in foreign policy to promote or further the interests of states abroad hence foreign governments will never come out in the open to admit that they fund

political parties. (Interview with academia key informant (F), 2019).

The researcher failed to secure interviews or get any response from both the British and USA embassies hence findings presented under this section were from secondary sources. Travis (2014) and Shaiko & Feirestein (1999) write that the USA does not provide financial support to political parties in foreign countries to avoid interfering in domestic political affairs of a sovereign state as well as exerting undue influence on political processes. Sibanda (2012) also asserts that Britain shuns financing of political parties in overseas territories and British political parties are not permitted to receive foreign financial aid. These assertion rules out the notion of USA and Britain influencing MDC policies through the provision of financial support. Findings from the research gathered from interviews with the academia, CSOs and party leadership members established similarly that indeed Britain and USA do not directly provide financial aid to the opposition political party MDC but use indirect means to do this. Thus Kumar (2004) argues that foreign countries such as USA and Britain render financial support to political parties in indirect ways. One of the ways they use is providing money to international NGOs and agencies like the National Democratic Institute (NDI), USAID, International Republic Institute (IRI), DFID and WFD, NED and the US Institute of Peace (USIP). These organisations receive a substantial part of their funding from the US Congress and British parliament (Michael, 2013). In turn they financially support local NGOs and CSOs. NED for instance, distributed one million USD to democratisation bodies like Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Zimbabwe Peace Project, Election Resource Centre and the Counselling Services Unit among others in 2006 (Masango, 2018). Soon after it was established the MDC got financial support from white large scale agriculturalists and the WFD, a British institution which receives an allocation from the British treasury similar to the USAID which also receives money from the US Congress (Asuelime & Simura, 2014). To this effect, Mukuhlani (2014) notes that it became difficult to make a distinction between MDC and NGOs due to their intricate relationship at the height of the regime change drive in the 2000s.

The 2001 Political Parties Finance Act prohibit foreign funding of local political parties in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is not alone in prohibiting foreign funding. Similar to research findings, Hamilton (2013) notes that the EU member states during the Venice Commission on March 17-18 2006, recognised a thought on the Prohibition of Financial Contributions to Political Parties from Foreign Sources to effectively ban foreign funding to local political parties. Funding foreign opposition political parties is strategic in ring fencing national interests should the opposition come into power as in politics there is always competition for scarce resources, power and its privileges (Bondt, 2012).

Wagner (2013) points out that political parties funding by foreigners is part of the democratisation projects especially in

Africa. Interestingly, he views the USA merely as opportunists who tends to support opposition political parties if they are deemed to advance American interests and gains. Similarly, China and Russia have also provided material assistance to ZANU PF dating back to the country's liberation due to their shared ideological beliefs of communism. Though the MDC was initially a recipient of foreign funds, soon after the 2008 elections donor funds to the MDC dried up possibly due to donor fatigue and the restriction on foreign funding imposed by law (Rogers, 2019). These observation are supported by the Rational Choice Theory guiding this study whereby Wittek (2013) argues that the global arena regulates national plans and each nation's resolution is made on the choice that it believes brings about an outcome that is in line with its preferences and one that maximises its benefit.

Views on foreign funding of political parties

Respondents were asked whether they supported parties receiving foreign funding and reasons for their answers.

Table 1: Views on foreign funding (No. 52)

Yes to receiving foreign funding	No to receiving foreign funding
29 (57%) respondents	23 (43%) respondents

More than half of the respondents 29 (57%) agreed that political parties should receive foreign funding while 23 (43%) disagreed (Table 4.2).

Respondents were further asked to give reasons for their answers. Respondents of ZANU PF and MDC parties who were in agreement stated that:

> *I agree that political parties should receive foreign funding because like any other entity, they too need money to carry out their activities and foreign funders do happen to have this money.* (MDC party member 1).

> *Political parties have huge responsibilities hence to fulfil their mandates and reach out to many people they need more money which foreign funders are able to provide.* (MDC party member 2).

> *Political parties are supposed to be independent organisations and as such they have a right to solicit and receive funding from whoever they want.* (ZANU PF party member 3).

A key MDC informant (A) similarly said that:

> *If democracy is a universal theme, then it is an international issue thus foreign funders who want to fund local political parties should be able to do so voluntarily and the political parties receive the funding voluntarily. By virtue of the MDC being a socialist democratic party and anchored in the capitalist ideology, our policies tend to resonate with like-minded foreign institutions hence there is no need to restrict sponsoring of sister parties just like*

> *churches and trade unions do.* (Interview with MDC key informant, 2019).

Citing the poor economic condition, a key ZCTU informant (G) said that:

> *Economically our country is not doing well and the government is unable to timely and adequately meet its financial obligations to political parties thus it is necessary that foreign funders chip in and fill the gap.* (Interview with ZCTU key informant G, 2019).

In addition, a key NGO informant (H) stated that:

> *As NGOs we do not agree with the blanket prohibition of foreign funding and we are of the view that at least a certain percentage should have been stipulated as a portion of foreign funding to improve their financial status.* (Interview with an NGO key informant H, 2019).

However other respondents of MDC and ZANU PF parties were of the view that political parties should not receive foreign funding:

> *Receiving foreign funding compromises the autonomy of our party as financial aid comes with strings attached.* (ZANU PF party member 4).

> *There is no free money in politics. Behind the scenes the funders will influence the direction of the party policies.* (MDC party member, 5).

> *Power tends to lie in the hands of the one with money hence the one who pays the piper determines the tune. It is a fact that the funder will have the final say in the business of the party and due to lack of resources the political party loses its plot and stops to advance the interests of its citizens and end up being used to advance the interests of the west.* (ZANU PF party member, 6).

A political analyst (I) was also against foreign funding:

> *It becomes difficult to wholly detach one's party ideologies and policies from those of one's funders. For instance the continued allegations that the MDC is a pawn of the west and that it seeks to promote homosexuality in Zimbabwe as most of its funders are advocates of this practice.* (Interview with a political analyst, 2019).

As much as there is real need for local political parties to receive financial support from foreigners to boost their operations, it is equally prudent that those who form their political parties be in a position to fund their own activities. There is no need to rely on outsiders to assist them with funds since the ability to fund your own party activities shields you from outside interference and undue influence on party policies.

The research findings on disagreeing with political parties receiving foreign aid are similar to what Ohman (2014) postulates that political parties will tend to become less responsive to voters if they are closely tied to their foreign financiers. Issues of national sovereignty and non-interference in domestic matters are easily blurred as external donor support is not easily provided without any form of interference (Kumar, 2004). The majority of western diplomats tie their monetary support to funding CSOs and opposition parties that promote the growth of democracy (Bassuener, 2013). This trend opened the doors of criticism of the west for funding regime change by former President of Zimbabwe, R G Mugabe. The reputation of the MDC and some NGOs have suffered due to this external alignment resulting in the tainted image especially of the MDC in the public domain (Masango, 2018).

Bassuener (2013) posits that in the case of politicians, trustworthiness is based on their genuineness and freedom thus a lot of open help and subsidizing from external sources opens opposition parties, CSOs and NGOs to charges that they are basically fronts for foreign governments. Also, giving support to just one or a few parties generates the notion of preferential treatment and vested interests by the funder hence other parties will view this as a subtle attempt to try to influence the results of the election (Amundsen, 2013). There is a perception among most ruling party members and SADC countries that the MDC is counter revolutionary and was created to reverse the gains of the liberation struggle (Dzimiri, 2017). Hungwe (2018) concurs with this perception and similarly points out that during the 2008 elections, the former Zimbabwean president Mugabe labelled the MDC as a puppet of the west and a shameful sell out who wanted to preserve the interests of white farmers. Furthermore, Mugabe and his ZANU PF party repeatedly accused the British and US administrations of pushing a regime change agenda in Harare through their support of the MDC, CSOs and NGOs implementing governance and human rights projects (Maodza, 2017). Hamilton (2013) also observes that indeed there are scandals of corrupt contributions to political parties in exchange for advantages like granting of public tenders. But the paradox of the whole scenario is that the ruling party openly receives support from other countries like China or Russia and yet the ruling party politicians do not regard this as a problem.

The study also indicates that some respondents support the idea of political parties receiving foreign aid is in line with the theoretical framework of liberal democracy used in this study. One tenet of the theory is to allow participation of a large number of the population in electoral processes through multi-party competition. Thus donor support in Africa is necessitated by the important role opposition political parties play in the broader democratisation agenda as they offer an alternative choice to the electorate besides the incumbent ruling parties (Wagner, 2013). Donor support is needed for institutional strengthening, development of party structures and conducting campaign activities during election periods.

Technical support and its influence

The second objective of this study was to evaluate the technical expertise that Britain and USA provided to the MDC and their influence on MDC policies. Respondents were asked to respond to questions on technical training provided by foreign donors and share their views on whether receiving foreign funded technical assistance made these funders to influence their party policy direction.

Technical training provided by foreign funders to political parties

Respondents were asked to list technical trainings that foreign funders have provided to their political parties.
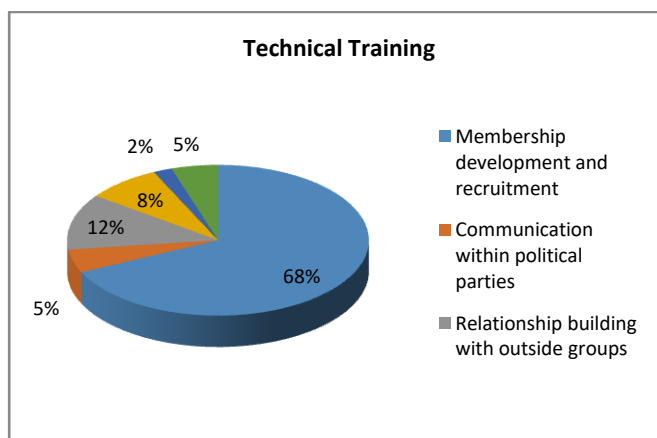

Figure 3: Technical training (No. 52)

The majority of respondents 35 (68%) indicated that their party had received technical training in membership development and recruitment as shown in Figure 3. Key informants provided more information on the technical assistance. A key MDC informant (A) said :

A number of foreign institutions and donor agencies have supported political parties in Zimbabwe with technical assistance. In our case, in 2007 the International Republican Institute held a technical training workshop for our shadow government ministers. During the training sessions, each shadow minister exhibited and defended his or her strategic plan position. This exercise was critical to build our shadow cabinet members' technical capacity and offer the party as the best alternative in the 2008 elections. (Interview with MDC key informant, 2019).

Similar views were pointed by a key informant (B) of ZANU PF:

Our parliamentarians together with parliamentarians from other political parties participated in technical training provided by the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA). The training sessions were held in partnership with Zimbabwe Electoral Commission in

2017 were technical issues of the Biometric Voters' Registration (BVR) processes were presented and discussed. The knowledge acquired during the training enlightened us as parliamentarians on the BVR and the need to encourage the electorate to register. (Interview, ZANU PF key informant, 2019).

Commenting on the same subject, a key NGO informant (H) pointed out that:

USAID directly and indirectly through its financial support to local organisations has been instrumental in providing technical trainings to political parties in Zimbabwe and has supported all parties in parliament. Party leaders and in some instances the party secretariat have undergone training in financial management, organisational development and communication skills. (Interview with NGO key informant, 2019).

The study findings suggest that all political parties receive foreign technical training which is critical for political parties in Zimbabwe because most of them lack a strong organisational base especially opposition political parties. The research findings concur with Michael (2013) who writes that the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Sweden, USA and Dutch and Danish governments support bilateral donors and a developing number of organisations and establishments to execute foreign subsidized help programmes in developing countries in African and Latin America. The most widely recognized technical help focuses around reinforcing democratisation using bilateral funding conveyed through an executing partner organisation. This is done to try and maintain a strategic distance from direct government backing to overseas political parties which may be seen as meddling in sovereign countries (Augustine, 2013). Donor governments understand the sensitivities surrounding the intervention in processes that are clearly political hence direct support to political parties has largely been kept out of the picture. Previously, technical support to political parties was connected to backing for elections but it has now widened up to include electoral support as a whole and to building party and systems between elections (Kumar, 2004).

The research findings are similar to a study conducted by Travis (2014) in Nigeria, Georgia, Nepal and Uganda whereby bi-lateral donors such as USAID and DFID (both funded by their states USA and Britain respectively), provided technical assistance to political parties. This programme was called the Deepening Democracy Programme and ran from 2010-2015. According to Travis (2014) political parties in the four nations were run in a way that constantly showed frail connections with their grassroots and needed clear approaches to mitigate the absence of party organisation at local levels. At party level there was absence of viable legitimate administrative and money related structures and frameworks of support, which were all aggravated in an environment characterised by fragile rule of law. In Nigeria, for instance, the technical help concentrated on the commitment of party

leaders through negotiation and preparing on the need to change the electoral commission as a focal general impediment to political party improvement and guaranteeing a level playing field in elections (Travis, 2014).

Aims of providing technical support to political parties

Respondents were asked to identify the aims of providing technical training to political parties.

Table 2: Aims of technical support (No.52)

Variables	Responses	
	Number	%
Improve organisational financial management and resource allocation	18	35
Enhance membership mobilisation and recruitment skills of party officials	16	31
Equip party officials with good communication skills	13	25
Improve quality of messages conveyed by party leaders to the electorate	3	6
Develop fundraising skills of party officials	2	3
Total	52	100

Most of the respondents 18 (35%) pointed out that the aim of providing technical support to political parties was to improve the party's organisational financial management and resource allocation. Sixteen (31%) of the respondents noted that to enhance membership mobilisation and recruitment skills of party officials was another aim of providing technical training. 13 (25%) of the respondents indicated that the aim of providing technical training was to equip party officials with good communication skills. A minority of the respondents 2 (3%) noted that development of fundraising skills of party officials was one of the aims of providing technical training to political parties.

A key informant of ZANU PF (D) explained:

Technical assistance is given to governments, parliamentary bodies and political parties to facilitate constitutional reforms. In the 2013 constitution making processes United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the Constitution Parliamentary Committee (COPAC) provided party officials with technical assistance in constitution making. This training assisted party officials to have a better understanding of the constitution making processes. (Interview, ZANU PF key informant, 2019).

Related opinions were expressed by a key informant (C) of the MDC:

Through technical training the number of women and youth participating in electoral processes has increased as we were taught on the importance of including these two often marginalised groups. Gone are the days where these two groups' presence was only symbolic. These are now actively involved in the operation of the party and increasingly running for

office as electoral candidates. Donor funding is now also based on a progressive gender policy and a youth quota. Members from our women's wing have undergone technical training in conducting voter's education programmes from FES. Our youths together with those from ZANU PF also received polling agent training sponsored by the EU ahead of the 2018 harmonised elections. (Interview, MDC key informant, 2019).

Political parties in developing countries are weak and find it difficult to connect with the electorate and represent the citizens' interests. The political parties are in need of continuous technical assistance to improve their capacity and develop their parties. The research findings are similar to Kumar (2004) who argues that technical assistance and training activities for political party development focuses on reforming and strengthening political parties to promote multiparty democracy and improve the environment in which they operate. It is the vision of technical help to assist in the creation and organisational development of vibrant democratic parties which competitively participate in all national levels (Wagner, 2013). EISA with financial support from the EU provides technical assistance to political parties in Africa. In Mozambique in January 2019, EISA conducted a technical training for the three major political parties Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) (EISA, 2019). The training focused on core areas in which parties needed to strengthen capacity in an electoral year such as the inclusion of women and youth in party lists and strategic political communication. In Madagascar in 2012, EISA provided technical training to ten political parties and covered areas of inclusivity, internal democracy and gender equality in party structures.

Similarly USAID under its Democracy and Governance Office in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Nigeria and Uganda provided technical assistance aimed at promoting stronger and more democratic political parties through support for elections, referendums, constitutional processes, legislatures and political dialogue (USAID, 2013). In Belarus, technical support helped party officials to communicate effectively with constituencies, to acquaint themselves with useful information on local challenges and as an outcome of the training party advocates began to conduct door to door visits, collect signatures on various petitions and contact voters directly (Amundsen, 2013).

Influence by foreign funders on party policies due to technical assistance provision

Respondents were asked to give their views on whether by providing technical assistance to their parties, foreign funders would also influence party policy direction.
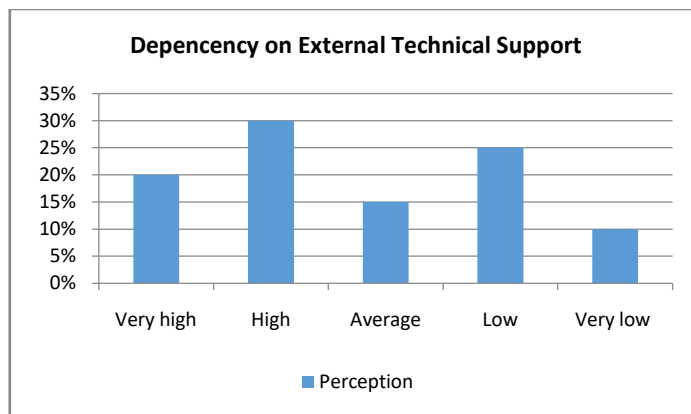

Figure 4: Influence on policy direction due to external technical support (No. 52)

Very High and High responses were joined as they meant the same and similarly Very Low and Low responses were joined in data analysis.

Half of the respondents 26 (50%) were of the view that by providing technical assistance to political parties, foreign funders would influence policy direction. Less than half 18 (35%) of the respondents believed that their party policy direction would not be influenced by foreign funders through the provision of technical assistance. Respondents of MDC and ZANU PF parties weighed in:

Yes party policies would be influenced by technical assistance offered by foreign funders and our party's vision would be derailed. (ZANU PF party member 4).

Party policy direction will be influenced. Zimbabwe is wealthy in terms of natural resources and once technical assistance is provided in formulation of policies in this sector for example, it is obvious that the funders will intend to benefit through the exploitation of the nation's resources in the long run. (ZANU PF party member,6).

There is no influence on policy direction since foreign funders are already aware of our party's principles so nothing can be changed by them. (MDC party member, 5).

A key ZANU PF informant (D) also weighed in by providing useful insights :

As ZANU PF we have only received foreign technical assistance for specific national programmes and none at party level in the past two decades from Britain and USA or any of its agencies and NGOs hence our party policies are in no harm of being influenced by these foreign funders. (Interview, ZANU PF key informant, 2019).

On the contrary, a political analyst (I) said that:

During the provision of technical assistance to political parties, individual parties are met privately to increase their operational capacity or to aid in finding solutions to particular difficulties so it is difficult in such instances not to influence party policy direction. In helping solving problems technical experts go as far as providing recommendations that can be applied as solutions thus subtly swaying policy formulation towards a certain direction which is in line with their state's national interest. (Interview, political analyst, 2019).

Refuting claims of foreign influence on policy direction due to technical support, a key MDC informant (C) stressed that:

Our policies are not in any way influenced by foreign funders' technical support because the funders are drawn towards financially and technically assisting the party only after having gone through the MDC manifesto and policy documents. MDC has party organs responsible for policy formulation processes like the National Executive Council, Standing Committees, Provincial Executive Councils, District Executive Councils. Thus foreign funders first evaluate the political party policies and if they are in line with their beliefs it is only then that they approve funding. I believe that doing it the other way round is risky for funders as they can easily fund terrorist organisations disguised as political parties. (Interview with key MDC informant (C), 2019).

The results suggest that technical assistance does not necessarily influence political parties' policies. Foreign funders seem to respect the sovereignty of political parties which they assist with technical assistance. The results indicate that technical assistance only come in when parties have already formulated their policies.

The research findings on political parties receiving external technical assistance without any influence later exerted on their policy direction differ with what the 2007 US State Department Report on Zimbabwe 2007 Performance Report. According to Masango (2018) a section in the report contained information that acknowledged that the US government had helped the MDC to clearly outline its plans and strategies to the general populace and communicate their message well to the electorate. Masango (2018) further notes that MDC's stance on various issues of policies show an inclination of a liberalism and democratic nature associated with US and western principles of democracy. MDC in its manifesto promises the Zimbabwean people "creation of a new beginning and building together a new Zimbabwe in which there is liberty, freedom, prosperity, job opportunities and justice," (MDC, 2013). US assisted MDC policy formulation as a future investment should the MDC get into power it would adopt policies laid down by the Americans furthering US national interests (Chikwawawa, 2019). Such an inclination by MDC is better explained by following the

dictates of liberalism rather than being influenced by USA and Britain.

Capacity building support and its influence on policies

The third objective of the research focused on assessing the impact of capacity building programmes that Britain and USA have provided to the MDC. In order to fulfil this objective respondents were asked to list capacity programmes that were conducted for their parties, and   effect external capacity building programmes have had on their party.

Capacity building training programmes conducted for political parties

Respondents were asked to list capacity building programmes that were conducted for their political parties to enhance organisational development.
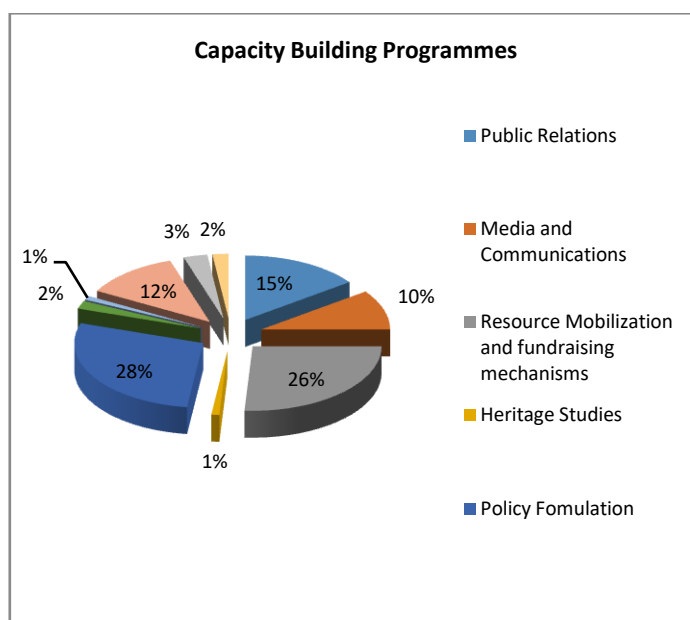

Figure 5: List of capacity building programmes (No. 52)

Figure 5 shows that 14 (28%) pointed out that Policy Formulation was conducted for their party leaders and structures. Other important capacity building programmes indicated were election campaigning 13(26%), public relations 9(15%), peace and security 6(12) and media and communications 5(10%) The least numbers of respondents 1 (1%) were recorded as saying training in heritage studies and another 1 (1%) business management and entrepreneurship.

A key informant of the academia (F) had this to say in regards to capacity building training:

Personally, I think that critical initial trainings that political leaders should undergo are Media and Communication Strategies and Public Relations. They will know how to relate with the public who happens to be a critical mass during elections and their support should not be taken for granted. Our current leaders show a lack of decorum and finesse

needed when addressing the public and are often brash in their approach. (Interview with academia key informant, 2019).

A key informant of the NGOs (J) added that:

> *Training in policy formulation was provided to newly elected parliamentarians in the aftermath of national elections mainly by USAID Zimbabwe. The majority of parliamentarians have undergone capacity building training in legislative procedures aimed at capacitating them in the conduct of parliamentary duties.* (Interview with NGO key informant, 2019).

The results of this study indicate that a variety of capacity building programmes are offered to political parties regardless of whether the party is ruling or in opposition. The knowledge acquired by political leaders during capacity building trainings has gone a long way in cementing the democratisation processes and promoting good governance in Zimbabwe.

Research findings are similar to the types of trainings conducted for political parties with the aim of consolidating the individual party organisations from top management to local communities (Kumar, 2004). UNDP in partnership with EISA conducted capacity building of political parties in Rwanda in 2016 in preparation for 2017 elections (EISA, 2019). Legislatures from a number of political parties were trained on Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) methodology. Appreciating the functions of diverse players in polls and the general electoral processes were aims achieved by the trainings. Ambitious young political leaders are also supported by UNDP with technical assistance in various courses to do with political party operations and building.

Capacity Building Programmes Funding

In this section respondents were asked to point out who was supposed to fund capacity building programmes and the answers are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Capacity building programmes funding (No. 52)

Variables	Responses %				
	SA	A	N	SDA	D
State funding	52	26	8	5	9
Party members	48	14	11	9	18
Local business entities	28	28	35	2	7
Party investments	26	20	22	18	14
Foreign donors/countries	12	5	3	78	2

In data analysis Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) responses were merged as they meant the same and similarly Strongly Disagree (SDA) and Disagree (D) responses were merged.

The majority of the respondents 40 (78%) agreed that the state should fund the capacity building trainings while the least number of respondents 8 (17%) agreed that foreign donors of countries should fund these trainings. Thirty-two (62%) of the respondents agreed that party members should fund these programmes. Key informants offered mixed responses.

A key informant of ZANU PF (D) said that:

> *Funding of capacity building programmes should be the responsibility of the state to guard against undue influence especially during the run up to elections period. Any other funder might take advantage and use this training platform to diplomatically campaign for the party of their choice. We should be wary of foreign funders' involvement in domestic political processes.* (Interview with ZANU PF key informant, 2019).

Contrasting sentiments were said by a key informant (C) of the MDC:

> *Foreign and local CSOs and NGOs should fund the training programmes given that they already have the financial and human resources to administer these trainings. Yes it is not an ideal situation as these foreign funders can manipulate the course content and end up influencing the process but realistically speaking, as a country we have a limited choice of countries lining up to offer any financial support to us. We have to make do with what we have and that means relying on CSOs and NGOs to provide the requisite funds needed for trainings.* (Interview with key MDC informant, 2019).

The findings of this study seem to suggest that most respondents support the idea that the state should fund capacity building programmes. But if the state was left to do this on its own it would struggle due to the prevailing economic instability. The state is struggling to provide basic goods and services to its citizens thus it will even be more difficult for it avail additional resources to fund capacity building programmes. Hence some respondents advocated that other organisations should also assist in funding capacity building programmes. The research findings are similar to Amundsen's (2013) who writes that developed countries value decent governance and democratic practices as requirements for positive growth therefore their main concern on the African continent has been strengthening democratic development and good governance. However, the developed nations have refrained from directly supporting individual political parties in Africa as some of their funds were previously misused by unscrupulous political party leaders who ended up buying luxury cars, building mansions and sending their children to overseas universities at the expense of party development (Hartani, 2013). To this end, these governments now indirectly fund political parties through various agencies, foundations and international NGOs who in turn fund local CSOs and NGOs who become responsible for conducting capacity building trainings for political parties. Augustine (2013:29) notes that "foreign funded programmes risk going beyond purely technical training activities,

touching on and potentially changing the inner power structures of a society."

Funding local CSOs and NGOs have become a favourable option for foreign donors. CSOs act as a referee to government raising the red flag whenever there is a major shift in policy direction or constitutional amendments not reflecting the citizens' needs and interests. They are supposed to engage government positively in order to open connections between various collections of people (Bassuener, 2013). The Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust (SAPST) was established in 2007 and is partly funded by USAID. Its aim is to strengthen local and regional parliaments through the provision of trainings to Parliamentary Portfolio Committees and the Secretariat of Parliaments in legislative, policy and budget analysis and reporting (SAPST, 2019). Parliamentary Committees in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malawi and Lesotho have undergone capacity building trainings in line with their sectorial areas and have been equipped with necessary skills to execute their duties effectively. For example, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Information, Media and Broadcasting Services Committee Parliamentary in August 2019 to unpack the Freedom of Information Bill. The Trust has also conducted familiarisation trainings for NGOs, CSOs, interest groups and citizens on Parliamentary drills, procedures and systems in its target countries.

Effects of capacity building programmes

Respondents were asked to assess the effects of political party capacity building programmes.

Table 5: Impact of training (No. 52)

Variables	Responses	
	Number	%
Strengthened Parliamentary Portfolio Committees	27	52
Enhanced party leaders' understanding of legislative processes and electoral processes	12	23
Improved women's participation in electoral processes	9	18
Increased informed participation of parliamentarians in legislative procedures	3	5
Promoted internal democracy within parties	1	2

More than half of the respondents 27 (52%) believed that the capacity building of political parties had the effect of strengthening Parliamentary Portfolio Committees. Only 1 (2%) of the respondents felt the impact of capacity building trainings was promoting internal democracy within parties (Table 5).

A political analyst (K) added that:

> *Capacity building trainings have had a positive impact on political party development. More women are now participating in political processes and afforded equal support just as their male counterparts. It is clear that without capacity building trainings on gender parity and equality,*

many of these women would not have been treated with respect and recognised as able leaders. (Interview with political analyst, 2019).

Similar sentiments were also said by a key ZANU PF informant (D):

> *Capacity building trainings have positively enhanced our party's capacity to participate effectively in elections where we have been successful in garnering the majority votes every time.* (Interview with ZANU PF key informant, 2019).

A different view was presented by a key informant of the MDC (C):

> *The impact of capacity building trainings has been minimal on our party development as evidenced by the number of splits that have occurred in our party. Parties that are internally democratic tend to be able to adapt to new challenges and communicate effectively within their structures. There is discord amongst the various structures of our party to such an extent that we have frequently been prone to infiltration by the ruling party agencies.* (Interview with MDC key informant, 2019).

The impact of trainings can either be positive or negative depending on what will currently be prevailing on the ground. Research findings on strengthened portfolio committees are similar to an evaluation study conducted by Travis (2014) in Bosnia whereby the training support provided by USAID was aimed at strengthening legislators' participation in policy formulation procedures. Prior to receiving the training meaningful participation of legislators was low but after undergoing the training, a marked change in participation was observed. Legislators began to engage in informed debates thereby playing an effective role in passing of new legislation.

Findings of this study showed that capacity building had a positive impact on promoting party leaders' understanding of legislative and electoral processes particularly for the MDC. Coming on board with no prior political and legislative experience, the majority of MDC parliamentarians have over the years relied on capacity building trainings conducted by NGOs like USAID and UNDP to gain skills thus the trainings were deemed timely and relevant by the party leaders.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it may be concluded that there is no influence on MDC policies by Britain and USA as there is no direct financial aid to MDC. The focal sources of funds for political parties indicated in the research are all local sources leaving no room for foreign influence on party policies through financial assistance. The prohibition of foreign funding stipulated under the Political Parties Finance Act is a welcome development in ensuring non-interference by foreigners in domestic political processes.

There is no influence on MDC policies due to provision of technical assistance to the party by Britain and USA. Technical assistance is offered to both ZANU PF and MDC and aims to develop party structures. The provision of technical assistance implies improved participation of parliamentarians in legislative processes in an effective manner due to amassing technical knowledge on how to execute their legislative duties.

Based on the research findings it is concluded that there is no influence by Britain and USA on MDC policies due to their provision of capacity building programmes. Capacity building programmes are offered to all major parties in the country. Capacity building programmes are necessary for the development of political parties to become strong organisations with sound internal democratic principles. Conducting capacity building programmes for political parties ensures that the capacities of parties are strengthened to weather any type of political storm thereby capacitating them to adapt to the ever changing political landscape.

Funding, technical training and capacity building programmes which are done through NGOS and by the state are all aimed in promoting democracy in Zimbabwe as all parties tend to benefit. This is in line with the doctrine of liberalism and this is where the link with Britain and USA is as these are regarded as defenders of democratic principles in theory and practice. In terms Sustainable Goal Number 16 this is important as funding, technical assistance and capacity building aid in promoting peace, justice and building strong institutions.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) The research showed that political parties' main sources of funding for political parties are from local funders and that resources realised from these sources are not enough to meet all the operational needs of the parties. It is recommended that party leaders encourage their members to religiously pay subscription fees and motivate individuals to make donations to the parties. State allocations should be disbursed on time and the amount increased to cater for inflationary tendencies.

(ii) The research revealed that political parties are banned from getting external funding under the Political Parties Finance Act of 2001. On that note, it is recommended the Act be amended to allow all local political parties to receive a specific fraction of foreign funding from likeminded donors, agencies, foundations and political parties to create a level playing field in resource mobilisation. The state will be responsible for imposing limits on the amount a party can receive from external funders and setting up the conditions for transparent party funding and credible financial reporting.

(iii) Based on the research findings that showed a list of technical trainings that have been conducted for political parties, the research recommends that

additional technical trainings on how to develop party policies, to organise and maintain strong coalitions and articulate party policies to the electorate should be conducted for party leaders and activists.

(iv) The research revealed that capacity building programmes conducted for political parties are funded by NGOs and CSOs. To this effect, the research recommends that the state should provide resources to undertake these trainings in order to put to rest the assumption that these funders influence party policies through their provision of capacity building programmes.

(v) Further research may be carried out on

a) Comparative analysis of opposition political parties' electoral performance in Southern Africa.

b) How opposition political parties can use social media to counter disinformation.

c) Impact of money in politics on Youth participation in Zimbabwe.

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