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The Origins and Development of the Zimbabwean Crisis

by

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Dedicated to Tinokunda Events Zhira

ABSTRACT

Representations of the economic, political, and social crisis in Zimbabwe have often focused narrowly on President Robert Mugabe and the land reform program. In this thesis I examine the origins and development of the Zimbabwean crisis by focusing on the broader economic, political, and social changes in the period from 1980 to 2004. I argue that Zimbabwe's descent into crisis originated in the legacies of the colonial era and developed due to inappropriate policies by the post-colonial government. I posit that the crisis resulted from economic decline which started in the late 1980s and worsened during the 1990s. This eroded the popularity of the government and paved way for organised opposition to challenge the ruling party for power. In this thesis I argue that the Zimbabwean crisis was caused by a combination of long-term and short-term factors. These encompass the land reform program, the entrenchment of authoritarianism, and the struggle for democratisation.

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I want to thank my family, Jesca and Tino, including brothers, Bernard, Drake, Daniel, Abel, Norman, my sister Josephine, and also my parents Daniel and Ellen. It was due to their warm love and support as a family that my goal was realised.

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I claim full responsibility for all the discrepancies of this thesis.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU:	African Union
BBC:	British Broadcasting Cooperation
BSAC:	British South Africa Company
CCJP:	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CFU:	Commercial Farmers' Union
CHOGM:	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CIO:	Central Intelligence Organization
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
MDC:	Movement for Democratic Change
MMD:	Movement for Multi-party Democracy
NCA:	National Constitutional Assembly
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organisations
PF - ZAPU:	Patriotic Front - Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union
RNLB:	Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau
SA:	South Africa
SADC:	Southern African Development Community
UN:	United Nations
ZANU (PF):	Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front
ZCC:	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
ZCTU:	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZLP:	Zimbabwe Liberators Platform
ZNLWVA:	Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association
ZRP:	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZUM:	Zimbabwe Unity Movement

INTRODUCTION

When many people hear about the Zimbabwean crisis, they often think about President Robert Mugabe and the eviction of white commercial farmers from the land. Recently, the Zimbabwean crisis has been marked by extensive shortages of basic goods, sharply rising levels of national poverty, and the authoritarian nature of the government. My thesis examines the origins of the economic, political, and social crisis Zimbabwe is currently going through. I posit that the turmoil was a culmination of long, medium, and short term causes. These emanated from the contradictory nature of national development over a period of time stretching back to the colonial period. I locate the origins of the crisis in the character of transition to self-rule, arguing that legacies from the colonial period impeded possibilities for future growth in Zimbabwe. I also content that the shortcomings of the post-independence government caused the gradual development of the crisis, especially in the period of liberalization in the 1990s. Instead of identifying the controversial land reform program as the starting point of the crisis, it is my contention that the land reform program represented the threshold of its maturation. In this thesis I argue for the complex and multilayered nature of the crisis, linking the separate phases of the turmoil with their causes in the political, social, and economic history of Zimbabwe.

It is important to offer a summary description of what is meant by the Zimbabwean crisis, and to identify major conditions which constitute it. This is in order to make the arguments raised in this thesis more clear and understandable. I take the crisis to mean three intertwined layers of aspects that have shaped Zimbabwe's development path in the last two decades. The first is a trend of economic downturn, whose signs and symptoms became visible in the late 1980s. These mounting economic

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challenges prompted the government to adopt structural adjustment policies in 1991. However, macroeconomic reforms did not reverse economic contraction as was expected. Zimbabwe's economic troubles were worsened by adjustment policies until the government abandoned them in 1996. In my view, the decline of Zimbabwe's economy during this period was linked to major changes in the nature of international capitalist expansion. This expansion saw many developing nations suffer from increasing debt and balance of payments problems. Besides, Zimbabwe's economic meltdown was accelerated by the country's costly participation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) war between 1998 and 2002. Added to these factors was the violent seizure of white-owned commercial farms. After the year 2000, tumbling GDP, critical foreign currency shortages, soaring inflation, and the persistent scarcity of commodities were markers of Zimbabwe's economic collapse.

Another important dimension of Zimbabwe's crisis is political conflict between the state and the nation. This conflict arose from a condition of state decay and its extensive loss of civil support. The state's loss of legal and moral authority was mainly caused by economic decline identified above, since the public blamed the government for corruption and other forms of economic malpractice. This element in turn stimulated the revival and consolidation of organized opposition to the government under the leadership of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The government responded to the threat of organized opposition through violence, the general stifling of civil rights, and increased autocracy. I think that it is feasible to refer to this dimension of the turmoil as the crisis of democracy in Zimbabwe. This is because the state began the systematic persecution of the opposition and the closure of all forms of civil dissent. The high level

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of political polarization between the ruling and opposition parties, together with the isolation of the Mugabe regime by the world community should also be regarded as part of the political crisis in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe's economic and political instability caused and fuelled violent modes of social transformation which can be called a social crisis. From the mid 1990s on, levels of urban and rural poverty rose phenomenally as a result of dwindling incomes. Households found it increasingly difficult to meet costs for education and basic health care, let alone to access enough food and clean water for consumption. In particular, the breakdown of the health system compounded a raging HIV/AIDS epidemic which caused Zimbabwe to record very high rates of infection and mortality. Poverty and disease left the population sick, the human resource base minimal, and the core processes of social reproduction retarded. Periodic droughts and the chaotic land reform program severely undermined national food security until Zimbabwe became dependent on food aid and imports to avert mass starvation. In my opinion, Zimbabwe's situation evolved into a social crisis since it challenged conventional wisdom of progress in the human condition. This is because for the swelling numbers of the poor, the very meaning of living became little more than the daily struggle for survival. Many Zimbabweans responded to the condition of deprivation by voting with their feet, opting to scatter themselves around the globe as economic and political refugees. This compounded the social crisis through the massive loss of skilled people in critical sectors like health and education. In this thesis I examine the intertwined nature of the "triple crisis" as a succession of events and developments over a period of time.

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My initial source of information for this thesis was the local media. It covered the unfolding of events linked to three factors which stimulated my interest in this topic. The first of these factors was the controversial sequestration of commercial land by war veterans at the behest of the government, begun in March 2000. The second was the vicious struggle for power pitting the ruling and opposition parties, culminating in the general and presidential elections of 2000 and 2002, respectively. The third, which is not an event but a process, was the marked level of economic dislocation which gripped Zimbabwe in response to the first two factors. For instance, grinding foreign currency shortages, long winding queues for fuel and basic consumer commodities were indicative of a nation in disaster. While the media reported about events as they unfolded, its coverage was inadequate towards a deeper understanding of the causes of violent social change Zimbabwe was going through. The subsequent muzzling of the media made me shift focus towards more analytical academic work, which I knew would provide an historical explanation to the Zimbabwean crisis. Going through the published literature altered my initial conceptions as I gradually realized that the dramatic events which formed the tip of the crisis were but manifestations of broader processes stretching backwards over a period of time. This is why published academic research formed the main basis on which I built arguments raised in this thesis.

The focus of research in Zimbabwe has produced literature touching on a variety of themes and concerns. In the ensuing literature review I classify research interests into three main separate categories, and I use reverse chronology to analyze such research interests. I have termed these categories crisis literature, middle level literature, which examines economic performance, democracy and civil society activity, and transition or

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adulatory literature. The first category brings together research aimed at appreciating the manifold origins and manifestation of the present crisis in Zimbabwe. It identifies three main features of the crisis. that is, economic collapse. political decay and widespread social distress. Broadly, crisis literature is focused on Mugabe, the fast track land reform program, and the struggle for power between the ruling and opposition parties. In a book titled *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the Struggle for Power in Zimbabwe.*[1] David Blair described the deepening of the crisis following the defeat of ZANU (PF) in a constitutional referendum held in February 1999. Blair offered a graphic coverage of the "farm invasions," which were led by war veterans. He touched on political violence targeted at the MDC and its supporters during the 2000 general elections. and the endless shortages of basic consumer goods.

The focus of research in Zimbabwe during the period covered in this thesis shows a strong connection between existing events and the attitude evident in the literature. A common feature of crisis literature is the tendency by analysts to identify Mugabe as the starting and end points of analysis. The main reason for this is because Mugabe alone has led Zimbabwe since independence in 1980. Besides. his leadership traits and contentious policies have been of defining importance in Zimbabwe's national development. Recently. events in Zimbabwe achieved profound regional significance because of the country's close political and economic ties with SADC states. In a volume entitled *Our Votes. Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe.* Martin Meredith recounted how Mugabe led a nationalist movement to self rule and took the country

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[1] David Blair. *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the Struggle for Power in Zimbabwe* (London. New York: Continuum. 2002).

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through a decade of social and economic progress before turning into a corrupt despot.[2] Focus on Mugabe as a way of explaining the Zimbabwean crisis has fashioned the belief that only his succession can form conditions necessary to restore normal order. This sentiment was captured in a book by Geoff Hill, entitled *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Final Countdown*.[3] While the author recited in great detail the dynamics of the turmoil, he remained optimistic of a prosperous post-Mugabe Zimbabwe. In my view, while Mugabe is at the centre of crisis, the tendency to focus on his personality and leadership is a common feature of journalistic accounts. These accounts covered Zimbabwe after the tumultuous occupation of former commercial farms in 2000.

Academic focus recognizes the central role played by Mugabe in the Zimbabwean crisis. However, it interprets his policies in the context of wider events and developments over a period of time. This literature does not start explaining current conditions in Zimbabwe from the controversial land seizures of 2000. It argues for multiple origins of the crisis which emanated from the distorted nature of national development in the period of self-rule. A logical attempt to identify the multiple facets of the present crisis was made in a volume edited by Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos, and Stig Jenson.[4] Authors in that volume examined the major dimensions that constitute the current crisis. They probed how the controversies around the land reform program triggered a redefinition of the relationship between the state and nation in the context of rapid social change. In the book, Raftopolous focused on the roots of state decay, its loss of

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[2] Martin Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002).

[3] Geoff Hill, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Final Countdown* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2003).

[4] Amanda Hammar, *et al* (eds) *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003).

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legitimacy, and the reanimation of nationalism and violence as forms of state and nation making.[5] Nelson Marongwe's article explored the nature of conflicts over land and natural resources in post-colonial Zimbabwe.[6] He compared earlier forms of conflict over land with the violent occupation of commercial farms marking the fast track land reform program. His work identified significant differences in the groups of occupiers, their motives and the nature of state response.

The need to understand the provenance of the present crisis also spurred research on the role of the war veterans in Zimbabwe's political development. War veterans made a huge contribution towards intensifying the crisis because they spearheaded the occupation of commercial land and the dismissal of white farmers. The substantial role played by war veterans in the present crisis was reflected in Norma Kriger's research. In an article entitled "Zimbabwe's War veterans and the Ruling Party: Continuities in Political Dynamics." Norma Kriger made an historical analysis of the intricate rapport between the government and war veterans.[7] She explained why war veterans were able to challenge the power of the state in 1997 by demanding compensation for wartime sacrifices. She argued that veterans were born a powerful political category due to their ability to contest state power through negotiation and alliance formation. In an article entitled "'Squatters'. Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe." Jocelyn Alexander.

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[5] Brian Raftopolous. "The State in Crisis: Authoritarian Nationalism. Selective Citizenship and Distortions of Democracy in Zimbabwe." Amanda Hammar. *et al* (eds) *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business,* 217-41.

[6] Nelson Marongwe. "Farm Occupations and Occupies in the New Politics of Land in Zimbabwe." in Amanda Hammar. *et al* (eds). *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business.* 155-90.

[7] Norma Kriger. "Zimbabwe's War Veterans and the Ruling Party: Continuities in Political Dynamics." in Staffan Darnolf and Liisa Laakso. (eds). *Twenty years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism* (NY. Hampshire: Pelgrave Macmillan. 2001).

rearticulated the relationship between the state and veterans. She probed how mounting economic hardships in the 1990s fuelled social grievances and led to an increase in the power of veterans and their subsequent challenge to the ruling party.[8] JoAnn McGregor also focused on the contribution of war veterans to the present turmoil.[9] She looked at the decentralisation of power from the central state to local authorities under the control of war veterans. It is accurate to say that this devolution of state power to structures set up by veterans was indicative of the state decay identified by Raftopoulos.

My own thesis is situated in the category of crisis literature. I concur that Zimbabwe is presently in the throes of a process of negative development resulting from a destructive interruption of the normal reproduction of economic, cultural, social and/or political life.[10] It is important to note that the focus of crisis literature touches on the nature of economic, political and social progress in Zimbabwe from the time of self-rule in 1980, with some authors going back to the nature of capitalist expansion during the colonial era.[11] For instance, Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya drew further attention to the international dimensionS of the Zimbabwean crisis by factoring in the negative consequences of the country's integration in global financial markets.[12] They argued that understanding Zimbabwe's turmoil cannot be complete without appreciating how the

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[8] Jocelyn Alexander. "'Squatters'. Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe." in Amanda Hammer. *et al* (eds). *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*. 83-117.

[9] JoAnn McGregor. "The Politics of Disruption: War Veterans and the Local State in Zimbabwe." in *African Affairs* (Volume101, No. 402, 2002). 9-37..

[10] R. J. Johnston, *et al*. (eds). *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Fourth Edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000). 123.

[11] David Moore. "Zimbabwe: Twists on the Tale of Primitive Accumulation." in Malinda S. Smith (ed). *Globalizing Africa* (Trenton, NJ, Asmara: Africa World Press. Inc. 2003). 247-69.

[12] Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya. *Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice*. New Edition. (Harare: Weaver Press. London: The Merlin Press. Pietermaritzburg: UNP. 2003).

trends of globalization have accentuated the crisis of capitalist accumulation on the periphery. Crisis literature does necessarily identify a single event as the starting point of the crisis. It argues for a holistic approach which recognises the multiple-layered nature of the crisis over a period of time. While taking the dawn of independence as the vantage point for starting research, crisis literature argues that the nature of development after colonial rule was influenced by the character of colonial exploitation experienced by Zimbabwe. It goes on to identify the incongruous nature of national development after independence. It recognises early efforts by the government to bring betterment to the majority population despite the persistence of sectional interests from the colonial era.

In this thesis I stress continuity between the pre and the post-colonial eras as one of the factors which laid the foundations for a crisis in Zimbabwe. Although research focused on unravelling the origins of the Zimbabwe crisis condemn the unfortunate change of Mugabe's government from a popular movement to an autocratic regime, it neither subscribes uncritically to the neo-liberal counter narrative supposing that western-style democracy resolves the challenges confronting developing countries. Ben Cousins illustrated this critical edge of analysis in an article examining the limitations of both African nationalism and liberal democracy enunciated by the MDC and its allies.[13] My own thesis builds on this literature and goes in new directions by locating the origins of the crisis in a broader context combining local and external factors as causative. Besides, I argue that narrow focus on Mugabe limits alternatives for grasping forces which influenced his policy directions, such as the shared interests of ZANU (PF) as a political organisation. I am also interested in the dynamics involved in the mobilisation of youths,

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[13] Ben Cousins, "The Zimbabwe Crisis in its Wider Context: The Politics of Land, Democracy and Development in Southern Africa," in Amanda Hammar, *et al.* (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*, 286- 307.

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noting that the potential for development imbedded in Zimbabwean youths was manipulated and misdirected by powerful political actors to further short-term interests.

Crisis literature in Zimbabwe is also marked by the government's response to the turmoil itself and to criticism leveled against ZANU (PF) generally. While conceding that Zimbabwe is in the midst of a crisis, members of the ruling elite have defended the government and ruling party from blame. For instance, President Mugabe characterizes the Zimbabwean turmoil as a grand conspiracy by the opposition MDC and former white commercial farmers determined to promote Western imperialism. This, he claims, will result in the recolonisation of Zimbabwe.[14] For instance, in a collection of speeches published as a book, Mugabe strongly defended the government's confiscation of commercial farms for redistribution. He portrayed the exercise as a legitimate process intended to right the problem of peasant landless bequeathed by unjust colonial policies. Punctuated by nationalist rhetoric, the book characterizes the land reform program as a continuation of the 1970s war of national liberation. Mugabe envisioned his radical approach to land reform as necessary for future economic and social prosperity not only in Zimbabwe, but also in other African countries grappling with landlessness. While the book should be regarded as rationalization for a president's unending hold on power, it is incisive for understanding Mugabe's leadership attributes in the context of a deep national crisis blamed on his policies. These attributes include sheer ruthlessness, intransigence, and the ability to use public fora to castigate critics with dubious anti-imperialist rhetoric and combative claims to national sovereignty.

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[14] Robert G. Mugabe. *Inside the Third Chimurenga: Our Land is our Prosperity* (Harare: Department of Information and Publicity. Office of the President and Cabinet. Zimbabwe. 2001).

Crisis literature builds upon research focused on the 1990s when Zimbabwe faced mounting economic challenges during and after the adoption of structural adjustment policies. I classify this research as middle-level literature, touching political development and Zimbabwe's economic performance. Growing authoritarianism and doubts about the economy encouraged literature with a strong edge of analysis. Sam Moyo's research on the nature of agrarian transformation during the time of economic structural reform explored heightened claims to land in Zimbabwe's communal areas.[15] New pressure over land was because small-scale farming was gathering fresh importance in response to world demand for cheap agricultural products. The nature of agrarian change attracted considerable research interest because the 1990s presented the government with increased opportunity to speed up land reallocation. These changes were examined in a volume edited by T.A.S. Bowyer-Bower and Colin Stoneman.[16] The contributors probed prospects and limitations for land reform and the likely results on development and poverty reduction. Their work took varied perceptions about land reform from a cross-section of stakeholders. Michael Drinkwater focused on the nature of state intervention in directing the path of communal agrarian changes in the early years of self rule.[17] Basing his research on interviews, primary, and published sources, Drinkwater noted and argued against the unwarranted persistence of "scientific" agrarian planning tried by colonial official in the 1950s, and the policy directions adopted after 1980.

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[15] Sam Moyo. *Land Reform under Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe: Land Use Changes in the Mashonaland Provinces* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2000).

[16] T.A.S. Bowyer-Bower and Colin Stoneman (eds). *Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Constraints and Prospects* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

[17] Michael Drinkwater. *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas* (London: Macmillan, 1991).

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Besides changes in the agricultural sector, research in the 1990s focused on the impact of structural adjustment on workers and other groups of poor people. The significance of this literature is that it centred on the actual condition of peoples' daily living under circumstances of increasing deprivation, linking these social changes to a structural "crisis of capitalist accumulation." A comprehensive study on the nature of economic growth and reform was carried out by Tor Skalnes in a book which bridges the colonial and post-colonial eras, and unravels some of the contradictions in the course of capitalist development in Zimbabwe.[18] The altered relationship between the state and separate interest groups following macroeconomic reform were examined in a volume edited by Lloyd Sachikonye and Brian Raftopoulos.[19] This book is important in understanding the history of the workers' movement because it recognised the pivotal role played by unionised labour in championing the struggle for national democratic change. Aside from examining economic changes, researchers also took a keen interest in the nature of political processes and the role of civil society in mediating state power. In a study focused on the 1990 elections, John Makumbe uncovered aspects precluding the conduct of free and fair polls in Zimbabwe.[20] Makumbe cited voter apathy and various forms of electoral manipulation by the government, besides the harassment of opposition candidates and supporters.

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[18] Tor Skalnes, *The Politics of Economic Reform in Zimbabwe: Continuity and Change in Development* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995).

[19] Brian Raftopoulos and Lloyd Sachikonye (eds), *Striking Back: The Labour Movement and the Post-Colonial State in Zimbabwe, 1980-2000* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2001).

[20] John Mw. Makumbe, cited in Liisa Laakso, "Research Debates in Zimbabwe: From Analysis to Practice," in Staffan Darnolf and Liisa Laakso, (eds), *Twenty years of Independence in Zimbabwe,* 7.

Therefore, the state of democracy excited considerable research interest about the 1990s. Alfred Nhema's work can also be cited as typical of literature focused on assessing Zimbabwean democratic standards.[21] Nhema noted that despite the holding of periodic elections, the state of democracy in postcolonial Zimbabwe was undermined by the state's wish to keep political competition minimal. He posited that the guerrilla movement was responsible for the high level of political centralism after independence since the change from an armed movement to a party set to operate within a democratic setting was uneasy.[22] I think to this explanation should be added the fact that Zimbabwe inherited a rigid system of centralism from the Smith regime. Research interest on the state of democracy was also shown by a study carried out by Masipula Sithole.[23] Sithole argued against the idea of creating a one-party state, noting that it was obsolete and had failed in other countries like Tanzania. This school of thought was also supported by a majority of contributors in a book edited by Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd Sachikonye.[24] Drawing on public opinion, the authors argued that the one-party state in Zimbabwe was inimical to democratic practice and unwise for national political wellbeing. Instead, they proposed that it was vital for the nation to deepen multi-party democracy by raising public awareness and engaging the government on matters of national concern.

I think that literature focused on the state of democracy was reactive to the older literature of the 1980s which was nationalist and adulatory after the bitter armed struggle. The older literature explored the transition of power from the colonial regime to majority

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[21] Alfred Nhema, *Democracy in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Liberalization* (Harare: UZP, 2002), 113.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Masipula Sithole, *Democracy and the one-party state debate in Africa: the case of Zimbabwe* (Harare, Sapes Books, 1992).

[24] Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd Sachikonye (eds), *The One-party state and democracy: the Zimbabwe debate* (Harare, Sapes Books, 1991).

rule. It probed how the new government consolidated itself and its achievements in the provision of vital social services to the hitherto deprived black population. A study focused on the changeover of power was edited by Mandaza, entitled *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986.*[25] Contributors to this volume touched on politics, the economy, the labour movement, and issues of social development. While some of the authors praised the government's policy of national reconciliation and its modernisation thrust, sentiments critical of state policy were also expressed, albeit in optimistic terms. For example, articles by Sam Moyo, Clever Mumbengegwi, and Thomas Shopo observed the government's failure to fulfil popular expectations regarding land reallocation. They suggested that there was a possibility for future conflict over land if the process of redistribution was not given priority.

However, as Liisa Laakso rightly noted, the book was mute on low-level repression and the prevalence of human rights abuses in Matebeleland and the Midlands provinces.[26] It was Joseph Hanlon who examined the disturbances and violence of the early 1980s.[27] However, he placed emphasis on regional instability and Zimbabwe's need to espouse tough regional security measures to stem apartheid SA destabilisation. The same can be said of Ronald Weitzer, who argued that indeed Zimbabwe needed a strong government soon after independence in order to champion regional political stability.[28] In a study edited by Canaan Banana, contributors reflected on postcolonial developments,

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[25] Ibbo Mandaza, (ed), *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986,* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1986).

[26] Liisa Laakso, "Research Debates in Zimbabwe: From Analysis to Practice," in Staffan Darnolf and Liisa Laakso (eds), *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe,* 4.

[27] Joseph Hanlon, *Apartheid's Second Frontier: South Africa's War against its Neighbours* (Ontario: Penguin, 1986).

[28] Ronald Weitzer, "In Search of Regime Security: Zimbabwe since Independence," in *The Journal of Modern African Studies,* Vol. 22, No. 4, 1984.

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particularly on the achievement of unity between ZANU (PF) and PF ZAPU.[29] Some of the articles praised the strong spirit of nationalism which the ruling party still evoked for political mobilisation during election times. The lack of a critical edge of analysis and the tendency to praise the nationalist government is also evident in some of Terence Ranger's earlier work.[30] Ranger explored the role of peasant societies in the nationalist struggle. probing strategies for peasant mobilisation and the loyalty of the peasantry to the ruling nationalist state after independence.

The older literature of the 1980s was full of hope and did not offer a critical edge of analysis to state policies. This was partly due to feelings of euphoria associated with self-rule. and because Mugabe was revered as a liberator and forward-looking African statesman. This attitude came out in two journalistic accounts printed soon after the founding elections of 1980.[31] It is also important to note that the nationalist literature of the early 80s was revised and challenged in the 1990s when the independence euphoria dissipated and was replaced by more critical analyses of the liberation struggle itself. Instead of repeating the ruling party's interpretation of the armed struggle. research began to offer alternative perspectives on how the war was pursued and its fading importance as a legitimising factor for the ruling party. Researchers of note regarding the revision of nationalist literature include Tonya Lyons.[32] Lyons used interviews and written evidence to probe the gender dimensions of the war. noting that the position of Zimbabwean

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[29] Canaan Banana (General Editor). *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990* (Harare: The College Press. 1989).

[30] Terence Ranger. *Peasant Consciousness and the Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study* (London: James Currey. Berkeley: UCP. 1985).

[31] David Smith and Colin Simpson. with Ian Davies. *Mugabe* (Harare: Pioneer Head. 1981). Dian Mitchell. *Who's who. 1981-82: Nationalist leaders in Zimbabwe.* (Harare: D. Mitchell. 1982).

[32] Tanya Lyons. *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean National Liberation Struggle* (Trenton. NJ: Africa World Press. 2004).

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women in the social hierarchy was not fundamentally changed by their "equal" participation with men during the war. I think this work made a crucial contribution to postcolonial literature in Zimbabwe because it relied on memory and people's voices as evidence to reconstruct the past. Besides the methodological richness, the book also went a long way in breaking new ground for recounting the nationalist war. It challenged the official nationalist narrative used by the ruling party to maintain support. More importantly, the book revealed the vital contribution to the war made by PF ZAPU, a fact hitherto demeaned by the ruling party.

Although its origins stretch much earlier, there can be little doubt that the Zimbabwean crisis took a complex twist after the "farm invasions" of 2000. In this thesis I locate the long term origins of the crisis in the nature of transition to independence, and also in the policies for development adopted after the colonial period. In Chapter 1 I explore the transition of power and other salient political changes in the postcolonial period. I show the challenges and prospects encountered by the new ruling elite in its effort to rebuild a prosperous nation after colonial rule and the war of liberation. I focus closely on the ruling party and its relationship with citizens, noting that despite its initial failure to fulfil popular expectations, it managed to retain the support of the electorate in the first decade of self rule. I also probe how the new government consolidated itself on power through the ruthless persecution of PF ZAPU, and the final signing of the Unity Accord in 1987. I examine the ruling party's political vision, arguing that the independent state closely mirrored the Smith regime in terms of the centralisation of power and intolerance to contrary political ideas. This is important because it explains how ZANU (PF) became entrenched in Zimbabwe's political sphere.

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In Chapter 2. I argue that legacies of the colonial period provide an important basis for explaining the roots of the current crisis in Zimbabwe. Among the legacies bequeathed by colonial rule was the striking inequality in resource access and ownership between blacks and whites. Racial segregation underwrote colonial rule from the time when Zimbabwe was colonised in 1890. It was accentuated by the various laws which dispossessed Africans of land and made them a labour pool for the new capitalist economy controlled by whites. Zimbabwe's attainment of independence gave the nationalist government opportunities to redress injustices of the past. However, the provisions of a negotiated settlement imposed constraints on alternatives for resource redistribution. Therefore, in Chapter 2 I explore factors which hindered land reform after 1980, touching on the Lancaster House Constitution, the resistant attitude of landowners, and on the government's failure to sufficiently probe available opportunities.

In Chapter 3 I explore the nature and performance of the Zimbabwean economy. I briefly examine economic performance in the 1980s. emphasizing the early signs of decline in the late 1980s. After that I probe the adoption and impact of macro-economic reforms. I argue that economic structural adjustment policies are critical to understanding the present crisis because they accentuated a process of uneven development. They did this by causing de-industrialisation, which worsened unemployment, while causing the concentration of wealth in a narrow section of the population. These conditions eroded achievements in the social services sector which were recorded during the early years of self-rule. These conditions set off a vicious cycle which saw the majority of Zimbabweans experiencing growing poverty and social suffering. In Chapter 3 I also draw the link between economic decline and the emergence of public criticism of the

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government. I touch on the revival of civil society movements, highlighting the modes of public discontent and the appearance of opposition to the ruling party and government. I examine the emergence of militant interest groups which began challenging state authority, such as the war veterans. I conclude chapter 3 by discussing Zimbabwe's intervention in the DRC war. I argue that this was a wrong foreign policy choice for Zimbabwe, one that further deepened the crisis.

In Chapter 4 I focus on recent events marking the turmoil, which I have described as indicators of a mature crisis. I probe the revival and consolidation of opposition to the government and ruling party under the leadership of the MDC. I examine the MDC's support base, its vision and strategies for achieving national reform. Further, in Chapter 4 I draw attention to the limitations of liberal democracy as an alternative economic and political framework in Zimbabwe. I also give a critique of the land reform program based on what we know about its results. I reiterate that land redistribution was a genuine national concern which was hijacked by President Mugabe and ZANU (PF) for political survival. I link the discussion about opposition politics and land reform to the growth of authoritarian rule under the ruling party. This connection makes it important to debate the measures adopted by the state to contain dissent. I shed light on the reaction of the international community to Zimbabwe's crisis, arguing that this response was not adequate in creating conditions for halting the plunge. Overall, I argue that the Zimbabwean crisis should be viewed as structural. Its origins and development cannot be limited to focusing narrowly on Mugabe's political career without the broader context in which it was created and sustained.

CHAPTER 1

Post-independence Political Developments

This chapter examines political developments of the 1980s which contributed to the current crisis in Zimbabwe. It traces the history of ZANU (PF) from the war of liberation to the period of political consolidation after independence. It argues that ZANU (PF)'s entrenchment on Zimbabwe's political landscape blocked alternative streams of creating national political realities. This hindered the nurturing of a people-oriented democratic culture, a fact which still fuels the ruling party's current intolerance of political diversity. The chapter also talks about the relationship between ZANU (PF) and civil society in the 1980s, noting the contradictions in the policies of development pursued by the government. These contradictions include efforts to improve the social welfare of the black majority but promoting private interests from the colonial period. This chapter also looks at the signing of the 1987 Unity Accord between ZANU (PF) and PF ZAPU. It debates the implications of this on the wider political culture in Zimbabwe.

1.1. The transition of power

ZANU (PF) was formed in 1963 during the nationalist movement for self-rule in Zimbabwe. It emerged as a splinter faction from the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU), which was under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo. When ZANU was formed, it came under the chairmanship of Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole. Robert Mugabe was the party's first secretary general. A number of factors have been put forward to explain the breakaway of ZANU from ZAPU. What is agreed upon is that the split was primarily at the top leadership level of the nationalist movement. Ideologically, there were differences and disputes on how to engage the colonial regime into negotiating the

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transfer of power to Africans. Nathan Shamuyarira, who was also a founding member of the rebel party, noted that ZANU leaders accused Nkomo of lacking a solid vision necessary to achieve independence.[1] Nkomo's main approach involved lobbying the international community to pressurize the Smith regime to grant Africans majority rule. However, some of his colleagues thought his gestures were mere globetrotting that would not lead to realizing targeted aims. More radical leaders in the nationalist movement advocated confrontation with the Smith regime as an alternative to negotiation. Nevertheless, both parties waged the war of national liberation after the split. Nationalist leaders also attempted on several occasions to amalgamate their military efforts to continue the war.[2] Besides, Nkomo and Mugabe realised the importance of unity during important negotiations where prospects for ending the war were explored, for example during the Geneva Conference of 1976. However, the facade of unity came apart as soon as such talks ended, revealing personality differences and internal power squabbles.

Following Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the new government under ZANU (PF) belittled ZAPU's contribution to the armed struggle. This was part of a wider project to consolidate the ruling party's hold onto power and to broaden its support base in the country. I argue that Mugabe never viewed ZAPU as an ally in government but as an opposition to be suspicious of. This was despite his stated policy of reconciling with former political foes and his formation of a short-lived government of national unity. From early in its rule ZANU (PF) clearly displayed intolerance to opposition by initiating a campaign of violence in Matebeleland and the Midlands provinces in the early 1980s.

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[1] Nathan Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia* (London: The Trinity Press, 1965). 173-93.

[2] Emmerson D. Mnangagwa, "The Formation of The Zimbabwe People's Army: Zipa," in Canaan Banana, *Turmoil and Tenacity*. 143-6.

The campaign was done under the guise of national security against the dissident threat and South African destabilization.[3] This campaign of state-sponsored violence can be cited as one of the key methods by which the government in Zimbabwe consolidated itself in power.

However, post-independence developments also reveal the co-existence coercion, violence and persuasion as methods of creating political authority. ZANU (PF)'s use of violence to eliminate perceived opponents and to cultivate loyalty should be taken together with the use of persuasion for political mobilization. This can be supported by noting that ZANU (PF) registered vast electoral support during the founding elections of 1980. This stemmed from the very high level of public political awareness achieved by guerrillas and the nationalist leaders during the war. Besides, the path of moderation and national reconciliation enunciated by Mugabe in his inaugural speech instilled a sense of optimism even to those formerly opposed to him. This can be said of the Rhodesians who had invested in the economy and decided to wait and see how the transition of power would come through. Mugabe's policy of reconciling with former enemies at independence stemmed from the need to avoid deepening uncertainty and instigate an exodus of white skills from Zimbabwe.

The possible departure of whites would have affected Zimbabwe's economy, a situation which took place after Mozambique's independence in 1975. Then Mozambican president, Samora Machel, also warned Mugabe to avoid scarring away the whites in order to avoid major economic dislocation.[4] The policy of moderation and national

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[3] Joseph. Hanlon. *Apartheid's Second Frontier*, 12.

[4] Brian Raftopoulos and Daniel Compagnon, "Indigenization, the State Bourgeoisie and Neo-authoritarian Politics," in Staffan Darnolf and Lisa Laakso, (eds). *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe*, 18.

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reconciliation largely signified plausible efforts at inclusive citizenship in the new vision of reconstruction and nation building. This pragmatic approach played a significant role in creating and consolidating the legitimacy of the new government locally and also abroad. where the new ruling elite hoped to attract allies and developmental aid. It was mainly Mugabe's policy of reconciliation after the war that made him a darling of the West in the early years of his political career. Another crucial reason that cultivated support and loyalty for the government in the 1980s was the contribution Zimbabwe made in fighting apartheid in South African and Namibia. This was because the 1970s and 1980s were decades marked by tension and political instability in southern Africa as liberation movements fought for majority rule and white minority regimes aggressively defended their positions. There was also considerable uncertainty by Western countries whether the newly independent African states would adopt socialism or capitalism as paths for national development. Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 and the proclamation by the new elite of its inclination to pursue socialism sharpened regional tension. This was partly because apartheid SA pursued regional destabilization against the newly elected majority governments.[5]

It was in this context that Zimbabwe was compelled to adopt an alert national security policy to defend its interests and to strengthen regional safety. According to Donald Chimanikire. there was "supreme national interest" for Zimbabwe to champion regional safety to safeguard economic development and the social well-being of its

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[5] Joseph Hanlon. *Apartheid's Second Frontier*. 12. Richard Weitzer. "In Search of Regime Security." 535-537.

people.[6] Thus, besides reinforcing the legitimacy of ZANU (PF) locally, the fight against

South African apartheid earned Zimbabwe the admiration of developed countries like

Canada, whose policies also sought to overthrow South African apartheid. However,

Zimbabwe's contribution in the anti-apartheid campaign made it possible to suppress

criticism for Mugabe's bad human rights record in the 1980s. This was mainly why the

Gukurahundi massacres received little international coverage and condemnation in

comparison with the violence marking the land redistribution program, the 2000 and

2002 elections.[7]

Besides a commendable foreign policy, the post-independence state in Zimbabwe

also evoked the importance of national unity over ethnic differences and regionalism as a

way to consolidate itself in power. While appeals for national unity were important, I

think that ZANU (PF) was able to manipulate the agenda of national unity to monopolize

allegiance from citizens for a wider project of crushing political competitors. The banner

of national unity was raised high as an inducement for citizens to accept state authority.

Yet the state also used coercive methods to compliment persuasion in the enforcement of

loyalty. It became easier for the state to quell dissent and suppress criticism under the

guise of national unity, simultaneously advancing self-serving agendas. One such agenda

was ZANU (PF)'s failed attempt to set up a one-party state in the mid 1980s.

It is noteworthy that besides formal structures of state power, ZANU (PF) also

mobilised and directed party youths to harass the population and induce allegiance. This

happened particularly in the urban areas where people were forced to attend regular party

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[6] Donald P. Chimanikire, "Foreign and Security Policy in Zimbabwe: From Independence to the DRC," in Staffan Darnolf and Lisa Laakso, (eds), *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe*, 181-2.

[7] For a description of the violence see David Blair, *Degrees in Violence*, 63-204.

meetings or risk being punished. Despite the use of coercion and arm-twisting tactics. ZANU (PF) did make huge strides in creating a strong base of support using genuine methods of nation building in the early years of self-rule. After its ascent into power on a popular electoral mandate. the new government continued to cultivate support from citizens. This it did through the rapid provision of public services to the hitherto deprived black population. With financial and technical support from the donor community. the state made remarkable progress in expanding the education sector and the health delivery system. Combined with the impressive expansion of agricultural output for the most part of the 1980s. it was the state's thrust for modernisation that created Zimbabwe's image as an African success story.[8]

Another factor which maintained popular support for the government was the satisfactory performance of the Zimbabwean economy in the early to mid 1980s. The relative growth of the economy occurred despite the structural fault lines emanating from a skewed pattern of resource distribution. Of particular concern was the limited access to land and capital by blacks. many of whom continued to live in overcrowded and unproductive communal areas.[9] However. soon after the post-war economic boom. the prevalence of severe droughts placed a major strain on the economy. This undermined the government's efforts to present ZANU (PF) as the party able to deliver the anticipated fruits of independence. These failures became more glaring beginning in the late 1980s. paving way for some people to seriously question the credibility of the government. Thus. it is feasible to argue that by the late 1980s. the government of Zimbabwe steadily alienated itself even from the rural population where it ironically continued to claim

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[8] Alois Mlambo. "The Ambiguities of Independence. Zimbabwe 1980-1990." Unpublished manuscript. 2-5.
[9] George Kanyenze. "The Zimbabwean Economy." 35.

widespread support. One reason for this development was the government's inability to explore available opportunities for land reform. Jocelyn Alexander has noted that for instance. the early 1980s in Zimbabwe witnessed massive peasant anger and numerous instances of confrontation between peasant farmers and the ruling elite.[10]

The policy failures of ZANU (PF) and the government were further exposed from the late 1980s onwards when the media began reporting numerous cases of top-level corruption among government officials and civil servants. A case in point was the Willowgate car scandal of 1989. The scandal involved government officials who abused their privilege to buy cars from the Willowgate car assembly plant and resold them to the public at highly inflated prices for profits. It increasingly became clear to the general public that state officials were occupied with self-enrichment by stealing national wealth while the poor suffered the effects of a stagnating economy. It was amid public disaffection with the government that some senior politicians started defecting from the ruling party. thus signalling the rebirth of criticism and opposition to the government. For instance. Edgar Tekere defected from ZANU (PF) and formed the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) ahead of the 1990 elections. His defection was the first sign of growing internal division in the ruling bloc.[11]

Tekere's determined denouncement of endemic corruption in the ruling party and state bureaucracy exposed a growing trend of accumulation from above. which became a defining feature of Zimbabwe's ruling elite. Another example of frustration and internal schism in the ruling party was played out by Margaret Dongo. Dongo left ZANU (PF) and contested the 1995 general elections as an independent candidate. citing corruption

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[10] Jocelyn Alexander. "'Squatters'. Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe." 85-7.
[11] Lisa Laakso. "Research Debates." 133-35.

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and nepotism within the ruling elite. Her victory in the Sunningdale constituency against a ruling party candidate can be cited to show divisions within the ruling party and the rising will by urban citizens to confront ZANU (PF)'s myth of political invincibility. Tekere and Dongo's defection from the ruling party showed the unwillingness by senior party officials to acknowledge constructive criticism that would have assisted the party to reform from within. Rather than accepting criticism as a positive aspect in the national body politic there was an element of hostility to the diversity of opinion, and the tendency to interpret difference as political sabotage. I think this is one of the reasons that caused sycophancy within the ranks of the ruling party. Mugabe's inner circle became convinced that worshipping him would guarantee promotion and political survival.

1.2. The Unity Accord

In December 1987, ZANU (PF) and PF ZAPU signed a Unity Accord resulting in their merger to form ZANU (PF). I think that understanding the Unity Accord is important for this discussion because it stood for a process of political consolidation by the ruling elite and the death of political plurality. Even though the terms of agreement were debated considerably by leaders from the two parties, there was limited effort to consult the wider Zimbabwean society whether uniting the two parties was desirable. The exclusion of the wider public was despite the leadership's claims that both parties were to merge from grassroots levels upwards. This was regardless of claims that "without the wholehearted commitment and support of the people, the unity agreement is nothing but a piece of paper recording the consensus of a few individuals."[12] According to the signatories, the Unity Accord was the result of "years of patient and determined political

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[12] Didymus Mutasa, "The Signing of the Unity Accord: a step forward in Zimbabwe's political development," in Canaan Banana, *Turmoil and Tenacity,* 288-98.

negotiations." stretching back to the liberation war.[13] I think that it was the Unity Accord that formally paved the way for the ruling party's monopoly of the art of national politics at the expense of a broader democratic dispensation. This makes it vital to probe the chief motives behind the signing of the Accord, weighing the benefits and losses derived.

It is my contention that the Unity Accord was primarily an undertaking carried out from above. As such, it can be judged as an exercise resulting in the unity of political parties and not necessarily as the unity of people. Even though the leaders of ZANU (PF) and PF ZAPU portrayed the Unity Accord as a culmination of the spirit of national cohesion, there are clear indications that other motives were behind its signing. For Mugabe and ZANU (PF), the Unity Accord was a vehicle for the elimination of a rival political sovereignty epitomized by Nkomo. In my own opinion, Nkomo and his followers in PF ZAPU eventually agreed to negotiate with Mugabe for unity not because they felt personal conviction for unity. It was mainly because their power base had been severely eroded by the brutal Gukurahundi campaign.[14] Nkomo became fully convinced by the scale of the Gukurahundi massacres that Mugabe was prepared to go an extra mile to ensure that PF ZAPU ceased to exist as a viable political organization. Only by agreeing to subordinate himself to ZANU (PF) would he bring peace and stability to the people in Matabeleland. What is important about the Unity Accord is that it took advantage of the fairly strong spirit of national identity already embedded in Zimbabweans, thus forestalling possible future conflict along the ethnic divide.

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[13] Robert G. Mugabe, "The Unity Accord: Its Promise for the future." in Canaan Banana, *Turmoil and Tenacity*, 336; Lisa Laakso, "Research Debates" 132.

[14] For a description of the Gukurahundi campaign see, *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report into the Disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*, (Gweru: CCJP and LRF, 1988).

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For Mugabe, the real motive behind eliminating a rival political pole was to facilitate the creation of a one-party state in Zimbabwe along Marxist-Leninist principles. As newly-elected prime Minister, Mugabe declared the goal of a one-party state as early as 1981: "A one-party state is the concept we have...ZANU (PF) and ZAPU [should] come together and form the basis for a government."[15] The ruling party's desire for a one-party state had been in the cards in the party's vision during the liberation war. Guerrilla fighters used this idea to mobilise peasant support in the countryside. After independence, the black ruling elite hoped to use the one-party state concept as an initial requirement for the socialist transformation of the whole country, whereupon control of the productive resources would be vested in the hands of peasants and workers. However, the idea of socialism finally lost appeal due to the constraints of a negotiated settlement and the absence of a clearly defined program for achieving it.[16] Despite the gradual move away from socialism as a policy blueprint for national development, Mugabe and his allies in the ruling party were loath to tolerate the idea of multi-party democracy. This was particularly if the other party was PF ZAPU - a party that ZANU (PF) had rivalled as early as 1963.

In seeking to understand the political developments which contributed to the present crisis, it is also necessary to note the positive benefits which the Unity Agreement brought to the people of Zimbabwe. Of vital importance is the fact that the achievement of unity between the two political parties resulted in the restoration of peace in western Zimbabwe. According to Laakso, a peace deal between the two parties was "probably the

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[15] Alfred G. Nhema, *Democracy in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Liberalization*, (Harare: U.Z. Publications, 2002), 113.
[16] Michael Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change*, 80.

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most important outcome of the Unity Accord for the people of Matebeleland."[17] Laakso

noted that even though the people "knew nothing about the Unity Accord," they cheered

when they were told that ZAPU leaders had been appointed ministers in Mugabe's

cabinet. This showed that some people hoped that national unity would increase their

political representation and that it would end the violence. At that time. Welshman Ncube

also viewed the Unity Accord as a success. He observed that it "ushered in a new

political climate of freedom which brought with it democratic demands and

expressions."[18] Ncube's analysis posited that the Unity Accord was a step towards

democratisation in Zimbabwe because separate "sectors of the population...felt released

from the constraints of party political rivalry which had inhibited virtually all democratic

expressions about national problems."[19] This analysis focused on the ending of violence

and instability that had dogged Matebeleland and parts of the Midlands provinces for

over five years. It did not anticipate other agendas which Mugabe sought to promote

through the Accord. for example. the one-party state. In my view. the idea of a one-party

state played a crucial role in cultivating the attitude of political intolerance on the part of

ZANU (PF).

Therefore, at the time of its signing. the Unity Accord was a subject of some

praise in Zimbabwean political and academic circles. Many analysts viewed it as the

harbinger of political pluralism *inside* ZANU (PF). Ncube applauded the changing

atmosphere in the parliament of Zimbabwe. observing that the house started to show life

and to vigorously carry its duties of calling for government accountability. This

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[17] Lisa Laakso. "Regional Voting and Cabinet Formation." 132.
[18] Welshman Ncube. "The post-unity period: developments. benefits and problems." in Canaan Banana. *Turmoil and Tenacity.* 308-9.
[19] *Ibid.*

environment stimulated lively debates on issues of national importance and ministers were finding themselves having publicly to account for their actions or omissions.[20] Unity between the two parties also papered over cracks of ethnic differences and regionalism that were considered inimical to the health of the national body. This led to the resumption of development projects which had been stalled during the time of disorder and confrontation in the Matebeleland and Midlands regions. It can thus be mentioned that at least in principle, the signing of the Unity Accord between ZANU (PF) and PF ZAPU created proper conditions for inclusive citizenship as efforts to build the nation went beyond ethnic and regional fragmentation.

Besides the positive aspects of the Unity Accord noted above, it is my contention that the absorption of PF ZAPU into ZANU (PF) stymied the development of political pluralism and laid the foundations for a culture of political intolerance. This culture has remained ZANU (PF)'s trademark to the present, a fact to be cited to explain the current condition of political polarisation in Zimbabwe. The ruling party's hatred for other parties was consolidated by the Unity Accord because ZANU (PF) faced no organised external opposition to its policies in government. More importantly, the signing of the Unity Accord meant that the distinction between the party and government became blurred. Appointments to the government increasingly became dependent on political affiliation and loyalty to ZANU (PF). From 1987 onwards, it became possible to talk of the "party-state" to designate the relationship between the party and the government in Zimbabwean political circles. Besides, voters in Matebeleland and the parts of the

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[20] *Ibid.,* 316.

Midlands provinces did not show lasting enthusiasm for the Unity Accord. This was shown by massive voter apathy in the 1990 elections.[21]

In this chapter I discussed some of the important political developments in Zimbabwe in the 1980s. I argued that these developments are fundamental to an understanding of the present political crisis. I focused on the factors that enabled ZANU (PF) to achieve national political dominance after independence. These include the use of violence to crush PF ZAPU, a rival political party, and to induce allegiance from the wider population. In the chapter I also highlighted some of the internal weaknesses of the government, such as rising levels of bureaucratic corruption. These factors led to the alienation of the ruling elite from the majority population. This was shown by the onset of public discontent against the ruling party. I finished the chapter by analysing the signing of the Unity Accord between ZANU (PF) and PF ZAPU. I noted that this pact paved way for the entrenchment of Mugabe's ruling party as the sole and supreme political organisation in Zimbabwe. I think that the failure to nurture a tradition of democracy and political tolerance was a key retrogressive element of Zimbabwe in the post-independence period. This culture was to influence the utterly reactionary response of the ruling party to the formation of a formidable opposition political party in 1999. I believe that it is after grasping the roots of political intolerance that we can best appreciate the ruling party's current persecution of the MDC and civil society as constitutive of the Zimbabwean crisis.

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[21] Lisa Laakso. "Regional Voting and Cabinet Formation." 132: Welshman Ncube. "The post-unity period." 312-13.

CHAPTER 2

Legacies of the Colonial period

In this chapter I focus on the legacies of colonialism as a central factor to explain the Zimbabwean crisis. I start off with a short summary of the nature of colonial rule, particularly the policies followed in several key areas which shaped the post-colonial order. After that I examine the nature of transition to independence, touching on the vital areas of land and agrarian reform. The main argument of the chapter is that legacies of the colonial period were fundamental obstacles to processes of national development in post-independence Zimbabwe. In the chapter I also probe the successes and deficiencies of the government in dealing with these legacies. I argue that the government's own failures played a huge role in the process of crisis formation. My interest in the chapter is to answer the vital question why the government of Zimbabwe took so long to resolve the land issue. To do this, I examine the factors which either hindered or promoted efforts by the government to redress the controversial questions of land and agrarian reform. I posit that reasons which hindered the reallocation of land included restrictions of the Lancaster House Constitution, resistance by propertied interest groups, and the lack of proper planning by the government. I also explain the possibilities surrounding the land reform program in the first decade of self-rule, focusing on early efforts by the government at land redistribution.

By the colonial legacy, I mean the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects from the colonial interlude that persisted to hamper development after the termination of colonial rule. My argument borrows from Colin Leys, who argued for a strong link between the current lack of development in Africa and "centralized colonial authority,

colonial trading monopolies and the colonial exploitation of ethnic differences."[1] Leys noted that economic structures bequeathed by colonialism have constituted major obstacles to the development of integrated national economies after independence.[2] In Zimbabwe, the major legacy from the colonial era was the apparent unequal opportunities for accessing resources, particularly land and capital, between blacks and whites. The roots for this inequality lay in the process of dispossession carried out when Zimbabwe was brought under British colonial rule.

2.1. The Nature of Colonial Rule

Zimbabwe came under British rule in 1890 during the peak of European colonial expansion into Africa. After its annexation, the country was administered by the British South Africa Company (BSAC), a commercial venture owned by the British imperial enthusiast, Cecil Rhodes. The initial impetus to colonise Zimbabwe stemmed from the false belief that the land was laden with gold because of its close proximity to the South African rand mines in Johannesburg, and the long history of gold mining associated with Great Zimbabwe.[3] Early efforts to develop the mineral potential of Zimbabwe proved disappointing so the BSAC shifted focus to the agricultural sector as a second pillar of the colonial economy. Using violence and racist legislation, the BSAC carried out a process of land alienation which divided the country into European land and African reserves. European immigrants were encouraged to settle in Zimbabwe with the guarantee of cheap, fertile commercial land, subsidies from the state, and forcibly

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[1] Colin Leys, *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory* (Nairobi: EAEP, 1996), 190-191.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] I. R. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe: Capital accumulation and class struggle* (London and New York: Longman, 1988), 12.

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recruited African labour paid at low wages.[4] However, after realising that settler capitalist accumulation was often threatened by a viability crisis, the BSAC embarked on several policies to undermine the economic independence of Africans. This was done in order to force them to enter the emerging capitalist sector as providers of cheap labour.[5] Thus, from the very beginning of colonial rule, Zimbabwe evolved a dual economy marked by the expropriation of surplus value from Africans to benefit the settlers.

In 1923, the BSAC lost the right to rule Zimbabwe when the settler community voted for Responsible Government status. This gave the settler state considerable power to enact legislation against Africans with minimal interference from the British government. In 1930, for example, the colonial government passed the Land Apportionment Act. The Act consolidated the principle of land allocation along racial lines, becoming a cornerstone of settler domination for more than five decades.[6] This resulted in the further marginalisation of Africans in the reserves and communal areas, away from the transport network and profitable markets. Besides, the settler state entered into several agreements for the recruitment of migrant labour from the sub-region to the South African mining industry. The migrant labour regime did not benefit Zimbabwe in overall terms because it was meant to guarantee the colonial venture a steady supply of remittances from South Africa. From the Company's point of view, the system of labour migrancy was viable despite the fact that it depleted labour on the local market.

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[4] See, for example, Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia* (London: Pluto Press, 1976).

[5] For a detailed examination of labour policy in early colonial Zimbabwe see Giovanni Arrighi, "Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia" in Giovanni Arrighi and J.S. Saul (eds), *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), 180-234.

[6] Tor Skalnes, *The Politics of Economic Reform in Zimbabwe*, 35.

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The 1930s was a defining decade for Zimbabwe in terms of economic policy. While the economy functioned along market forces of supply and demand, the 1930s saw extensive state intervention through subsidies and marketing mechanisms. This new thrust was aimed at saving settler producers from ruin during the Great Depression.[7] On the labour market, the colonial government under Godfrey Huggins passed the Industrial Conciliation Act in 1936. The Act divided the labour market along racial lines, demarcating between skilled and unskilled labour. It reserved "skilled" jobs for white employees while "unskilled" jobs were reserved for African workers, irrespective of qualifications or ability. Increased state regulation of the labour market was indicative of the beginnings of secondary industry in Zimbabwe, which grew phenomenally during the Second World War. Manufacturing output expanded vastly until it overtook mining and agriculture as the largest national income earner.[8] In overall terms, the war laid the foundations for future economic growth in Zimbabwe. This was consolidated by the further development of infrastructure and an expanded market when Zimbabwe was amalgamated with Zambia and Malawi in 1953, and into the Central African Federation.

Politically, the post-war period saw the resurgence of African nationalism in response to the process of decolonisation sweeping across Africa. Initially, the spirit of nationalism manifested itself as struggles by the working class protesting against laws of labour discrimination. These struggles soon took a political dimension as educated Africans began to form political parties which often organised or directed violent

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[7] *Ibid.,* 38.
[8] For a detailed study of economic changes during the Second World War and after see E. S. Pangeti, *et al* (eds). *Zimbabwe: A History of Manufacturing, 1890-1995* (Harare: UZP, 2000).

township protests.[9] The late 1950s was thus a period of intensive political mobilisation against the colonial state. African nationalist leaders extended demands from the franchise to expressions for independence and majority rule. It is vital to note that the state in colonial Zimbabwe denied voting rights to Africans by setting property and income qualifications beyond the reach of virtually all Africans. Much of the politicking involved separate groups within the settler society attempting to advance their interests *vis a vis* the state. Thus, the very survival of the colonial state was hinged on its ability to contain African resentment of its racist policies.

The nationalist movement against colonial domination gathered momentum when leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) started sending out activists to mobilise the rural population against the colonial state and its increasingly intrusive agrarian policies. This was especially true of the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1951, which sought to radically transform the structure of peasant agriculture in the rural areas.[10] In his description of the development of nationalism in Zimbabwe, Nathan Shamuyarira likened the rapid expansion of political consciousness to a wild fire, arguing that "penetration into the rural areas was perhaps the main achievement of the ANC."[11]

The response of the colonial state to the rising tide of African nationalism was increased surveillance and the tightening of controls. In 1959, the ANC was banned for what the premier, Edgar Whitehead, called "the growing tendency of the movement to

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[9] Nathan Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, 67-8.

[10] For a detailed discussion of the NLHA see Guy Thompson, "Cultivating Conflict: Agricultural 'Betterment' and the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) and Ungovernability in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1954-1962," in *Africa Development*, Vol XXIX, No. 3, 2004, 1-39.

[11] Nathan Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, 49.

incite people in the rural areas as well as in urban areas to defy the law."[12] It is thus feasible to refer to this period as one marked by increased confrontation between the colonial state and African nationalism. In 1961, a constitution which further entrenched the discriminatory laws against Africans was adopted, a step which showed the government's rapid movement to the political right. This movement was climaxed by the coming to power of the conservative Rhodesian Front (RF) in the elections of 1964. The following year. Ian Smith illegally declared independence from Britain, a move which strengthened the resolve of the nationalist leadership to advocate a war of national liberation. Drawing on traditional grievances such as discriminatory agrarian laws and practices, the nationalist movement triumphed after a protracted war which led to independence in 1980.[13]

The current condition of poverty and lack of development in southern Africa is partly traceable to landlessness, a condition that was created and sustained by colonial policies.[14] This underlines why analyses of the current crisis in Zimbabwe have seldom skipped the central role which the politics of land and agrarian reform have played in the country's past. Historically, access to productive land and its productive use was the main source of living, and the basis for accumulation in pre-colonial Africa. Even though the economies of much of Africa were agro-based, the continent also had other forms of economic activity like mining, manufacturing, fishing, and trade. However, the advent of

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[12] Cited in Nathan Shamuyarira. *Crisis in Rhodesia,* 48.

[13] While the dynamics of the liberation war are important and interesting, they are not the subject matter of my thesis. A number of studies have been done on the topic, most importantly a book edited by Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence Ranger. *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War,* (Oxford: James Currey, Portsmouth: Heinemann, Harare: UZP, 1996).

[14] Ben Cousins, "The Zimbabwe Crisis in its Wider Context: The Politics of Land, Democracy and Development in Southern Africa," Amanda Hammar, *et al* (eds). *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business,* 265.

colonial rule violently displaced Africans from the land and ruptured the African way of life. It introduced the continent's inhabitants to capitalism as producers of wealth for metropolitan Europe. In return. Africans were entailed to consume imported products.[15] This form of trade was unequal exchange. representing the economic exploitation of one continent and its peoples by another. The struggles for self-rule in separate African states stood for efforts by the continent to undo decades of colonial exploitation and to promote development. As the case of Zimbabwe illustrates. this often involved the reallocation of land from the landed oligarchy to the peasantry.

2.2. The Post-colonial State and Land Reform

When Zimbabwe became independent in 1980. one of the major challenges faced by the new government was to address the key issue of unequal resource ownership between blacks and whites. The main area of contention was the limited access to productive land. particularly by Zimbabwe's small-scale communal farmers. The bulk of African producers lived in the communal areas. away from good transportation facilities and urban markets. During the struggle for independence. the need to give land back to blacks through redistribution was often regarded "priority number one" in the nationalist mantra.[16] This is why the need to reclaim land was by far the main rallying point for the liberation war. At independence. therefore. expectations were high especially among the landless that the new government would speedily move in to fulfil promises of land redistribution made during the war. The primary justification for the need to reallocate land was because the land had been seized illegally from blacks. and reallocation was

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[15] Walter Rodney. *Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington DC: Howard University Press. 1982). 149.

[16] Norma. Kriger. *Zimbabwe. Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices* (Cambridge: CUP. 1992). 52-5.

intended to address the injustices of the colonial era. Besides the question of restitution, another objective of land reallocation was to stimulate productivity and increase peasant contribution to national economic output. More importantly, a land reallocation exercise would strengthen the ties between the post-independence government and the hitherto marginalised sections of the population, thus boosting its overall legitimacy as a populist government. Therefore, it is my contention in this chapter that an understanding of the controversy over land tenure and reform in its historical dimensions is at the core of any efforts to grasp the Zimbabwean crisis.

In the 1980s, the government of Zimbabwe was faced with a substantive challenge of reallocating land to the landless. In this regard, the government was faced with two main alternatives for approaching the challenge of land reallocation. The first option would have been to promote what came to be known as radical land reform. Radical land reform was going to involve the confiscation and nationalisation of commercial land for reallocation to the landless. Much of the land was owned by white farmers, but some was also owned by a burgeoning class of black commercial farmers. The role of the government would have been to develop the resettlement infrastructure through the construction of transport, educational, health, water, and other facilities. Indeed, the spontaneous occupation of "vacant" land took place in some parts of the country in the first few years after independence. This was evident, for example, in the Chimanimani district of eastern Zimbabwe.[17] However, radical land reform is not what the government opted for, due to a number of constraining factors, chief of which was the political settlement forged at the 1979 Lancaster House Conference. The option which

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[17] Jocelyn Alexander, "'Squatters', Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe," in Amanda Hammer, et al (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*, 85-90.

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the government adopted was a contradiction of the liberation war rhetoric and popular expectation.[18] It involved limited land reallocation and, in some instances, the eviction of peasants who had resettled themselves on land left by white farmers during the war.

Accounting for the failure by the new government to carry out radical land reform has been an area of heated debate in Zimbabwean academic circles. Some scholars have stressed the factors that constrained the government's early resettlement policies. Others have focused on the available opportunities and the failures of the government. It is my contention that a crucial factor that constrained land reform in the first decade after independence was the Lancaster House Constitution. After protracted negotiation between the British government and African nationalist leaders, led by Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, a compromise with respect to land reform was weaved. The Constitution provided that land reform would be through the "willing-buyer willing-seller" clause. A more aggressive land reform policy required constitutional amendments which could not be initiated until ten years after independence. This would be in return for financial and technical support during the period of reconstruction. According to Ibbo Mandaza, the British government included the "willing-buyer willing-seller" clause in order to safeguard the interests of the propertied class during the period of transition.[19] The propertied class was largely made up of commercial farmers and investors in mining, industry and business, most of whom represented foreign capital. To make it more difficult, it was agreed that the new government would buy land from willing sellers on

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[18] *Ibid.*, 98.

[19] Ibbo Mandaza, (ed) *The Political Economy of Transition*, 33-41; Patricia Alden and John Mw. Makumbe, "The Zimbabwe Constitution: Race, Land Reform and Social Justice," in G. H. Cornwell and E. W. Stoddard, (eds), *Global Multiculturalism: Comparative Perspectives on Ethnicity, Race and Nation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 219-21.

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the market and compensate the dispossessed farmers in foreign currency. Because land that was liberated during the armed war had to pass through the market, it meant the law of private property upheld economic and social injustices created by colonial policies.[20]

As highlighted above, another factor restraining land reform after independence was the source of money to compensate affected farmers. The impasse between the governments of Britain and Zimbabwe over compensation is partly blameworthy for the violent land grabs of 2000. Negotiations at the Lancaster House talks determined that dispossessed farmers were entitled to full compensation for loss of land, property, and other developments on their farms. This provision was meant to cover especially those farmers who bought their land on the market before and after independence. It is feasible to argue that the Lancaster House Constitution was the bridge of continuity in discriminatory land policies in Zimbabwe. It ensured the protection of property rights against demands for redistribution by the new ruling elite and the peasantry. Eric Worby also drew attention to the political provisions of the Lancaster House agreement.[21] He argued that the Constitution was a symbol of an unfinished revolution due to the incidence of protected white seats in parliament for seven years after independence. Taken together with the sustained white occupation of a lion's share of prime commercial farmland, the Lancaster House Constitution was a visible reminder of "sovereignty promised but not yet fully realised."[22]

However, despite the restrictions imposed by the Lancaster House Constitution, the new government of Zimbabwe still had a number of options available for land reform and resettlement. Ironically, soon after independence, the government went into an

[20] Patricia Alden and John Mw. Makumbe, "The Zimbabwe Constitution." 221.
[21] Eric Worby, "The End of Modernity in Zimbabwe?" 57.
[22] Ibid.

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alliance with the CFU. the representative body of the commercial farming sector. The alliance between the government and commercial farmers was signalled when Mugabe selected Dennis Norman of the CFU as Agriculture Minister. The government justified this stand by arguing that the commercial farming sector. dominated by white farmers. occupied a strategic position in the economy. For example. tobacco farmers were reassured of state support because they produced the main foreign exchange earner for Zimbabwe. Because of the Lancaster House land clause and the alliance with the new government. commercial farmers "continued to enjoy the benefits of the colonial era."[23] This alliance. tied with the new government's promotion of peasant farming through input-subsidisation and the expansion of market opportunities resulted in Zimbabwe producing more food than it needed. For years to come. this ensured a condition of national food security without disturbing the commercial farming sector. Surplus produce was exported to regional markets and beyond. bringing foreign exchange and earning the country a reputation as the breadbasket of Africa. However. the growth of output in the farming sector masked the absence of structural changes in the ownership of land. a situation which became a site for future tension between the government and the landless.

Despite limited opportunities for land redistribution. the government's early efforts at resettlement scored a positive impact. This was because it gave first priority to groups of people desperately in need of land. such as former refugees. some households displaced by the war. and ex-combatants. Despite the slow pace of the program and the limited number of people resettled over two decades. John Cusworth commented that early efforts at land reform raised chances for income generation and enhanced access to

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[23] Patricia Alden and John Mw. Makumbe. "The Zimbabwe Constitution." 223.

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water, health and education services, bringing a positive impact on poverty reduction.[24]
Registering its support for land reform in Zimbabwe, the British Overseas Development
Administration (ODA), gave a positive comment on previous resettlement efforts. It
expressed its hope that future land reform plans would go a long way towards raising
production, thus addressing economic and social inequalities. ODA noted that: "...despite
all the operational problems, resettlement can provide economic and social benefits to the
poorest members of the population whilst at the same time having an overall positive
impact on the economy."[25] Extensive studies done on the nature of land and agrarian
reform in the first years of independence have underscored its positive impact on raising
standards of living.[26] The main worrying factor was the slow pace of the process and the
drying up of financial support from the British and the donor sector.

By the late 1980s into the 1990s, the pace of land resettlement slowed down
measurably. Besides the shortage of money for resettlement and the growing
unavailability of land for purchase, the government shifted the broad objectives of land
reform from poverty alleviation to the promotion of productivity. From roughly 1986,
the government altered its attitude towards land reform and adopted an ill-conceived
approach for carrying out the program. The new approach towards land reform involved
the tendency by policy advisers in the Ministry of Lands to incorporate technical agrarian
planning in the formula for land reform. Technical agrarian planning in Zimbabwe was
originated by the colonial state in the 1950s. Its intended impact was to transform

[24] John Cusworth, "A Review of the UK ODA Evaluation of the Land
Resettlement Programme in 1988 and the Land Appraisal Mission of 1996," in T. A. S.
Bowyer-Bower, and Colin Stoneman, *Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, 26-7.
[25] John Cusworth, "A Review of the UK ODA Evaluation," 30.
[26] Bill Kinsey, "Land Reform, Growth and Equity: Emerging Evidence from
Zimbabwe's Resettlement Programme," in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol.25,
No. 2, March 1999, 173.

agricultural production in the communal areas from "primitive" to "modern" standards. According to Michael Drinkwater, the persistence of technical agrarian planning in post-colonial Zimbabwe was a colonial legacy that stalled alternative policies for land reallocation and sustainable agrarian development.[27]

In her discussion of early land reform efforts, Jocelyn Alexander also observed that subsequently, government officials warned that land reform was "not to be about the popularly controlled restitution of the lost lands, but about modernization and productivity delivered through a highly centralised bureaucracy for the benefit of a disciplined citizenry."[28] It is ironic that the post-colonial government would revive technical methods of land reform. I say this because the approach had previously stimulated strong resistance and a situation of ungovernability in the countryside.[29] In my opinion, although the government encountered several constraints to land reform, the appeal of a technical approach to agrarian change was a fundamental miscalculation which hindered its early efforts at land reform.

Beyond the factors identified above, it is Sam Mayo's contention that the policy direction of the state was changed in the mid to late 1980s due to pressure from an emerging class of black accumulators.[30] This class argued that land redistribution to the landless was likely to harm commercial agriculture. Members of this class, most of them drawn from the ruling elite, recommended that the state had to slow down the exercise or abandon it altogether. The occurrence of elite class accumulation at the expense of the poor was a trend set in the early years of self-rule. Evidence to support this observation

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[27] Michael Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change*, 83.

[28] Jocelyn Alexander, "'Squatters', Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe," 98.

[29] Guy Thompson, "Cultivating Conflict," 17-23.

[30] Sam Moyo, *Land Reform under Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe: Land Use Change in the Mashonaland Provinces* (Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2000), 78.

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was collected in early 2000 by Margaret Dongo, a former legislator. Dongo compiled a list of 270 farms intended for peasant resettlement that had been snatched by senior politicians and their cronies.[31] Therefore, criticism of the slow pace of resettlement should also be sought in the policy failures of the Mugabe government. I think that its sincerity in dealing with this challenge left a lot to be desired. This point is supported by the fact that the ruling party tended to stir peasant grievances over land as a long-time election strategy. ZANU (PF) shoved promises of land resettlement to the background once re-elected back into power, only to revive them ahead of another election, mainly since 2000.[32]

Besides the policy failures of the government, another fact that constrained early land reform efforts was the power and resistance of the CFU. Large scale commercial farmers should be cited for opposition to radical land reforms and also for failing to take the initiative to resolve the unjust pattern of land distribution. According to Bowyer-Bower, this opposition is because commercial farmers regarded "the institution of property to be fundamental to the whole social order, and the security of tenure to be germane to contemporary development."[33] The resistance by the CFU was partly because of their alliance with the government in the early years of independence. This cordial relationship between the government and the CFU rested on certain threads of mutual understanding.

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[31] Aleck Russell, *Big Men, Little People*, 301.
[32] Malinda Smith and Guy Thompson, "The Struggle for Social Justice in Zimbabwe," in *The Edmonton Journal*, September 23, 2004.
[33] T. A. S Bowyer-Bower, "Theory into Practice: Perspectives on Land Reform of the Farmers' Unions of Zimbabwe," in T.A.S. Bowyer-Bower and Colin Stoneman, (eds), *Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, 62.

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One such key condition was that the government would continue to observe the sanctity of private property. and to suppress radical demands for land from peasants and other groups of claimants. Mutual understanding between the alliance partners was buttressed by the importance of commercial farming in the economy. Moreover. the partnership rested on the belief that radical land reform would shatter the economic mainstay at a time when Zimbabwe did not have a class of indigenous farmers oriented towards commercial production. This reason was later revealed by then head of the CFU. Peter MacSporran. who said that "The government is now aware that employment and production is more important than who owns the land. The role of agriculture is such that if you remove the commercial farms you destroy the economy."[34]

What contributed to giving commercial farmers a sense of security was their vast contribution to national economic output. They were aware that it was almost impossible to alter the sector without adversely affecting production and the whole agro-based economy. The clear arrogance of farmers does not mean that all of them totally eschewed land reform. Rhetorically. the CFU often came out as a supporter of land redistribution. However. as Lionel Cliffe noted. "they were always in favour. for a mixture of reasons of political preservation and economic self-interest. of a limited redistribution provided they could shape it."[35] Even as late as 1998. many members of the CFU advocated a strategic approach to land reform centred on detailed analysis and assessment of issues and options. involvement of all stakeholders and representative institutions. coordination and

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[34] Cited in Aleck Russell. *Big Men, Little People*. 302.
[35] Lionel Cliffe. "The Politics of Land Reform in Zimbabwe." in T.A.S. Bowyer-Bower and Colin Stoneman. (eds). *Land Reform in Zimbabwe*. 44.

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inclusion of donor agencies. and discussion of the positive impact of land reform using a well-planned marketing lobby.[36]

This model of land reform was agreed upon at the 1998 Donors' Conference on Land Reform. At that Conference, the governments of Zimbabwe and Britain. the CFU. NGOs. and representatives of the donor community reached a consensus on the necessity of land reform. The goals envisioned by the stakeholders included redressing the glaring imbalances in land ownership and use created by colonial invasion and buttressed by discriminatory land legislation. This was in an effort to find a lasting solution that would have fostered redistribution for poverty reduction. political stability and economic growth. The outcome of the 1998 Donors Conference determined that land redistribution would best achieve intended results if carried out without undermining agrarian production and the rest of the economy. The Donors' Conference mapped plans involving a ten year program of land reform and resettlement. starting with an inception phase over two years. Funding and other forms of technical support for the program was pledged by the governments of Zimbabwe and Britain. Further. the donor community and development agencies were called in to mobilize more resources for land reform. The inception phase was to allow the purchase of farms and development of resettlement infrastructure before occupation.[37]

While the government of Zimbabwe subsequently blamed commercial farmers for being intransigent to land reallocation. commercial farmers in turn argued that this allegation was unfounded. The CFU. for example. often stressed that farmers were more than ready to cooperate with the government and the landless. provided that the policy

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[36] T. A. S Bowyer-Bower. "Theory into Practice." 68.
[37] Alec Russell. *Big Men. Little People.* 309.

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framework was orderly, transparent, and for the benefit of the landless. Farmers accused Mugabe of bashing them for his own failures, and of using land reform as an election gimmick. In the late 1990s, the alliance between the government and the CFU became increasingly strained. Initially, beginning with the 1992 Land Acquisition Act, the government seemed poised to speed up the acquisition and distribution of farms, having escaped from the restrictions of the Lancaster House Constitution. Another reason for strained relations was the heightened pressure for land by groups of landless people who led sporadic occupations of land around the country throughout the 1990s.[38]

The alliance between the government and the CFU was also occasionally tainted by Mugabe's frequent rhetoric about taking away land and giving it "to the people." Using the threat of taking away the land, Mugabe managed to keep the farmers cowed. In my view, the argument that commercial farmers were willing to cooperate with the government on land reform does not fit the assumption that those with power and privileged access to resources will never acquiesce to redistribution without a struggle. For instance, when the government of Zimbabwe listed 1 471 farms for compulsory acquisition in 1997, the farm-owners successfully appealed in the courts to get the farms delisted. They insisted that only market-driven land reform was ideal for the country, pointing out that the state had to respect the sanctity of private property. Therefore, resistance by property-owners ultimately forced the government to suspend the exercise. It has to be noted that some individual commercial farmers possessed foresight on the impending land conflict in Zimbabwe. This was despite the fact that only a few imagined the scale of violence or from which social group the future demand for land would come.

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[38] Nelson Marongwe, "Farm Occupations and Occupiers in the New Politics of Land in Zimbabwe," in Amanda Hammar, et al (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*, 162-3.

Having realized that the concentration of land in a few hands was a glaring example of economic and social injustices, some farmers made efforts on their own to allocate some land to landless peasants living close to their farms. I think that to say former commercial farmers were ready to cooperate with the government and the landless on a large-scale process of reallocation is, therefore, not empirically founded. In my view, mutual suspicion and outright hostility between the Zimbabwe government and the CFU contributed to the long-term failure to redistribute land.

I contend that the proper settlement of land reform issues in African countries has great potential to reverse the trend of poverty that the continent's millions wallow in today, thereby fostering their betterment materially.[39] However, the inherent contradictions often encountered when implementing land reforms may produce unintended outcomes, resulting in waning agrarian output, economic decline, and widespread social suffering. Part of this problem is because conflicts over land ownership and access continue to be hampered by corrupt leaders, poor planning, meagre financial resources, lack of detailed consultation, inadequate capacity, resistance from landed oligarchies, and the fear of scarring away foreign investors.[40] Western governments and some development agencies have voiced support for poverty reduction initiatives like land reform in developing countries. But as the case of Zimbabwe showed, this support is always when such initiative is market-based, planned, peaceful, lawful, and transparent. I think that these conditions are often a hindrance to land reform initiatives. This is because

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[39] Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, "Land, Growth and Governance: Tenure Reform and Visions of Progress in Zimbabwe," in Amanda Hammar, *et al* (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*, 257.

[40] Ben Cousins, "The Zimbabwe Crisis in its Wider Context: The Politics of Land, Democracy and Development in Southern Africa," in Amanda Hammar, *et al* (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*, 274-6.

the landless often find them to be cumbersome and a way by the propertied classes to avoid sharing national resources with the poor.

In this chapter I explored the important question of land and agrarian reform as one of the crucial causal factors of the Zimbabwean crisis. I argued that the challenge for land reform was a legacy bequeathed by unjust colonial policies drawn on the basis of racial prejudices. I underscored the necessity for land reform in the first years of independence. showing early efforts at land reform and appreciating their positive impact. I also explored the reasons which constrained the government's initial attempts to resolve the controversies over land. citing the provisions of the Lancaster House Constitution as key. Besides. I noted the presence of opportunities. albeit limited. for land reallocation. citing the government's poor vision and policies for effecting successful land reform. These poor policies include attempts to use technical agrarian methods which emphasised productivity of a commercial nature. This was at the expense of land reallocation for redressing colonial iniquities and speeding up poverty reduction. I also criticised the government for using promises of land reform for cultivating political support without substantive efforts after elections. These factors I have combined with the resistance of commercial farmers who lobbied the government by stressing the vital importance of commercial farming in the economy. This view received support from an emergent class of black accumulators who often used their political influence to amass tracts of land ahead of the landless. Therefore. the long-term failure to redistribute land should be factored in when examining the sudden panic of 2000.

CHAPTER 3

Neo-liberalism, Economic Collapse and Criticism

In this chapter I examine the performance of the Zimbabwean economy during the period after independence. with a special emphasis on the era of economic liberalisation in the 1990s. I argue that the relative growth of Zimbabwe's economy in the first few years of independence was expansion without structural change. This expansion was mainly due to the revival of the colonial economy with a large private sector. strong state intervention and guidance. renewed inflows of foreign direct investment. and new policies which improved conditions for many black Zimbabweans. I posit that the opening up of the once-protected Zimbabwean economy to global financial markets during the era of liberalisation is one of the key factors that contributed to the present economic crisis. In the chapter I start by highlighting the overall nature and performance of the economy in the 1980s. This is in order to contextualise the transition from command planning to Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAP) in 1991. I indicate the negative impact of ESAP on industry and workers. showing how neo-liberalism initiated the unmaking of the positive gains in the provision of social services that were achieved in the first decade of self-rule. They did this by bringing in user fees. removing exchange controls. limiting access to education and medical services. and eroding minimum wages and job protections. These conditions compounded the lack of structural change in the economy and further stifled its potential for future growth.

In this chapter I also propose that the apparent decline of the national economy is an important factor explaining the origins and development of public discontent against the ruling party and government. I show this by discussing the beginning of social

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movements critical of government policy. such as the labour unions. war veterans. and other categories of civil society. I contend that criticism and hostility to the government became deeply-seated in the era of economic neo-liberalism. a fact that worsened the erosion of legitimacy for the state. This section is important because it shows the origins of public anger with the ruling party and the factors leading to the emergence and consolidation of organised opposition.

3.1. The Economy in the 1980s

There is considerable scholarly literature about the nature and performance of the Zimbabwean economy in the period after independence. Suffice it to say that at independence Zimbabwe had one of the most diversified economies on the continent. boasting a vibrant manufacturing sector. a thriving mining industry. and a relatively prosperous agricultural sector. Many studies cover in detail the economic "boom" of the first two years of independence. which was caused by post-war peace and stability. increased demand. and the lifting of sanctions. resulting in expanded exports.[1] Zimbabwe's reintegration into the global economy also revived investment flows. New access to international aid and borrowing. improving trade terms. good weather conditions. excess capacity and increased aggregate demand arising from stable agricultural and wage incomes all pulled the economy towards an average growth rate of 12 per cent per annum.[2] On its part. the government tried to balance pressures from different groups. Large-scale farmers. manufacturers. and mining capital advocated an export-led path of growth. as rising domestic demand soon led to balance of payments problems. The rapidly expanded intervention of the government in the economy meant

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[1] George Kanyenze. "The Zimbabwean Economy." 42.

[2] *Ibid.* Also Suzanne Dansereau. "Liberation and Opposition in Zimbabwe." in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies.* Vol. 21. No. 2. May 2003. 178.

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increased expenditure. particularly to finance the provision of social services to the hitherto deprived black population. and to pay wages to the growing Africanised bureaucracy. The growth of 1980/2 was soon eclipsed by a severe slump in 1982. which lasted until 1984.[3]

Despite the inauguration of stabilisation measures prescribed by the IMF and World Bank to solve the 1982-4 crisis. it is noteworthy that Zimbabwe's economic decline continued to trouble state officials throughout the second half of the 1980s. I agree with George Kanyenze that signs of stagnation arose from the failure by the government to transform the skewed economic structures inherited from the colonial period.[4] In Kanyenze's view, at independence Zimbabwe's economy had "both extreme characteristics of a relatively developed economy and economic backwardness and neglect of the majority of the people. [It was] characterised by enclave and dual development."[5] This condition of duality emanated from a situation whereby a small. mostly white elite. owned the bulk of resources. thus delivering "a skewed distribution of income. resulting in jobless. ruthless. voiceless. rootless and futureless growth."[6] In 1981. the government drafted an economic policy blueprint titled "Growth with Equity." The blueprint envisioned the setting up of a socialist society through the promotion of balanced development and equitable distribution of income and productive resources. Government predicted that this would simultaneously help to develop human capacity by

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[3] Tor Skalnes. *Economic Reform in Zimbabwe*. 107.
[4] George Kanyenze. "The Zimbabwean Economy." 35. 39.
[5] *Ibid..* 35. 36.
[6] *Ibid..* 39.

encouraging worker participation and the extension of social services to lower income groups in the urban and rural areas.[7]

In principle, this policy initiative would have dismantled the inequities marking the Zimbabwean economy at independence. In practice, however, only the extension of social services to the black majority under the government's direction did take place. With respect to rural agriculture, the government offered input subsidies and marketing opportunities which facilitated the tripling of peasant production. There was interest by economic advisers to harmonise demands by entrenched groups from the colonial period and ambitions of emerging black accumulators and consumers. Unfortunately, the government's ability to continue balancing production and redistribution using welfarist expenditure was threatened by the dual nature of the national economy, and the absence of a program to tackle this anomaly. This is why Kanyenze concluded that "throughout the first decade of independence, Zimbabwe did not pursue a comprehensive development strategy."[8] The inner contradictions inherited from the colonial period, together with the state's failure to transform them, help explain why in the late 1980s, the Zimbabwean economy was being managed on a "reactive management-by-crisis basis."[9]

Brian Raftopoulos blamed state policies for Zimbabwe's economic retardation in the late 1980s. According to him, the reason why the economy slowed down was due to state socialist expenditure, hesitant land reform, and efforts to set minimum wages.[10] This led to limited economic expansion and the hope that growth would trickle down for redistribution to the that poorest proved unfounded by the end of the decade. Zimbabwe's

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[7] Alois S. Mlambo, "The Ambiguities of Independence," 3-5.
[8] George Kanyenze, "The Zimbabwean Economy," 53.
[9] *Ibid.*, 53.
[10] Brian Raftopoulos, "The State in Crisis," 222.

economic stagnation after 1986 was partly worsened by differing policy inclinations between the party and the government. At least in rhetoric, the party was still advocating economic planning geared to fulfil its socialist vision. A growing number of technocratic economists preferred policies in line with the realities of a world economy marked by the growing power of global capitalism.[11] Their opinions showed sympathy with powerful interest groups from the colonial period, but also with the emergent African bourgeoisie class, which joined to criticise the government for its tight control of the economy.

3.2. Economic Structural Adjustment

In 1991, the Ministry of Finance under Bernard Chidzero formally announced the government's adoption of an economic structural adjustment policy package. Chidzero's announcement followed a series of recommendations and pressure by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. A pertinent question is why Zimbabwe adopted ESAP when available wisdom showed its harmful effects to African economies that tried them before. In answering this question, it is important to note that economic liberalisation resulted from pressures from the IMF and World Bank. These financial institutions stressed that structural adjustment policies were required for additional lending. Combined with mounting external pressure, it is Raftopoulos and Compagnon's contention that the mismanagement of the parastatals, an oversized bureaucracy, increased budget deficits and the public debt made state control over the economy self-defeating considering Zimbabwe's dependence on outside markets.[12] Besides, the chronic absence of spare parts choked the export-led commercial agriculture and mining sectors.

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[11] Patrick Bond, *Uneven Zimbabwe*, 343.
[12] Brian Raftopoulos and David Compagnon, "Indigenization," 20.

private investment dried up and the state was not in a position to sustain its investment effort at the level of the early 1980s, even with the contribution of foreign aid.

It is my contention that the adoption of economic structural adjustment policies by the government of Zimbabwe accelerated the trend of economic decline and ultimate collapse. It did this by promoting uneven economic development that widening the income gap between separate social groups. The financial and export sectors, for example, benefited from economic liberalisation when the majority of the population was condemned to poverty and degradation. Whereas Kanyenze cited the reintegration of Zimbabwe into the worldwide web of capitalist growth after independence as a positive factor for the economy, Patrick Bond argued that it was precisely this reintegration that stifled future growth and worsened economic decline from the mid 1980s.[13] It has to be noted that Zimbabwe's economy had expanded considerably during the era of forced import substitution owing to the sanctions imposed on Smith's government for illegally declaring self-rule in 1965. The attainment of independence opened up Zimbabwe to neo-liberal economic doctrines peddled by the Bretton Woods institutions. Bond contends that since much of the Third World was already deeply indebted because of borrowing from global financial institutions, Zimbabwe's dabbling with international financial markets was "indicative of increasingly universal power relations leading, in the main, towards accentuated uneven development throughout the world."[14]

Some officials working for the government of Zimbabwe resisted much of the market-oriented economic advice inspired by the IMF and the World Bank during the 1980s. This resistance was partly on the grounds that a market-based economy was

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[13] Patrick Bond, *Uneven Zimbabwe*, 343.
[14] *Ibid.*

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considered incompatible with the socialist path of development enunciated by the ruling party and some nationalist bureaucrats. Besides, the record of structural adjustment policies in other African and Latin American countries which tried them before Zimbabwe revealed their harmful nature. Zimbabweans were still learning from the prior experience of Zambia, whose economy was crippled after the country adopted structural adjustment policies in the mid 1980s. However, not all officials were against restructuring the economy. Some technocrats were convinced that the Zimbabwean economy had to be aligned to suit the demands of the expanding world economy.[15] I think it is interesting to note that Chidzero eventually agreed to implement adjustment policies. This is because earlier in 1986, he condemned the unequal terms of trade between rich and developing nations that adjustment policies were producing. Chidzero had said that developed countries were exporting capital back to the industrialised countries, almost subsidizing them.[16]After changing his initial attitude towards economic structural adjustment, Chidzero later defended this development strategy. He argued that it was intended to stimulate growth by attracting foreign investment, expanding employment and by reducing state spending through economic liberalisation measures.[17]

At the time when ESAP was adopted, the government of Zimbabwe faced strong warning and criticism from labour organisations and sections of civil society. They rightly predicted that ESAP would hurt the national economy and worsen social suffering. In its response to criticism, the government argued that the IMF and the WB were not behind the prescription of ESAP. Officials defended the program by saying that

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[15] Suzanne Dansereau, "Liberation and Opposition in Zimbabwe," 180.

[16] Cited in Patrick Bond, *Uneven Zimbabwe*, 349.

[17] Lloyd Sachikonye, "Bearing the Brunt: Labour and Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe," in *Southern Africa Report* (SAR) Vol. 8, No.5. (1993), 16. See www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=4063 , downloaded on August 22, 2004.

it was "home grown." in consideration of economic and social circumstances specific to Zimbabwe.[18] Besides. the government also pointed out that it would design "safety nets" to protect vulnerable groups of people during the period of structural adjustment. Even though it was widely known that economic adjustment was part of the resurgence of western neo-liberalism. the government tried to mollify local resistance by exonerating the IMF and WB. Hence it was subsequently blamed for the deleterious consequences which ESAP brought.

I think that the experience of Zimbabwe in the 1990s clearly shows the interplay of external factors and inappropriate domestic policies as causative of the present crisis. The pressure to reduce the government's participation in the economy was also hailed by separate interest groups. especially by players in the export sector.[19] It is accurate to say that the adoption of structural adjustment policies was a manifestation of external pressure occasioned by the expansion of international capital. However. there is reason to believe that on its part. the government was running out of ideas to rejuvenate the economy in order to tackle the problems of social differentiation and rising poverty. Therefore. as the ruling elite and business class benefited from the process of uneven development in the 1990s. the majority of the population sank deeper into poverty. accentuating the conflict between the haves and the have nots. This trend of luxury consumption by the elite and poverty for the majority did not begin in the 1990s. but began as early as the first decade of self rule. stretching back into the colonial period. Thus. it is also correct to locate the roots of public discontent with the government in the widening distance between peasants and workers on one hand. and the ruling elite. on the

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[18] Lisa Laakso. "Research Debates in Zimbabwe." 10.
[19] Tor Skalnes. *Economic Reform in Zimbabwe*. 109.

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other. With respect to the nature of economic changes and the political response they received, I agree with Mandaza's observation.[20] He noted that as the African petit bourgeoisie began gradually to find access to the same economic and social status as their white counterparts, it increasingly became unable to respond effectively to aspirations of the workers and the peasants.

Against the background of deepening economic decline were visible indications that the nascent "state bourgeoisie" was forging numerous business ties with members of the white corporate sector. Raftopoulos and Compagnon have aptly described this phenomenon as "accumulation from above."[21] The emergence of such business links saw many former civil servants and ZANU (PF)'s political clients being drafted during the 1980s as middlemen for white-owned corporations. This was at a time when political connections had become vital to operate a business, and the later were absorbed as junior partners in the same companies.[22] The elites' preoccupation with material accumulation did not escape public attention because the private media informed citizens about provisions in the proposed "leadership code" in 1981. The Leadership Code had been proposed to regulate and prohibit party and government officials from amassing wealth by taking advantage of their positions of power and influence.[23]

In my view, the advent of ESAP resulted in the growing alienation between the government and the rest of the population. This is because structural adjustment also brought changes in land policy as the ruling elite altered interest in who would be resettled if there was land reform. This trend had its roots in the late 1980s when the

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[20] Ibbo Mandaza, *The Political Economy of Transition*, 51.
[21] Brian Raftopoulos and David Compagnon, "Indigenization," 19.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Welshman Ncube, "The post-unity period," 310.

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"shared interests of existing white farmers and aspirant African land owners" worked to sideline claims to land by peasants.[24] Peasants were increasingly excluded from land resettlement efforts on the pretext that small-scale production was ill-suited to market considerations. This radical policy shift from the earlier position whereby peasants were to be the primary beneficiaries of independence through land resettlement caused massive peasant disaffection. rooted in their contribution to the war and repeated rhetoric at election times about land reform geared to benefit communal farmers. Drinkwater explained the rising chasm between the state and peasants as a product of "a conflict of interests that exists in the relationship between the state and the peasantry."[25] In the case of Zimbabwe. the state was caught between the need "to appease the peasantry in order to retain their support. but on the other hand [fearing] a peasantry. led by the old lineage leaders" if it allowed them access to most of the agricultural land.[26] One of the ways in which the state eventually attempted to escape from this dilemma was by placing emphasis on technical agrarian development. particularly of a commercial nature. While peasants were more concerned with equity in the access to land as an economic resource. the government's emphasis on efficiency and productivity for the market was a source of peasant frustration and disappointment. becoming a site for future confrontation.

The deepening of economic woes was not isolated to Zimbabwe. particularly during the era of structural adjustment. It epitomised some of the wider developmental challenges faced by many countries in Africa in the last twenty five years. With a few exceptions. the economies of many African countries were stagnating throughout the era

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[24] Lionel Cliffe. "The Politics of Land Reform in Zimbabwe." in T.A.S. Bowyer-Bower. and Colin Stoneman. (eds). *Land Reform in Zimbabwe*. 41.
[25] Michael Drinkwater. *The State and Agrarian Change*. 79. 82.
[26] *Ibid.*

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of neo-liberalism. A matrix of internal and external reasons, political, economic, and social is responsible for this decline. I believe that the role of the Washington Consensus in this stagnation is central. According to Angie Hoogvelt, it was mainly because of the neo-liberal agenda that Africa was manifestly excluded from the globalised world order.[27] Hoogvelt located the wider causes of economic decline in African countries in the "new global order" worshipped by the international community. To mark the new order, the IMF and the World Bank called in their loans and imposed the discipline of the market. The market combined privatization and liberalization with new forms of political governance in which the state was marginalized in favour of a revived civil society. These policies had a fractious impact on the social order and hastened the continent's descent into economic crisis, tribalism and civil strife.[28]

Inept policies and economic mismanagement by Africa's ruling elite have added to economic chaos and social misery on the African continent. However, Hoogvelt located these factors within the larger context of the global political economy. I agree with her approach because the new world order promotes the uncontrolled expansion of corporate capital often at the expense of the social well-being of communities, particularly in developing countries. A huge volume of literature on Zimbabwe has confirmed the above synopsis. Such studies concluded that the country's economic troubles were worsened after the adoption of austerity measures during the period of structural adjustment.[29] Research on that period also showed that the social welfare of

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[27] Angie Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World: The New Political Economy of Development*, (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 175.

[28] *Ibid.*, 176.

[29] Alois S. Mlambo, *The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme: The Case of Zimbabwe, 1990-1995* (Harare: UZP, 1997), 44.

workers and peasants, such as food security, access to education and health facilities was severely undermined as national governments were forced to reduce expenditure in these crucial areas.[30] During the first decade of independence in Zimbabwe, for instance, the government managed national developmental projects with support from NGOs and financial resources from the international donor community. Thus, the impressive strides made in the expansion of health and educational facilities in the 1980s were possible due to the government's interventionist nature in the economy to redistribute income and services.[31] However, the emasculation of the state to pave way for private investment in these vital sectors undid the compromises of the 1980s and started the erosion of the high standards achieved in the first decade of independence. Therefore, it is important to highlight the impact of structural adjustment in order to show the link between mounting challenges and the growth of opposition.

The impact of structural adjustment was mostly felt by the working class through massive retrenchments as both the government and the private sector sought to reduce the wage bill. Workers who managed to retain their jobs witnessed declining real wages, job insecurity and general frustration. According to statistics provided by Lloyd Sachikonye, by July 1992, 6 000 workers were laid off while 7 000 jobs were abolished in the civil sector alone, less than a year after the adoption of ESAP.[32] In the same period, the private sector was retrenching thousands of workers, allegedly to rationalise production and enhance efficiency through wage cuts and other cost recovery measures. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), the largest labour representative body, estimated that

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[30] See, for example, Peter Gibbon, (ed), *Structural Adjustment and the Working Poor in Zimbabwe* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995).

[31] Anders Narman, "Education in Zimbabwe," 144-6. Alois Mlambo, "The Ambiguities of Independence," 2-5.

[32] Statistics cited by Lloyd Sachikonye, "Bearing the Brunt," 31.

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"by the end of 1992, some 15, 000 private sector workers had already been laid off." while several thousand more jobs vanished in the mining sector.[33] The manufacturing sector was also not spared by the wave of indiscriminate retrenchment because jobs were abolished overnight and workers were simply told to go. The massive loss of jobs cut production levels at individual companies, at the same time breaking the fundamental link in the chain of production between primary, secondary and tertiary industries.

Socially, the laying off of thousands of workers had the predictable consequence of worsening the scourge of unemployment, thereby destroying the main source of income for households. Levels of poverty rose especially in the urban areas, but also in the rural areas, where many families depended on urban workers to supplement incomes from peasant farming.[34] Retrenched workers were usually asked to vacate company accommodation or to buy houses from their former employees using the paltry retrenchment packages, if they wished to continue living in those houses. Laid off workers who failed to pay their rental fees were evicted and many became homeless. Migrant workers from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique faced destitution because most of them had lost ties with their families back home. Some of them had not established a new home in Zimbabwe's rural areas, where most retrenchees retreated to pursue small-scale farming and other income earning activities. The loss of jobs by Zimbabwean workers under structural adjustment, taken together with the joblessness faced by school-leaving youths, worsened unemployment and created a lot of social chaos. Low and middle income families increasingly found it hard to fend for food, medical attention and school fees, let alone for clothes and decent housing. For many people, structural

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[33] *Ibid.*

[34] Michael Drinkwater. *The State and Agrarian Change.* 182-4.

adjustment signified the end of formal employment. and a shift to informal trade. Social classes and academic analysis characterised the negative impact brought by adjustment policies as symbolic for "eternal suffering for the African people."[35]

From the foregoing discussion. it can be noted that the experience of ESAP in Zimbabwe was marked by negative economic and social consequences. Between 1991 and 1995. the incidence of poverty. measured by the number of households unable to meet basic requirements for living. rose sharply from 40.4 to 63.3 per cent. The incidence of extreme poverty. measured by the number of households that could not meet basic food requirements. rose from 16.7 to 35.7 per cent in the same period.[36] It was a double tragedy that during the first phase of structural adjustment. Zimbabwe and the southern African region was hit by a severe drought in the 1991/2 season. The effects of drought were felt mostly in Zimbabwe's communal areas. where rainfall is generally erratic. household incomes often low. and the overall vulnerability to malnutrition high. Rural communities suffered from massive losses of stock which greatly undermined their ability to cultivate land in the 1993/4 agricultural season. thus locking them in the vicious cycle of poverty. In urban areas. the privatisation of public services and utilities was strongly resisted by students. particularly students at the University of Zimbabwe. who united with workers to demonstrate against escalating tuition fees and living expenses. These protests sometimes became violent as the government resorted to force to maintain order and to prevent rioters from looting goods from vendors and supermarkets. Growing public unrest and open criticism of the government. therefore. marked relations between the state and the general public as the negative effects of structural adjustment intensified.

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[35] Patrick Bond. *Uneven Zimbabwe*. 379-421.
[36] George Kanyenze. "The Zimbabwean Economy." 65. 76.

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Contrary to the wisdom of the IMF and WB, the Zimbabwean economy was not revived by liberalisation. Instead, it shrunk drastically from a positive growth index of the 1980s to a negative growth index amid nationwide closures of industry due to mounting operational problems. Commenting on the experience of Zimbabwe under structural adjustment, Laakso concluded that it was the simultaneous increase of competition in the domestic markets and increasing interest rates that led to a wave of bankruptcies in the Zimbabwean manufacturing industry. As a direct consequence, de-industrialization and growing unemployment were not short-term problems of the adjustment but its "logical end result."[37] Hardest hit by the opening up of the Zimbabwean economy to external competition was the textile sector which had thrived because of protective measures against external firms. This was exemplified by the closure of some of Zimbabwe's largest export-oriented industries, such as Cone Textiles and Hunyani packaging.[38] Other targets of economic regulation were not achieved as predicted. According to Kanyenze, for example, the aim of reducing the budget deficit from 10.4 per cent of GDP in 1990/91 to 5 per cent by 1994/95 was not realised. On the contrary, the budget deficit rose to 13.4 per cent of GDP by 1994/95.[39]

I agree with Hoogvelt that the Washington Consensus was mainly responsible for stage-managing the new colonisation and pillage of Africa's economic resources.[40] However, the Bretton Woods institutions shifted the blame for the apparent failure of structural adjustment programs to the governments of the countries that implemented them, arguing that it was these governments which failed to apply structural adjustment

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[37] Lisa Laakso, "Research Debates," 10.
[38] Patrick Bond, *Uneven Zimbabwe*, 455.
[39] George Kanyenze, "The Zimbabwean Economy," 58.
[40] Angie Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World*, 181-2.

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policies properly. In Zimbabwe. the World Bank explained the adverse effects of adjustment not on the ineptitude of the policies themselves. Instead, it imposed more conditionality for future borrowing, noting that "insufficient attention has been paid to skills requirements and too much reliance has been placed on overburdened staff and existing institutional structures to carry out the reforms."[41] The alleged failure by the Zimbabwean government to apply adjustment policies "properly" resulted in the IMF suspending the disbursement of funds under the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) in September 1995, further worsening balance of payments problems.[42] From the mid 1990s onwards, relations between the Bretton Woods institutions and the Zimbabwean government became increasingly strained. The financial institutions began blaming fiscal and monetary indiscipline by the Zimbabwean government as the chief cause of balance of payments troubles. In response, the government of Zimbabwe severed ties with the IMF and World Bank in 1998, shifting focus to developing alternate policies for economic management. However, by this time the national economy was already in deep trouble. I think that it were economic challenges which directly led to the rise of various social movements. These groups also raised important political grievances in their criticism of the government.

It remains crucial to emphasize that economic structural adjustment policies did not *cause* an economic crisis in Zimbabwe. In my view, what is accurate is that the reforms accelerated a trend of decline already underway by the late 1980s, partly caused by excessive borrowing from the IMF/WB to pay off debts, some accrued during the UDI

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[41] World Bank, (1995), cited in Patrick Bond. *Uneven Zimbabwe*, 353-4.
[42] George Kanyenze. "The Zimbabwean Economy." 60: Lisa Laakso. "Research Debates." 11.

period.[43] It was during and after the ESAP regime that signs and symptoms of an economic crisis became visible to the wider Zimbabwean society. Subsequent economic policies were not effective enough to halt the dangerous trend of decline. The consequences of ESAP were more pronounced in the social arena where gains achieved in the first decade of independence in healthcare and education were reversed by the privatisation of public services. This was when the Zimbabwean crisis became of both an economic and social nature. I agree with David Moore, who argued that in seeking to understand Zimbabwe's structural crisis, it is vital to locate ESAP "at the *middle level* of the crisis."[44] This was because ESAP directly aggravated de-industrialisation and narrowed down the income base for many households, forcing workers and the unemployed to rely more than ever on informal sources of income. Subsequent developments worked to deepen and to complicate the turmoil until it became difficult to control.

Besides shortcomings in the political field, I think that it was the rapid shrinking of the national economy in the 1990s which stimulated various forms of political dissent against the government. More importantly, it led to open and hostile criticism directed at the ruling party and president. However, despite the marked growth of criticism and opposition to the state in this period, research has shown that ZANU (PF) continued to garner considerable electoral support in the polls held in the 1990s.[45] This was in part due to the absence of organized opposition after the merger of ZANU (PF) and PF ZAPU, as I discussed in chapter 1. Therefore, the fact that many people in Zimbabwe continued to

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[43] Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's Plunge*, 9-18.

[44] David Moore, "Twists on the Tale of Primitive Accumulation," in Malinda S. Smith (ed), *Globalizing Africa*, 261, (emphasis original).

[45] Liisa Laakso, "Regional Voting and Cabinet Formation" in Stephan Darnolf and Lisa Laakso, (eds), *Twenty years of Independence in Zimbabwe*, 131-34.

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vote for ZANU (PF) in this period should not be taken to mean the absence of public discontent with the party and government, but the absence of an organised political alternative. As Kanyenze rightly observed, even before the formal proclamation of independence in 1980, Zimbabwe was engulfed by countrywide strikes caused by a crisis of expectations as people immediately wanted to see tangible changes to their welfare.[46] The rapid escalation of poverty after the restructuring of the economy had the effect of galvanising latent forms of criticism against the ruling party, thus laying the foundations of future opposition politics in Zimbabwe.

As I explored in chapter 2, the failure to speedily fulfil promises made during the war of liberation for land redistribution and the failure to deepen democracy remained chief among Zimbabwe's unfinished businesses. These shortfalls undermined the credibility of the party among the landless, whose numbers kept swelling as the population grew steadily, making access to national resources more difficult. Meanwhile, ruling party officials continued to broadcast political rhetoric at rallies during times of elections, making and breaking their promises as they pleased. However, in the middle of the 1990s, Zimbabweans were able to recognise the gulf between empty propaganda and their harsh reality marked by increasing deprivation. From the foregoing, it can be argued that civil disaffection with the Zimbabwean party-state was worsened by the poor performance of the national economy, coupled by rising levels of corruption in ruling party and civil sector circles. It was the role of civil society to transform this discontent into a broader struggle for government accountability and democratisation.

In my effort to explain the origins and development of the Zimbabwean crisis, I argued that the 1980s were marked by low-level public discontent with the government

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[46] George Kanyenze, "The Zimbabwean Economy," 40.

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over its failure to deliver the expected fruits of independence. I also contend that the 1990s was a period of open criticism. It was a period marked by the rapid erosion of legitimacy for ZANU (PF) and the government. On the political scale, Mugabe could not continue to justify attempts to create a one-party state because the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s robbed him of a model and ideological framework to justify its creation. More importantly, the wider African movement away from the one-party model dissuaded ZANU (PF) from pursuing this idea. Much to the president's chagrin, this development slightly loosened his grip on power and opened up possibilities for opposition politics in the country. Moreover, mounting domestic pressure from students, professionals, and the labour movement against one-partyism worked to undermine the political feasibility of single party politics. Many government officials realised that the socialist path of development had resulted in neither economic or social development. It had contributed to sustaining a mixed economy whose future growth was already in trouble. Closely linked to this is the fact that multi-party democracy was pushed by global donors as part of political liberalisation tied to international lending and adjustment programs. It was these factors which forced Mugabe to reluctantly abandon the path of socialist development he had initially vowed to adhere to.

3.3. Civil Society and Social Movements

In this section I further probe developments of the 1990s by focusing on the revival of civil society and the emergence of organised pressure groups. These groups articulated a range of problems in politics, the economy, and the general welfare of society. It is my view that understanding the roots and development of the Zimbabwean crisis cannot be complete without examining the changing relationship between the

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government and civil society, particularly during the late 1990s when Zimbabwe was marked by intense social unrest. I hold that Zimbabwe's drastic economic decline and growing signs of autocracy in the mid to late 1990s caused a marked revival of organised civil society activity. Civil organisations focused on creating public awareness about issues of development while also spearheading the struggle for democratisation. Laakso correctly described the 1990s in Zimbabwe as "a period of strengthening civil society."[47] In her view, it was the economic and social suffering caused by structural adjustment that mainly stimulated the resurgence of an increasingly vocal civil society movement. The rebirth of civil sector activity opened a new chapter in Zimbabwe because at this time civil organisations began to redefine their relationship with the prevailing political order. They did this by focusing on economic problems, matters of governance and state accountability, as well as challenges of social development. I think this had the positive effect of creating more space for voices critical of government policy to articulate alternative modes of leadership and economic management policies. The effect of this was to reshape the relationship between the state, capital and broader social interests. I want to start by discussing the reorganisation of the labour movement under the ZCTU, after which it claimed more autonomy from the government. This act formally signified the growing distance between the ruling elite and workers, fanning the flames of social justice struggle in the country.[48]

It is vital to understand the evolution of the labour movement in post-colonial Zimbabwe to appreciate the beginnings of organised opposition to state policies. At the time of its formation in 1981, the ZCTU was largely a "junior partner" of the

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[47] Lisa Laakso, "Research Debates," 9.
[48] Suzanne Dansereau, "Liberation and Opposition in Zimbabwe," 182.

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government. This was partly because the government argued for a strong alliance with the working class for the purpose of increasing the bargaining power of workers with capital, which at this time was largely foreign-owned. An alliance between the government and workers was also deemed necessary in order to facilitate the socialist transformation that the new government proclaimed upon its assumption of power. Besides, the government argued for close cooperation with workers' unions as a method to reduce workplace conflict, thereby directing all attention to the goal of national development. This is why in February 1981, the government encouraged and facilitated the formation of the ZCTU as an umbrella body that brought together separate labour unions from across the country.[49] However, while the government took several policy measures to improve the employment conditions and the general rapport between labour and capital, this thrust was also meant to strengthen the position of the state and to curb the autonomy of workers. The government's determination to control workers was not anything new. It stood for the persistence of colonial policies crafted to facilitate the control of mainly black workers by the colonial state.[50]

However, after 1985, the ZCTU came under a new executive which was more critical of the government's control over workers. The new executive clamoured for increased worker autonomy in order to make their representation more effective. Part of what prompted the ZCTU to push for greater autonomy was the growing of an alliance between white capital and the new black elite, leading to the gradual marginalisation of

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[49] *Ibid.,* 177.
[50] Brian Raftopoulos, "The State in Crisis," 222.

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workers' interests.[51] From 1985 onwards relations between the ZCTU and the government became more confrontational rather than collaborative. The government attempted to maintain leverage over workers and their representative institutions while labour unions became more organized, powerful and autonomous. In addition, the advent of ESAP in 1991 triggered the untieing of the ZCTU from the government as part of the political liberalisation occasioned by structural adjustment. The government's failure to consult labour and other segments of civil society in drafting and implementing adjustment policies completed the break-up between the government and the labour unions. This was particularly because leaders of the labour movement resisted ESAP, arguing that the reforms would impact negatively on the welfare of workers. It was in this context that the ZCTU took a leading role in mounting an attack against the government for increasingly unbearable economic and social woes.

I think that the souring of relations between the government and the ZCTU weakened the façade of tripartite unity between the state, capital, and labour, which the government earlier attempted to promote. This separation set a precedent whereby other sectors of civil society intensified their criticism of state policy. According to Raftopoulos, it was after the breakaway of the ZCTU from state control that the labour body "set out to nurture political alliances with other social groups, such as students, in a process of building a larger consensus around the need for greater state accountability."[52] The ZCTU evolved from an organisation for the sole interests of workers to become a vehicle for articulating wider issues of governance. In doing this, the ZCTU followed

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[51] Brian Raftopoulos and David Compagnon, "Indigenization," 19; George Kanyenze and Chiripanhura, "Brief History of the Union Movement in Zimbabwe," 31. See www.zctu.co.zw/html/about.shtm, accessed on October, 3 2004.
[52] Brian Raftopoulos, "The State in Crisis," 226.

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what took place in Zambia, where the national trade union changed into a political organisation and wrestled power from the ruling party. In Zimbabwe, it was the ability of the ZCTU to lead a coalition of civil society organisations in fighting for government transparency and responsibility that laid the foundations for opposition politics at the end of the 1990s.

The new assertiveness and influence of civil organisations climaxed with the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly under the guidance of the ZCTU in 1997. As soon as it was formed, the NCA became an important pressure group. It was able to bring together student movements, church and human rights organisations, and numerous other civic groups concerned with economic and social concerns, good governance, human rights and constitutional reform. The rallying point for the NCA was the need for a new constitution, considering that Zimbabwe was governed under the Lancaster House Constitution, modified by a number of amendments that gave excessive power to the president. Even though the stated mandate of the NCA was to encourage debate between the state and civil society on constitutional reform, the government was quick to associate the NCA with social movements whose potential threatened ZANU (PF)'s monopoly on power. It is Raftopolous's contention that this stance was founded on the government's fears that a coalition of civil society organisations called for democratisation and respect for human rights as ZANU (PF) was increasingly abandoning this terrain.[53] Therefore, concerns about economic prosperity, democratic governance and human rights became a central focus for the civil society movement. This fact worked to undercut the government's nationalist master narrative.

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[53] *Ibid.,* 228.

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It can be argued that that by the late 1990s, many Zimbabweans were fed up with ZANU (PF) and the government. What clearly demonstrated this was the ability of the ZCTU to mobilise a series of nationwide "stayaways" in 1998 in protest against the steep increase in the prices of basic commodities. Economically, the "stayaways" had a devastating impact on industrial production and on the delivery of vital services in the tertiary sector. This situation was aggravated by a string of food riots which rocked most townships of Harare in the same year. The general restlessness of the population was more pronounced in the urban areas. In Harare, student demonstrations and clashes with the police steadily drew international attention to the growing disorder in Zimbabwe. According to Geoff Hill "these strikes not only showed that people no longer supported ZANU (PF) blindly, but - worse still from the government's point of view - they had lost their fear of Mugabe...the masses had defied the power of the state."[54] Strike action and other forms of civil defiance severely discredited the government of Zimbabwe locally and abroad. It was amid these difficult times that many started to publicly announce that Mugabe should leave office. A ZANU (PF) legislator for Masvingo Central, Dzikamai Mavhaire, took up this sentiment and asked parliament for the president to go, on February 10, 1998. For suggesting the retirement of the president, Mavhaire was put under party disciplinary action which saw his sacking from the ZANU (PF) Central Committee. After the Mavhaire incident, it became a taboo to talk about Mugabe's retirement or succession. This was indicative of the president's determination to silence all criticism and to create a clique of loyal supporters and sycophants around himself.

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[54] Geoff Hill, *The Battle for Zimbabwe*, 102.

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However, the clash between the state and different social groups was dramatised most clearly by the emergence of the war veterans' movement in the mid to late 1990s.[55] The war veterans are important to understanding the current crisis in Zimbabwe because their confrontation with the government in 1997/8 was a major turning point in the relationship between the state and the governed. This was because "war vets" became a powerful political grouping which challenged the state to compensate its members for wartime services through the redistribution of productive enterprise. The centrality of war veterans in this discussion also arises from the fact that it was the war veterans who later spearheaded the occupation of commercial farms in 2000. Thus, it is vital to highlight the evolution of this movement. I emphasise their rising discontent and how they articulated their grievances to the ruling party and government. Suffice it to say, after the war, a significant number of war vets became lower-level state employees who worked as teachers and civil servants. They were often committed to the ideals of the struggle, but some of them were, by the late 1990s, bitterly disappointed. Thus, it is crucial to examine their grievances within the context of economic dislocation and rising social hardships marking that period.

Kriger rightly observed that Zimbabwe's liberation war veterans have played a vital role in shaping the country's political tradition.[56] They have done this through their often ambiguous relationship with the ruling party and the government, which is marked

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[55] War veterans derived their appellation from the war of liberation waged in Zimbabwe in the 1970s. When war veterans waged the war of liberation they were disparaged as "terrorists" by the colonial regime and its allies, while nationalists referred to war veterans as "comrades," or "freedom fighters."

[56] Norma J. Kriger, "Zimbabwe's War Veterans and the Ruling Party: Continuities in Political Dynamics," in Staffan Darnolf and Lisa Laakso, (eds), *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe*, 108.

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by "collaboration. conflict and accommodation."[57] In my view. regardless of the government's efforts to appease war veterans. many of them were frustrated over what they perceived to be the state's failure to fulfil wartime promises. It was only their lack of organisation that enabled the government to subdue their power throughout the 1980s. However. in the 1990s. disillusionment in the ranks of war veterans created a fundamental contradiction in their alliance with the party and government.

Whereas the ruling party evoked the war of liberation as its primary source of legitimacy. the partial marginalization of war veterans in the new status quo actually made a mockery of the very ethos of the wider nationalist struggle and the anti-colonial war. The formation of the National Liberation War Veterans Association (NLWVA) in 1997 significantly altered the interaction between the ruling party and the war veterans. The NLWVA was formed primarily as a forum to advance the grievances of its members to the ruling party and government. War veterans became a formidable political category because of their willingness to use militancy and outright confrontation as tools for bargaining with the ruling party and government. and advancing wider social interests and pushing for concessions from other groups. In 1997. the war veterans' movement moved from its stance of consultation and negotiation with the ruling party to one of confrontation. The following quotation taken from a speech by a war veteran illustrates a not atypical war veteran complaint:

> Some people now have ten farms to their names and luxury yachts and have developed
> fat stomachs when war veterans...live in abject poverty. Is this the ZANU (PF) I
> trusted with my life? Is this the same party which promised to take care of us in our
> old age? To the majority of Zimbabweans I say our party...has abandoned us.[58]

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[57] *Ibid.*
[58] Cited in Martin Meredith. *Our Votes. Our Guns.* 133.

The emergence of the war veterans' movement as a force that openly challenged the ruling party severely shook ZANU (PF)'s source of legitimacy in national politics. particularly as their leader. Chenjerai (Hitler) Hunzvi. was widely rumoured to harbour presidential ambitions himself. Previously. Hunzvi had also challenged Mugabe publicly on matters affecting veterans. particularly on the question of compensation and land reallocation.[59] In July 1997. the war veterans ratcheted up pressure on the government to address their grievances. which included pensions and the right to occupy white-owned land. By resorting to a series of well-organised demonstrations and acts of disobedience. veterans managed to humiliate Mugabe. personally. when he attempted to ignore their demands. In August 1997. they sent him an ultimatum claiming gratuities of fifty thousand Zimbabwean dollars (US$4 165). and monthly pensions of five thousand dollars (US$417). This money was for each of the fifty thousand war veterans demanding compensation. Besides money. veterans said:

> In order to resolve this issue peacefully. we demand that 50 per cent of all ex-combatants needing settlement be given land by December 1997. the rest by July 1998. Failure to meet these deadlines will force war veterans to move in and settle themselves on farms that have been identified for resettlement. They will occupy the white man's land because the white man did not buy that land.[60]

In a move that I think was desperate. Mugabe swallowed his pride and agreed to compensate the war veterans. Even though the growing power of veterans was inspired by nationalist memories of the war. it was also built around broader social problems that were daily affecting the average Zimbabwean. These problems included the inability of households to meet basic needs of housing. transport. food. heath services. and child care.

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[59] Cited in David Blair. *Degrees in Violence.* 39.
[60] *Ibid.,* 136.

For example. demands made by the war veterans to the government included the provision of free health care and education to their children. While they were articulating national agendas affecting many citizens. the war veterans also regarded themselves as a unique group deserving special attention. They felt they were entitled to exclusive consideration because of their roles in the liberation war. and their alliance with the ruling party and government. After getting hefty gratuities from the government in August 1997. some war veterans managed to invest their resources in different projects. However, the media also carried reports of veterans who squandered the money on conspicuous consumption. presenting themselves as rich members in society. However. the victory by war veterans over the government exposed the frail nature of the state in the face of internal challenge. a fact that made veterans more resolute in demanding further material benefits.

Regrettably. the money which the government coughed up for war veterans was unbudgeted for. It caused a Z$4.5 billion deficit in the national coffers - immediately trigging an unprecedented financial crisis which saw the Zimbabwe dollar falling from about Z$10 to the US$ to below Z$30 to the US$ in four hours of trading time.[61] In a situation where political expediency took primacy over economic concerns. the government chose to ignore advice from the IMF that Zimbabwe would never recover from a budget deficit caused by borrowing and printing money. The money that veterans received from the government empowered them to become social actors of considerable status. despite triggering soaring inflation. The growing power of war veterans posed a serious challenge on the ruling party and government. Either the party-state had to reassert control over veterans through force. or allow considerable decentralisation of

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[61] Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya. *Zimbabwe's Plunge.* x1.

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power away from the state to the veterans. Thus, it is tempting to speculate that if Mugabe and the ruling party had tried to reassert control over veterans, the reign of terror perpetrated by the veterans would have been avoided. However, because the ruling party was fighting to retain power, Mugabe allowed veterans considerable political leeway. According to Raftopoulos, instead of alienating veterans, the ruling party recognized their political capital and devised strategies to co-opt it to further its own goal of political survival.[62]

This is why soon after veterans successfully challenged the authority of the state in 1997/8, they started leading peasants and retrenched workers in sporadic occupations of white-owned farms and state land.[63] A local newspaper, later lamented the lawlessness that veterans were causing in broader social circles:

> The grim reality...is that we haven't got a normal government in Zimbabwe. Whatever the so-called war veterans say is what goes. They can sack teachers, nurses, and district council officials, order the transfer of magistrates, district administrators and senior police officers, close down schools, clinics and rural district council offices. They can disrupt any court proceedings. And with absolute impunity, they can harass, torture or order anybody's arrest.[64]

I think that the behaviour by war veterans described above can be interpreted using two basic paradigms. The first is that war veterans were instruments used by the ruling party in its determined fight against displacement. The second is that veterans had their own interests as a group and they used the ruling party to achieve these interests. To argue that veterans were instruments would be to deny them agency as historical actors. They acted by successfully negotiating state power while simultaneously using this power to advance their own interests. However, differences in the methods of achieving

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[62] Brian Raftopoulos, "The State in Crisis," 229.
[63] Nelson Marongwe, "Farm Occupations and Occupiers," 157.
[64] Cited in Amanda Hammar, "Local Government in Zimbabwe," 119.

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common interests divided the war veterans into two camps, one loyal to the government and the other sympathetic to the opposition.[65] In my opinion, it is important to note that from 1997 onwards, the growing power of war veterans enticed many unemployed youths who never fought in liberation war to align with the former freedom fighters. This partly explains why unemployed youths made a huge percentage of "war veterans" who led the occupation of commercial land in 2000. The presence of numerous youths in the ranks of war veterans has led many analysts to discredit the whole war veterans' crusade. But, there are several reasons to explain why some youths joined the war veterans. I think that it was because war veterans were assured of freedom of manoeuvre without reproach from the state that they used this freedom to confiscate private property. This enabled veterans to recruit scores of youths who also wanted material benefits and some form of power in their local communities.

Besides, joining the veterans meant that some youths actually found something to occupy themselves with. Often working under the influence of drugs and opaque beer, many youths became excited and thought they were above the law. This sentiment was clearly incited by Hunzvi when he announced on national television that "the law has to fit the people of Zimbabwe and they don't have the land. We war veterans are the policemen of Zimbabwe, we enforce the law, we do not obey the law."[66] A chief agenda proposed by the veterans was a quick resolution of the problem of land shortage affecting not only veterans, but also the communal farmers. By articulating the issue of land shortage, the veterans' movement echoed a popular demand among Zimbabweans from

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[65] The war veterans' movement in Zimbabwe is broadly divided into the NLWVA and the Zimbabwe Liberators Platform (ZLP). The Liberators Platform has publicly denounced the former as not "genuine" veterans, thus aligning itself to the liberal democratic framework.

[66] Cited in David Blair, *Degrees in Violence*, 74.

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various walks of life, thus creating potential for enlarging their support base. It was during these crucial moments that the government appointed a Constitutional Review Commission to conduct an outreach program to collect public views on a new constitution. The draft constitution provided for the possibility of two more terms for Mugabe, a fact which was resented by the majority of Zimbabweans. For its part, the Commission tried to make the draft constitution acceptable by providing for the compulsory acquisition of commercial land.[67] It specified that the obligation to compensate dispossessed farmers rested with the British government. ZANU (PF) summoned the entire might of the media to broadcast propaganda for the draft constitution, but the NCA managed to mobilise civil society to campaign against it.

To ZANU (PF)'s utter amazement, 55 per cent of the electorate rejected the draft constitution, in what became the ruling party's first electoral defeat since independence. After the stunning defeat of the February referendum, the war veterans took it upon themselves to "invade" white-owned farms in semi-spontaneous waves of violent occupation.[68] The government's response was intervention and support for the program. This was partly for fear of antagonizing the war veterans, and also as a move to mobilize support ahead of the June 2000 general election. It is important to analyse the participation of youths in the violent occupation of commercial farms, because the bulk of the so-called veterans were too young to have fought in the 1970s war. Many were in their mid twenties at the time of "farm invasions." Accordingly, these "bands of marauding thugs" were not genuine war veterans but hired mobs who did the "dirty job" of displacing white farmers. In my view, it is crucial to probe why the mostly

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[67] John Mw. Makumbe and Patricia Alden, "The Zimbabwe Constitution," 232.
[68] Nelson Marongwe, "Farm Occupations and Occupies," 177-82.

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unemployed youths became willing participants in the risky phase of farm occupation. What social forces drove them to leave their homes and to travel into unknown areas where they claimed heroic status on their behalf, but also for the government? What ideology generated the extraordinary zeal with which they occupied white-owned farms, simultaneously terrorizing farm labourers and their families?

By disguising themselves as war veterans, the unemployed youths functioned as agents of social transformation. They managed to do this mainly because "war veteran" was a convenient label to use in the struggle against historical and current forces that affected them directly and daily. These forces, such as unemployment and the attendant social and economic insecurity, played a leading role in pushing the youths to challenge what they perceived as a stifling status quo. I posit that social forces and their daily experiences in life were the primary determinants that influenced youths to coalesce into a history-making category of people. To argue that they were mere instruments used by the state in the pursuit of its own interests is to objectify them. It obscures their centrality as actors who participated in a social struggle for change. It has to be noted that the entire political elite managed to manipulate this activist potential embedded in youths. The only difference was in the strategies and effectiveness of the mobilization process. The MDC recruited youths to campaign for its electoral program of dislodging ZANU (PF) from power.

From the ongoing discussion, it is my contention that from 1997 onwards, the government's response to mounting problems of economic contraction and a legitimacy crisis was a reactionary movement from one blunder to the next. The emergence of various social movements clearly shows Zimbabwe was headed for turmoil. It was the

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policy choices adopted by the Mugabe regime during that crucial period which intensified the Zimbabwean crisis. Among the mistakes Mugabe made at that time was his decision to commit the country to a costly foreign war. Now I turn to discuss one of the central factors which worsened Zimbabwe's economic woes, the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I show how this war compounded the ruling party's growing legitimacy crisis by further fanning flames of opposition.

3.4. Zimbabwe in the Democratic Republic of Congo war

I want to cite Zimbabwe's involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo war as one of the immediate factors deepening the Zimbabwean crisis. I explore the reasons for Zimbabwe's intervention in the DRC war, arguing that this was a wrong foreign policy choice for the Zimbabwean government. I posit that despite Mugabe's efforts to justify his intervention in terms of regional security policy, what determined his decision was, in fact, the desire to create economic opportunities and also to cement personal ties with Laurent Kabila, the former president of the vast and rich central African country. For all the cost in foreign currency and human casualties that Zimbabwe bore, the DRC war resulted in the enrichment of the ruling elite. This fact eroded the remaining public faith in the government and it became a rallying point for opposition to Mugabe.

In 1998, Zimbabwe, together with Namibia and Angola, sent troops to the DRC. The motive was to defend the Kinshasa government against three main local rebel factions backed by Rwanda and Uganda. In an article that examines post-independence foreign policy in Zimbabwe, Donald Chimanikire argued that the major motive behind the invasion of the DRC was to install a government subservient to the Rwandese and

Ugandan governments. [69] However. I think that the DRC conflagration was a typical African resource war. Its underlying cause was the desire to control territory laden with high-value minerals, including diamonds, gold, columbo tantalite, iron, copper, coal, and timber. [70] Zimbabwe sent troops to the DRC a few weeks after the invasion in August 1998. Rumours and widely circulated media reports argued that the aggressors almost stormed Kinshasa, but were only repulsed by the superior military skills of the Zimbabwean army. Loyal supporters of Kabila in the DRC hailed the military achievements of Zimbabwe and its allies, anointing Zimbabwe's leader as a defender of the DRC from imminent invasion. In Zimbabwe, the reason for sending troops became a topic of heated debate in the streets and in political circles. Government critics argued that Mugabe took the decision to commit the national army without consulting parliament, let alone seeking its approval. [71] Justifying intervention in the DRC, the government evoked a SADC protocol that mandated member states to "take collective action in case of attempts to remove governments of the member states by military means." [72] This resolution was also adopted in line with the UN Charter on sovereignty, self-determination and self-preservation of nation states. In security terms, it compelled the allied countries to quell unconstitutional regime change in the DRC, a situation likely to have sparked further regional instability.

Zimbabwe's participation in the DRC war cemented the personal friendship between presidents Mugabe and Laurent Kabila. However, it certainly had devastating

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[69] Donald P. Chimanikire. "Foreign and Security Policy in Zimbabwe: From Independence to the DRC." Staffan Darnolf. and Lisa Laakso. (eds). *Twenty years of Independence in Zimbabwe,* 187.

[70] United Nations Security Council: Report S/2003/1027.

[71] Donald P. Chimanikire. "Foreign and Security Policy in Zimbabwe." 188.

[72] *Ibid.*

consequences for Mugabe, his party and government, locally and abroad. Zimbabweans criticised the government for the huge cost of the war, which, according to the Minister of Finance, Hebert Murerwa, increased from Z$35 million a month in 1998 to over Z$70 million a month in 1999. The *Financial Times* of Britain claimed in 2000 that Zimbabwe had lost Z$200 million worth of equipment in the war, even though the government disputed the figure as an exaggeration. In September 2000, Simba Makoni, then Minister of Finance, revealed that Zimbabwe had already spent Z$10 billion (US$263 million) on the war. The *Zimbabwe Independent* estimated that the war debt "is ...at least five times that."[73] Makoni jokingly likened Zimbabwe to a "house of hunger", warning that the level of military expenditure was fuelling the economic crisis to unacceptable levels.[74] Sadly for suffering Zimbabweans, his advice fell on deaf ears, and his suggestion to devalue the dollar attracted scorn from Mugabe as advice from "enemies of the state."

Measuring the impact of Zimbabwe's involvement in the DRC war cannot be limited to monetary terms alone. The war sapped public morale and worsened the crisis of legitimacy confronting the government. Independent media reports showed corpses of badly mutilated Zimbabwean soldiers coming back from the DRC for burial at home. When it was hard to identify the corpses, parents were sometimes ordered to hastily bury the remains without even verifying that the bodies belonged to their children. The spectre of body bags brought for burial negatively affected even the rural areas of Zimbabwe, seriously shaking the respect that some people still had for the government. It boggled the mind to understand why the country's sons and daughters were slaughtered in a foreign

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[73] *Zimbabwe Independent*, January 23, 2004.
[74] *Ibid.*, 191.

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country when Zimbabwe was at peace.[75] What particularly angered many people was the cost of the war at the expense of vital sectors such as health. education and food security. These sectors experienced substantial cuts in the budget allocation. Furthermore. Zimbabwe's participation in the war opened vast opportunities for personal accumulation for members of the ruling elite. particularly for generals. commanders and other individuals well connected with the military. For instance. Emmerson Mnangagwa. retired army general Vitalis Zvinavashe. Brigadier General Sibusiso. Mike Moyo. Charles Dauramanzi and Billy Rautenbach were named in a UN report on the "illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth in the DRC."[76]

Subsequent research carried out by an independent newspaper also established that members of the Zimbabwean army and ruling elite were linked to shady deals in the DRC. The paper unearthed "an intricate web of companies representing the interests of either key members of the military or those in the government."[77] This was despite denials by Zimbabwe's government that "neither itself nor its nationals were or are involved in any illegal deals in the DRC."[78] There can be no doubt that one purpose of Zimbabwe's intervention in the DRC war was to facilitate members of the ruling elite investing in the economy of that country. a process that Moore described as "mercantile accumulation."[79] The fact that Zimbabwe went into the DRC in search of bullion was confirmed when local investors began exploring business opportunities in the mining. logging. retail. farming. and other sectors of the DRC economy. It was also Mugabe's vision that Zimbabwean society at large would import some vital commodities that were

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[75] I witnessed one such burial in Nyajena rural area of Masvingo province.
[76] United Nations Security Council: Report S/2003/1027.
[77] *The Financial Gazette.* February 3. 2005.
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] David Moore. "Twists on the Tale of Primitive Accumulation." 256.

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scarce locally, particularly electricity. This vision was, however, hampered by the death of Kabila in 2001. His son and successor, Joseph Kabila, awarded lucrative business contracts to South African investors instead.[80] Untimely intervention in the DRC war for the benefit of the military chefs and ruling party brass should be cited as a disaster, a crucial factor to be noted when explaining the causes of the current crisis.

In this chapter I examined post-independence changes that contributed to the current crisis in Zimbabwe. I argued that the post-independence economy exhibited continuity with the colonial period in terms of the concentration of land and investment capital in the hands of a small, mostly white minority. The new ruling bloc largely failed to effect a comprehensive program of national wealth redistribution. These factors contributed to the contraction in the late 1980s, prompting the government to adopt the economic structural adjustment program in 1991. I also cited domestic pressure and the expansion of international capital under the neo-liberal economic policy agenda championed by the IMF and World Bank. I argued that this pressure was vital in the launching of macroeconomic reforms. I pointed out that this policy direction worsened Zimbabwe's economic contraction. It accelerated the scourge of unemployment and exposed the population to rising poverty.

I noted that the failure to transform the dual nature of the economy undermined the government's continued ability to sustain its populist program of extending vital social services to the black majority population. This resulted in the gradual emergence of public disaffection with the government and ruling party. I concluded this chapter by examining Zimbabwe's involvement in the DRC war, noting that it was not primarily for peace and security reasons that Zimbabwe was concerned, but for the need to facilitate

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[80] *Zimbabwe Independent*, January 23, 2004.

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self-aggrandizement by Mugabe and his inner circle. This was particularly important for his loyalists in the army, which he knew would play a key role in crushing simmering domestic opposition. It is now important to focus on the role of opposition politics in shaping the direction of the crisis. This is because it was the emergence of a strong party in the name of the MDC that forced the ruling party to reconstitute itself *vis a vis* forces of change.

CHAPTER 4:

Opposition, Land Reform, and Dictatorship

In this chapter I focus on three related dimensions of the Zimbabwean crisis. The first is the rebirth of opposition politics in Zimbabwe under the leadership of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). I consider the reasons leading to the formation of the MDC, identifying its support base, and probing its vision and strategies for effecting political and social change. My key argument is that the formation of the MDC escalated the Zimbabwean crisis. It did this by introducing a vicious struggle for power pitting the ruling and opposition parties against each other, which helped generate internal momentum to sustain the wider crisis. I think that by exploring the role of opposition politics in Zimbabwe, the further deepening of the turmoil can be better understood. In this chapter I also return to the fast-track land reform program, discussing what we really know about its results. I argue that while the need to reallocate land to the landless was an issue of broad national consensus, the violent and chaotic nature of the program was mainly retrogressive. It was a ploy used to diffuse criticism and to ensure the political survival of Mugabe and the ruling party. Moreover, I think it was the subsequent attempt to justify and defend the land reform program that ZANU (PF) used to build an autocratic regime in Zimbabwe. The autocracy was consolidated by a combination of state-sponsored violence and intimidation, repressive legislation, and by the militarization of society and institutions.

In this chapter I also highlight the reaction of Western countries and regional governments to the Zimbabwean crisis. I posit that the response of the world community and that of African leaders left a lot to be desired. The response of Western governments

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mainly reflected the neo-liberal priorities of democracy, good governance, human and property rights, and the rule of law. I also probe why some regional governments opted for solidarity with the Mugabe government, while others did not make their criticism of repression and human rights abuses in Zimbabwe public. It is my contention that by adopting a "wait and see" stance, African leaders were complicit in the further plunge of Zimbabwe.

4.1. The MDC and Reform

The MDC was officially launched on September 11, 1999. It was founded under the presidency of Morgan Tsvangirai, the former secretary general of the ZCTU. The chief factor behind the formation of the MDC was the desire to provide Zimbabweans with an alternative path of political consciousness to that of ZANU (PF). Addressing thousands of supporters who came to witness the party's official founding at Rufaro Stadium, Tsvangirai promised a crucial turning point in Zimbabwean politics: "In 1980 we came here to lower the Union Jack. Now we have come here to lower the flag of ZANU (PF). We have come here to ensure that the MDC is the next government of Zimbabwe," he said.[1] According to the MDC, the party was formed because of ZANU (PF)'s "failure and inability to govern Zimbabwe justly, transparently, honestly, fairly and equitably."[2] Thus, from the outset, the MDC located the causes of Zimbabwe's deepening crisis at the governance level, thereby justifying its stated objective of toppling Mugabe's government from power. At the time of its formation, the MDC had a number of advantages over the ruling party. One was that ZANU (PF) had lost popular support in the period stretching back to the early 1990s. Besides, the opposition party was formed

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[1] Cited in David Blair, *Degrees in Violence*, 44.
[2] MDC, 2000, see www.mdczimbabwe.org, accessed on December 4, 2004.

when Zimbabwe's involvement in the DRC war had sapped the national economy and fuelled public discontent. This was the reason why the MDC announced the intention to unilaterally withdraw Zimbabwean troops from the DRC conflict during the campaign for the 2000 elections. Another advantage that the new party enjoyed was support from youths who lacked direct connection with the liberation war. and did not find the ruling party's nationalist bandwagon appealing. Instead. many youths blamed the government for increasing economic and social suffering. and looked to the MDC as a viable alternative.

In terms of support. the opposition party mobilised strength by negotiating alliances between working peoples' organisations. the intelligentsia. student movements. churches. the corporate class. commercial farmers. and other sectors of civil society. However. this broad coalition was both a source of strength and weakness for the new opposition party. Its broad base was important as a source of electoral backing in the fight to defeat the ruling party. But its internal structure as a loose coalition of often conflicting interests was a source of weakness. For example. commercial farmers and corporate investors made up a huge proportion of the organisation's financial backers. Besides. its relationship with the British and American governments raised suspicion that the party was backed by Western imperialists. It was ambiguous how the party would balance the diverse class interests that constituted its constituency. Moreover. in its formative stages. the face of the MDC was largely urban and middle class. This fact made it possible for the ruling party to allege that the MDC would neglect the imperative interests of peasants and rural residents. I think that it was important for the MDC to explore methods of

bringing its message of reform to the rural population which make the bulk of Zimbabwe's voters, thus challenging ZANU (PF) in its so-called strongholds.

The influence of Western powers and the presence of conflicting classes in the structure of the MDC was an allegation which the opposition party found difficult to counter. This dented its credibility as a representative of true Zimbabwean aspirations. The MDC's ideology of reform and development drew mainly from the neo-liberal democratic tradition centred on principles of human rights, good governance, the rule of law, and respect for private property.[3] Defining the party's philosophical thrust, the MDC promised to guarantee rights for all Zimbabweans, regardless of race, political affiliation, or social standing. It assured that land redistribution, for example, would be done in a transparent manner and in keeping with the law.[4] This political platform appealed to the propertied classes, including businesspeople and large-scale farmers. They rallied behind the new party mainly because their interests were threatened by the ruling party's calls for the reallocation of national resources.[5] In my opinion, it is a major irony that the formation of the MDC did not immediately translate in the further democratisation of Zimbabwe's body politic. Neither did it result in the restoration of social justice.[6] Instead, it resulted in the rapid transition of Zimbabwe from a seeming democracy to a full-blown autocratic state.

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[3] Brian Raftopoulos, "The State in Crisis," 218.

[4] *Restart, Our Path to Social and Economic Justice*, MDC Policy Paper, 2003.

[5] Geoff Hill, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 109.

[6] The MDC challenged ZANU (PF) in the June, 2000 election, and in the March, 2002 presidential, and again in the March 2005 general elections. These polls were fraudulently won by ZANU (PF) due to brutal violence, voter intimidation, and other methods of electoral manipulation. Regional observers endorsed the polls as "free and fair,"while the MDC and Western governments described them as "stolen."

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There are several reasons to explain this irony, one of which originates from differing definitions of democracy drawn by both the ruling and the opposition parties. For this reason, it becomes necessary to briefly problematize the concept of democracy. For ZANU (PF), the mere holding of periodic multi-party elections is a signifier of a thriving democracy. According to Bratton and van de Walle, besides the periodic holding of competitive elections to choose occupants of top political offices of the state, a transition to democracy occurs when citizens install a government freely and within a matrix of civil liberties.[7] All the contestants have to accept the election results as valid. Therefore, the mere holding of periodic multi-party elections is neither a marker of democratic practice, nor an absolute endorsement of popular will. The case of the MDC in Zimbabwe reveals that efforts to build a true democratic culture are often held back by the internal contradictions met in defining its specific features.

I want to highlight the limitations of the MDC by noting that the liberal definition of democracy cannot be the ultimate solution to the problem of poverty and underdevelopment in countries like Zimbabwe. According to Ben Cousins, despite efforts to promote democracy in southern Africa after colonial rule, a sharp rise in mass poverty and inequality raises doubts about definitions of democracy that often sustain highly skewed relations of production and distribution and the inherent social ills.[8] In other words, democracy can be useful as a system of mediating relations of power between the state and social classes. But, its practice may not necessarily translate into economic and social justice for all classes. I think that the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe still has

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[7] Bratton and van de Walle, cited in Ben Cousins, "The Zimbabwean Crisis in its Wider Context: The Politics of Land, Democracy and Development in Southern Africa," Amanda Hammar et al (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*, 287.

[8] Ben Cousins, "The Zimbabwean Crisis in its Wider Context," 295.

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to address the contradiction between the sanctification of private property ownership and social inequality that the same property relations have produced in the past. In my view, this is one of the crucial areas which the MDC did not enunciate clearly, a fact to be cited as one of its limitations. More importantly, the MDC's economic philosophy is market-oriented, advocating rolling back the state further and promoting export-led growth. What this represents is the further integration of Zimbabwe in global trade and financial markets at a time when declining terms of trade mean reduced economic growth for developing countries. Since I have argued against neo-liberal economics for developing countries in the previous chapter, I agree with Bond and Manyanya who noted that "the MDC's economic strategy is dubious at best, and sufficiently similar to previous neoliberal policies that we can safely predict its failure."[9] Therefore, the current struggle for democratisation in Zimbabwe, centred on a contest for office between two main political parties, is a mask that is decidedly inadequate in the much broader fight for economic and social justice. It is for this reason that I think a future political settlement in Zimbabwe has to begin by considering popular demands for the redistribution of national resources. This future settlement should transcend both the narrow nationalism of the ruling party and the neo-liberal approach currently being peddled by the MDC.

4.2. A Critique of the Fast Track Land Reform Program

President Mugabe has defended the land reform program as intended to correct historical injustices in resource ownership and access between blacks and whites. While landlessness was a genuine national challenge that begged a solution, Mugabe evoked it to ensure his political survival and to save his party from being voted out of power. Despite claims by the government that land reform was completed in August 2002, I

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[9] Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's Plunge*, 113.

think that controversy over land ownership and tenure will always remain one aspect of Zimbabwe's unfinished business. For instance. in June 2003 the police and the army intensified the eviction of people who occupied farms in 2000. The state justified this measure by claiming that it wanted to "rationalize" the program. Eviction made landless people who had benefited from the allocation exercise started in 2000. The value of what such people have lost in material terms and the levels of poverty they have sunk into cannot be underestimated. To show that the controversy over land in Zimbabwe is ongoing. the MDC worked out an alternative model that proposed setting up a professional Land Commission to carry out "a rationalization of land allocation."[10] This raised the question whether the MDC would reverse the fast track land reform program in the event of assuming power. considering that some of the affected white farmers are its backers.

At this juncture it is important to revisit the fast track land reform program. analyzing its results and placing it at the centre of the current crisis in Zimbabwe. My main argument is that the program was largely unsuccessful. The immediate effect of the fast-tack land resettlement process in Zimbabwe was massive disruption of production in both the commercial and peasant agricultural sectors. although it was the former sector that suffered most.[11] Small-scale commercial production and agro-industries were also disrupted as a result of the occupation of farms. The havoc suffered by the farming sector during the land occupations was worsened by the failure of resettled farmers to either maintain. or to expand production on their new allocations. For small-scale farmers. the untimely movement of resettled families from the place of origin to the new plot meant

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[10] MDC. *RESTART: Our Path to Social Justice* (Harare: MDC. 2004). 16.
[11] For the dynamics of farm occupations see Nelson Marongwe. "Farm Occupations and Occupiers." 165-90.

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they could not adequately prepare for the 2000/1 planting season. New farmers could be seen along major roads living in hastily built shelters. Lamentably, their plots were mostly filled with grass, not crops.

The underutilisation of newly acquired land was also aggravated by the chronic shortage of maize seed, fertilisers, and tillage equipment. These shortages arose from a shrinking economy which saw Zimbabwe running out of foreign exchange to import vital inputs.[12] Some farmers who were resettled during the peak of "land grabs" claimed plots for mere speculation. Many of them went back to their old homes as soon as the euphoria was over. Media reports and a government land audit report noted that some new farmers and their families found themselves stranded for food and resorted to decimating wildlife on conservancies and occupied farms.[13] Such cases of hunger were a precursor to a national food crisis that worked to discredit the whole idea of the fast track land reform.

Besides the open-ended nature of the fast track land reform exercise, it caused a persistent national food crisis. At its height between 2002 and 2004, the critical shortage of food threatened more than 6.5 million people with chronic hunger.[14] This fact is shocking because Zimbabwe was a net exporter of food before 2000. Therefore, the fast track land reform program effectively killed the 1980s record that Zimbabwe was the "breadbasket of Africa." Historically, even though the stability of agriculture in Zimbabwe was periodically upset by regional droughts, the sector quickly revived to

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[12] *Ibid.*

[13] "Extracts from the Utete Presidential Land Review Committee Report." Zimbabwe, 2003 Published in *The Herald* 23, 24, 27, October 28, 2003.

[14] "Famine in Zimbabwe: Implications of 2003/2004 Cropping season" Report prepared for the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, by Zimconsult, Independent economic and planning consultants, April 2004, 1.

accumulate a surplus in good seasons.[15] Against government rhetoric that Zimbabwe's

current food shortage was caused by drought, independent research noted that after 2000,

food security has been getting worse every year, particularly in respect of the staple

maize.[16] According to a group of Canadian civil society organisations which visited

Zimbabwe in 2004, it was the "effective destruction" of commercial farming that created

"severe food insecurity...and localised famines."[17]

My view is that the disappearance of large-scale commercial farms in Zimbabwe

was the most prominent feature of the country's agrarian change. But, I do not regard the

destruction of the commercial farming sector as the primary cause of Zimbabwe's

persistent food crisis. I think the main cause of the serious food unavailability was the

failure by the new group of farmers to quickly adjust production from small-scale peasant

to competitive production that would satisfy national demand. I contend that the vacuum

created by the disappearance of commercial farming should be factored in when

considering Zimbabwe's inability to produce export crops. Such crops as tobacco and

horticultural products were vital for generating enough foreign currency to import inputs

for the emerging class of indigenous farmers. This critical shortage of foreign currency

affected not only the farming sector but other vital economic activities like mining,

transport, and manufacturing.[18] Therefore, it was the crisis of adjustment that should be

regarded as the primary cause of the ongoing food crisis in Zimbabwe, rather than the

destruction of the commercial farming sector *per se*.

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[15] The worst in living memory was the 1992 drought. It coincided with ESAP.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] "Zimbabwe Under Siege: A Canadian Civil Society Perspective," September
2004. Document downloaded at www.zwnews.com on September 15, 2004.
[18] "Mugabe snuffs Zimbabwe tobacco, fuelling Zambia boom,"
www.zwnews.com, accessed on February 8, 2005.

Judging by the timing of the fast-track land reform program, it is feasible to conclude that political expediency dictated the manner in which it was done. Faced with the chance of being voted from power, ZANU (PF) stirred the program to garner electoral support ahead of the June 2000 elections. To argue that land reform was carried out for political survival does not imply the absence of popular feelings for the exercise among Zimbabweans. I think this is precisely the reason why the trick worked for the ruling party. According to Debby Potts, peasants, war veterans, rural-urban migrants, anti-poverty NGOs, and economic and social justice activists underscored the necessity for land reform as a strategy to reduce poverty.[19]

David Moore challenged the notion that hunger for land was a popular grievance in Zimbabwe. He noted that although it was "assumed that the ruling party's revived interests in the land question during election times were provoked by the peasants' demand for land, and sporadic squatting had taken place, there seems little direct evidence of a massive peasant desire for commercial land."[20] Moore further posited that while the ruling party justified the occupation of commercial farms for resettling peasants, the "peasantry was not aroused over land but there was no doubt that in objective terms the peasantry is aggrieved."[21] I do not agree with Moore's analysis because the absence of a spontaneous peasant movement for land resettlement does not necessarily diminish the necessity for its redistribution. What makes me argue that the process was initiated for political expediency was the timing. It was a result of panic

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[19] Debby Potts, "Zimbabwean People's Perception of the Land Resettlement Programme: the Case of Rural Urban Migrants" T.A.S. Bowyer-Bower and Colin Stoneman, (eds), *Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, 30-1.

[20] David Moore, "Twists on the Tale of Primitive Accumulation," 255.

[21] *Ibid.*, 165.

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when the ruling party faced displacement by an opposition. and the manner in which it was handled - violent confiscation against law.

Therefore. it is crucial to probe the role of peasants in the fast-track land reform program. According to Nelson Marongwe. a broad cross section of Zimbabweans took part in one way or another during the tumultuous period of land occupation.[22] Many peasants were willing participants who settled on commercial land although it was the war veterans who led the crusade. Added to the category of peasants were rural villagers. some of whom had lost their jobs during ESAP. and were looking for land and other resources to maintain a livelihood. Therefore. the grand agenda of land reform was not intrinsically intended to benefit the peasantry alone. but that the plight of peasants was manipulated to suit the convenience of powerful political actors. The fact that peasants were induced and co-opted into a broader social movement for land reclamation may be a reflection of the deeply seated aspirations of a marginalized social category. Peasants readily agreed to play the role of occupiers not because they were in a clearly defined alliance with the government. or with the war veterans. I think that it was because they sought to advance their own interests. often at odds with other participants in the same movement. In my view. their participation is enough to cast them as agents of social change whether their support was given by discretion. coercion. or both.

Another factor exposing the fast track land reform program to criticism is that the government tended to resettle farmers on the basis of political affiliation. MDC officials and its perceived allies were denied land and often told to claim it from Tony Blair. the British Prime Minister.[23] ZANU (PF)'s argument that the confiscation of commercial

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[22] Nelson Marongwe. "Farm Occupations and Occupiers." 181.
[23] Robert G. Mugabe. *Inside the Third Chimurenga.* 95-7.

land was restitution is flawed because the ruling party also seized farms to reward loyal supporters and to bribe opponents and bring them back to the ruling party.[24] Similarly, the sequestration of commercial land was a form of punishment to white farmers for allegedly voting "NO" in the constitutional referendum of February 2000, and for their sympathy with the opposition.[25] Mugabe and the ruling party subsequently argued that domestic and world criticism about human rights abuses and tyrannical rule was meant to undo the "agrarian revolution," and to encroach upon Zimbabwe's national sovereignty.[26] In contrast to government rhetoric, personally, I condemn the element of cronyism and multiple-ownership of farms by ruling party politicians and loyalists at the expense of the land-hungry.[27]

In October 2003, the Utete Presidential Land Review Committee revealed cases of multiple farm ownership by party and state officials. They did this in contravention of the "one-man-one farm" principle set up by Mugabe.[28] A United Nations report released the following month named 178 senior state officials who amassed about 150 000 hectares of prime land for themselves.[29] In addition to grabbing more than one farm, well-connected civil servants and prominent politicians corruptly got tractors, fertilizer, fuel, and other farming equipment subsidized by the government. For instance, in late 2003, a "tractor scandal" involving leading politicians and state officials who acquired tractors under a US$6 million Tobacco Growers Trust tractor plan ahead of ordinary

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[24] "Government rewards Makwavarara with seized Raffingora farm" *The Standard*, July 21, 2004.

[25] David Blair, *Degrees in Violence*, 61.

[26] Robert G. Mugabe, *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, 43-6.

[27] *The Financial Gazette*, December 24, 2003.

[28] "Extracts from the Utete Report"

[29] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Press statement released on November 7, 2003.

indigenous farmers who had no finance to buy inputs was unearthed.[30] In 2004, the Reserve Bank governor, Gideon Gono, admitted that the fast track land reform program was marked by the lack of transparency and accountability. He noted that inputs provided by the government had been "absorbed and concentrated to a few members of the society."[31]

I think that the lack of government capacity for resettlement is also among the factors that contributed to the failure of the fast-track land reform program. While the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture claimed that more than 300 000 farmers were resettled on close to 11 million hectares by August 2003, the Utete Report said that "only some 4.2 million hectares had been taken up by 127,192 households under the A1 model." The Ministry claimed that 50,000 black commercial farmers were created under the program, but the committee said that just 1,672 farms under the A2 model on a total of 2.1 million hactares were occupied by 7,260 farmers.[32] There is little doubt that some state officials lied in order to mislead the world about the results of land reallocation. The yawning gap between targets set and goals achieved was partly due to the government's lack of resources to carry out such an ambitious program. This was why the state later launched a campaign to coerce banks and financial institutions to supply loans for inputs despite the absence of collateral security from the majority of new farmers.

It is tempting to portray Zimbabwe's fast track land reform process as the height of agrarian disorder in contemporary Africa. However, defenders of the program cite the "final destruction" of the dual agrarian economy and the repossession of land by black

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[30] "Tractor scandal exposed," in *The Financial Gazette*, December 24, 2003.
[31] Cited in *The Sunday Mail*, February 6, 2003.
[32] United Nations for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, November 7, 2003.

Zimbabweans as revolutionary.[33] It is also essential to recognize that some commentators have warned of a premature conclusion. arguing that in the long run. perceptions about land reform in Zimbabwe may approach rays of appreciation. For instance. on his visit to the US in February 2005. the chairman of the NCA. Lovemore Madhuku. himself a staunch critic of radical land reform. described the program as "sensible and workable."[34] Madhuku shifted slightly from his previous assessment which emphasized the chaotic nature of the program. Therefore. I think that despite the failures of the land reform program cited above. debate on the subject is ongoing. A fundamentally grounded and objective conclusion remains elusive because of the divergent views often given.

4.3. Responses to the Zimbabwean crisis

In this section I probe how the international community responded to the Zimbabwean crisis. From the time when the violent seizure of former commercial farms started in 2000. events in Zimbabwe attracted much international attention. especially in the media. This makes it important to discuss the responses of Western and African governments to Zimbabwe's crisis. and to assess what impact the response had on subsequent events in the country. Soon after the June 2000 elections. the government of Zimbabwe faced increased condemnation from the international community for human rights abuses and for failure to honour the rule of law. In July 2001. the US Senate approved the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act. The Act placed travel restrictions and penalties on Mugabe and the top brass of his government and ruling party. This measure precipitated the exclusion of the Zimbabwean government from the world community. rendering Zimbabwe a pariah state.

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[33] Robert G. Mugabe. *Inside the Third Chimurenga.* 118.
[34] Cited in *The Herald.* February 3. 2005.

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The Act also set conditions for the resumption of normal relations between the "renegade" state and the international community. These conditions included adhesion to the rule of law, respect for property rights, the restoration of civil liberties, and an end to all forms of lawlessness and violence "sponsored, condoned or tolerated by the government of Zimbabwe, the ruling party and their supporters or entities."[35] In addition, the Act stipulated that Zimbabwe should meet conditions for holding "free and fair [2002] presidential elections, equitable, transparent and legal land reform, a fulfilment of the Lusaka Peace Accord to end the DRC war, and a commitment that the police and army be subordinate to a civilian government."[36] These conditions clearly showed that in Western perception, Mugabe fell from being a darling as a champion of reconciliation and development to becoming a villain and outcast.

The EU also intervened at a time when initial news of farm occupations filtered through European capitals in 2000. Justifying its motive for taking action against Zimbabwe, the EU cited the "essential elements" clause, which mandates its member counties "to ensure that the issue of human rights and democracy and the rule of law will be included in meetings and discussions with third countries and at all levels..."[37] The 1994 European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) empowered the EU parliament to uphold the promotion and defence of human rights, democratisation and conflict prevention efforts together with NGOs and international organisations.[38] Following upon these principles, in February 2002, the EU imposed "targeted" or "smart" sanctions on Mugabe and his inner circle. Five months later, the European bloc widened

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[35] Cited on www.FreeRepublic.com, July 15, 2001.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] EU MEMO /03/254, 10 December 2003.
http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/news/memo03_254.htm
[38] *Ibid.*

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the list and scope of the sanctions to include 52 politicians and senior business people.[39]
The imposition of sanctions on the Mugabe regime arose from the high levels of politically motivated violence associated with the fast track land reform process and the parliamentary elections of 2000. Besides. Mugabe's refusal to allow the EU to observe the 2002 presidential election angered the continental bloc. This was pertinent considering that the EU wanted to send an observation team whose duty was to "legitimise an electoral process, where appropriate, to enhance public confidence in the electoral process, to defer fraud, and to strengthen respect for human rights..."[40]

Although sanctions were intended to pressure the government to restore normal conditions to Zimbabwe, their impact was not confined to the political sphere. Neither did they lead to reform by the "renegade" state. Instead, sanctions indirectly resulted in cuts in aid and development assistance. The isolation of Zimbabwe from Western development aid was for a variety of reasons, including fear of money being stolen. unrealistic exchange rates, and decisions to send money to other countries where more of it would reach beneficiaries. In my view, the cuts in development aid can be cited for contributing to deepening the suffering of ordinary Zimbabweans.[41] On July 22, 2002, *The Guardian* noted that countries of Europe had severed lines of development aid to Zimbabwe worth 128 million euros. The poor continued to fight shortages of goods, soaring inflation, and the failure to access basic social services in health and education. Meanwhile, the EU said that sanctions were not harmful to Zimbabwe's national economy because they only involved "the freezing of personal asserts of senior members

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[39] BBC World Service TV. July 22, 2002.
[40] EU MEMO /03/254.
[41] "Donor Mistrust Worsens AIDS in Zimbabwe." in *The New York Times*. August 12, 2004.

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of government and other high ranking officials, the prevention of the same to travel to EU Member States and the embargo on the sale of arms." The Union noted that targeted sanctions would help rein in Zimbabwe's government without causing any hardship to the ordinary Zimbabwean.[42]

In Zimbabwe, the MDC prayed for the imposition of sanctions, hoping that they would be an effective method to pile pressure on the government. In March 2002, party spokesman, Paul Themba Nyathi was quoted as saying: "We welcome these new sanctions heartily because they are going to send a clear and unequivocal message to Mugabe and his cronies that decent governments are not going to tolerate his tyranny."[43] Nyathi stressed that: "It is a message that a government that tortures its own people as a matter of course must suffer serious sanctions, and be isolated." As I noted above, the imposition of sanctions as a tool for correcting Zimbabwe's crisis cannot be regarded as having achieved its objectives. It had the importance of shaping the crisis in two major ways. On the one hand it accelerated the isolation of the Zimbabwean government from the rich countries from where it was getting much-needed developmental assistance. Secondly, sanctions radicalised Mugabe and his close associates who did not seek rehabilitation, but decided to server cordial relations with European governments. By negotiating new partnerships with Asian countries, Mugabe and his followers intended to undermine the whole concept of Zimbabwe's isolation. I do not think the imposition of sanctions was a remedy to Zimbabwe's problems, because they affected the ordinary citizen more than they did the politician.

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[42] Cited on BBC World Service TV, July 22, 2002.
[43] Cited on CNN.com/World, March 9, 2003.

I posit that the polarisation of relations between the government of Zimbabwe and the West prevented a quick breakthrough to the political conflict the country was facing. This polarisation was because Mugabe interpreted the Western democratic crusade as constitutive of undue interference in the internal matters of a sovereign nation. This allowed him to snub efforts by the West to promote democratic rule in Zimbabwe as a racist ploy to effect regime change and derail the land reform program.[44] While the West was making correct criticisms. I think that polarised relations were deepened when perceptions of the political challenges facing Zimbabwe shifted markedly from constructive engagement for reform to removing the ruling party from office. This new vision was captured in a speech on Zimbabwe in 2002 by the former US Secretary of State. Colin Powell:

> With the [Zimbabwean] president gone. with a transitional government in place. Zimbabweans of all descriptions would...come together to begin the process of rebuilding their country. If this happened. the United States would be quick to pledge generous assistance to the restoration of Zimbabwe's political and economic institutions even before the election. Other donors. I am sure. would be close behind.[45]

Powell's vision was not realised because the diplomatic rapport between Harare and Washington became non-conducive to dialogue. Therefore. although sanctions hurt Mugabe and his cronies in their personal capacities. they were not effective to make them "see sense." Instead. sanctions gave the ruling circle grounds to "delink" Zimbabwe from the West through the formulation of a "Look East Policy." The Look East Policy became a measure by which the Zimbabwean authorities sought to bust sanctions by liaising new alliances with Asian states. particularly with China.

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[44] CNN.com/WORLD. March 9. 2003.
[45] Cited on *CNN.com/US*. June 24. 2003.

On the African continent, governments were divided about the case of Zimbabwe. Their reaction showed the absence of a coordinated plan of action to mediate the restoration of a people-oriented government. The absence of concerted efforts from the continent arose mainly from Mugabe's growing intransigence, and partly from the solidarity and protection that he was getting from Thabo Mbeki, the SA president. In order to illustrate the divided nature of outside intervention, I think it is vital to focus on efforts by the Commonwealth to mediate the conflict in Zimbabwe. In March 2002, the Commonwealth suspended Zimbabwe from its councils for one year as Mugabe's punishment for "stealing" the 2002 presidential poll. Citing rampant violence and the intimidation of voters, the Commonwealth Elections Observer Team concluded that "the conditions in Zimbabwe did not adequately allow for a free expression of will by the electors." During the period of Zimbabwe's suspension, a troika of Australia, South Africa and Nigeria was mandated to monitor developments in the country to determine if the government was restoring order, observing the rule of law, and halting human rights violations.

The Zimbabwean question clearly overshadowed deliberations at a CHOGM in the Nigerian capital Abuja, in December 2003. Part of this was because Mugabe was not invited to the meeting owing to his suspension, and also because Tony Blair threatened to boycott the meeting if Mugabe was going to be present. Mbeki strongly advocated the readmission of Zimbabwe to facilitate the quick resumption of dialogue.[40] His ideas got backing from Uganda, Namibia, and Mozambique, while Botswana condemned human

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[40] "Get tough," *The Guardian* (UK), June 3, 2004.

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rights violations and the condition of rapid decline in Zimbabwe.[47] Also opposed to Zimbabwe's readmission was Australian PM. John Howard. then Commonwealth chair. A special committee of Jamaica. South Africa. Mozambique. Australia. Canada and India eventually settled for the continued suspension of Zimbabwe. However. this decision was taken after Mugabe had already pulled Zimbabwe out of the Commonwealth. saying it was an "evil organisation."[48]

Some SADC leaders. including Sam Nujoma and Yoweri Museveni. condemned Zimbabwe's renewed suspension. They cited "the dismissive. intolerant and rigid attitude displayed by some members of the Commonwealth."[49] According to them. Zimbabwe's final withdrawal from the organisation was a missed opportunity for resolving the crisis. I think that the division within the Commonwealth over Zimbabwe stemmed from the different priorities which member states upheld. It showed the conflict between the neo-liberal priorities of human and property rights respected by developed countries. This was in contrast with the solidarity of African leaders in the face of Western power and interference. African leaders tended to interpret the core of Zimbabwe's problems as arising from the need to redistribute resources for economic and social justice. In my view. forms of international intervention to solve the crisis in Zimbabwe were a big failure. While the Mugabe regime was certainly shaken by local and global pressure. by 2004. it had long managed to reconsolidate itself on power as a fully fledged autocratic state.

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[47] Thabo Mbeki. "We will resist the upside-down view of Africa." ANC Today: Online Voice of the African National Congress. vol.3. No. 49. 12-18 December 2003.
[48] "African body slams Commonwealth" BBC NEWS. December 9. 2003. See news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3304461.stm also "Mugabe says no return to Commonwealth" www.sokwanele.com . October 23. 3004.
[49] *Ibid.*

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4.4. The Autocratic State

In this section I examine the main ideas and methods used by ZANU (PF) to rebuild the autocracy and to survive a barrage of local and global condemnation. This is vital because ZANU (PF)'s continued stay in power was so critical in prolonging the Zimbabwean crisis, and in adding new dimensions to it. The most important factor in addressing why ZANU (PF) defeated the MDC was the matrix of electoral manipulation between 2000 and 2005. It was the ability by ZANU (PF) to rig elections that acted as a stepping stone towards the consolidation of a despotic state. Having lost public faith, the state evolved numerous blatant measures to reassert authority and to contain civil dissent. These ways included the promulgation of draconian legislation meant to block the dissemination of information perceived to be anti-government, and to allow for the effective broadcast of state propaganda. Besides, the state also purged the judicial system by harassing judges whose verdicts contradicted the government's views and motives. Under the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Patrick Chinamasa, the Zimbabwean judiciary underwent rapid transformation which saw judges either being arrested, or resigning because of undue interference from state agents.[50] Undermining the judiciary allowed authorities to strip citizens of basic rights by according more power and impunity to the police force, the army, the militia, and ZANU (PF) supporters.

In terms of repressive legislation, the cornerstone of Mugabe's continued stay as Zimbabwe's leader was the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which became law on January 22, 2002. The law was adopted ahead of the crucial presidential election pitting Mugabe against MDC leader, Morgan Tsvangirai. It is possible to describe POSA as old

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[50] Examples include High Court Judges Fergus Blackie and Benjamin Paradza, who were arrested in September 2002 and February 2003, respectively for allegedly "obstructing the course of justice."

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wine in new bottles because it was a modern-day version of the Public Order and (Maintenance) Act, promulgated by the colonial regime of Ian Smith in the 1970s in an attempt to stem the tide of African nationalism. It is ironic that both legislation purported to safeguard national order and the security interests of all citizens of Zimbabwe. Yet. in reality. the laws were crafted as the legitimating framework by which loyal citizens were clearly demarcated from "enemies of the state" and "sell-outs." The former were included in the new nation-renewing project, while the later were outcasts punished and rehabilitated through violence. bribery and coercion.

Certain provisions of the POSA came to people of Zimbabwe as devastating blows to the fundamental freedoms which they aspired to achieve as a true democratic nation. Among other things, the Act made it an offence to gather in groups of more than three people without the notification and consent of the Zimbabwe Republic Police. The Act gave sweeping powers to the police to arrest and detain perceived violators. resulting in the harassment of opposition politicians and their suspected allies. By making it an offence to gather without police "clearance." the POSA was an assault on individual freedoms of creativity. assembly and association. Section 19. Article (1) (b) of the POSA provided for the arrest of any person who did any action. uttered any words or distributed or displayed any writing. sign or other visible representation that was obscene. threatening. abusive or insulting. intending thereby to provoke a breach of the peace or realising that there is a possibility that a breach of the peace may be provoked.[51]

Besides instilling public fear. the POSA was the most crucial instrument used by the ruling party to check the MDC from organising political activities around the country. There was also a tendency by the police not to apply the harsh law against gatherings by

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[51] Government of Zimbabwe. Public Order and Security Act. February 2002.

the ruling party and its supporters. The brutality of repressive legislation was worsened by a partisan police force collaborating with members of the intelligence network, the army, and the militia or "green bombers." The police force was active in quelling organised opposition by the MDC, while the military was often called in to display the state's military capacity and to harass citizens in public places. According to MDC MP David Coltart, "the militarization of institutions and society" was completed when the government started appointing the army to positions of authority for closer monitoring.[52] Therefore, the creation of an autocratic state in post-colonial Zimbabwe was made possible by the crafting and use of arbitrary laws that empowered the state machinery to gain absolute control over citizens.

I think that it is important to focus on the key role which the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) played to ensure the political survival of Mugabe and the ruling party. As the source of power shifted from civil society to the state apparatus, the army played a crucial role of tendering unquestioning allegiance to the president. It is my belief that there was a chance for a mass uprising if the security machinery had lost commitment to the incumbent government. This possibility was vividly illustrated in January 1999, when a local newspaper carried a story alleging that 23 senior officers of the national army wanted to overthrow the government. Their reason for the alleged attempted *coup* was to protest against growing economic mismanagement and the unilateral decision to sent troops to the DRC.[53] However, the solidarity between ZANU (PF) and the security machinery was well illustrated in February 2002. Then Commander of the Zimbabwe

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[52] David Coltart, "The Mugabe Regime - Tyranny About to End." Article accessed at www.zwnews.com on December 3, 2003.
[53] "Government coughs up Z$24m to tortured journalist," *Zim Online*, February 21, 2005.

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Defence Forces. General Vitalis Zvinavashe. said that the army would not support a leader. or a party. with no liberation war credentials. This was in clear reference to the MDC and its leader. Tsvangirai, whom the ruling party castigated as a puppet and proxy for British and US imperialism. Zvinavashe's announcement was made a few days before the 2002 presidential polls.[54] It was calculated to evoke bitter memories of the liberation war in the hearts and minds of Zimbabweans so that they would vote for ZANU (PF).

Describing the tactics used by ZANU (PF) to defeat the MDC during the 2002 polls. Elphas Mukonoweshuro argued that "the tactics employed by the ruling party were more akin to preparation for war than an election...Zimbabwe was seeing the gradual installation of a civil military junta."[55] Most people thought that ZANU (PF) would find an excuse to start a war and topple an MDC government if it came to power. As part of the scheme to intimidate the electorate. army trucks rolled down the streets in major urban areas where people were known for strong anti-ZANU (PF) sentiments. Armed soldiers descended with vengeance on members of the public. harassing. flogging. torturing and abducting citizens.[56] Besides the army and police. the reconsolidation of autocracy in Zimbabwe was also done through the training of a youth militia. or green bombers. In November 2001. Mugabe officially opened the Boarder Gezi Youth Training Camp in Mt Darwin. It was the first of the many camps to be set up around the country in the few months to come. The government justified establishing the camps to inculcate

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[54] Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya. *Zimbabwe's Plunge*. 179-80.
[55] Cited in David Moore. "Twists on the Tale of Primitive Accumulation." 249.
[56] I witnessed members of the army descending in Mbare high-density suburb of Harare. They beat up shoppers indiscriminately before proceeding to the nearest bar. They asked who voted for the MDC and who had voted for ZANU (PF). Many patrons said they voted for ZANU (PF). hoping that soldiers would spare them. But the soldiers argued that if the patrons voted for the ruling party. why was it that the opposition candidate polled more votes. They began assaulting almost everyone in the bar.

nationalism. It argued that Zimbabwe was under foreign aggression and needed a crop of patriotic youths to defend the country against "the MDC and its Western masters."

According to the BBC, the training which camp inmates went was "inhuman."[57] For instance, youths in the camps were taught "the technology of pain," while the treatment of girls by male inmates and camp commanders was marked by systematic rape, concubinage and slavery. The government of Zimbabwe vehemently dismissed these charges as racist and an effort to discredit its "noble" programs. However, the credibility of the BBC broadcast was strengthened in February 2005 when the African Union Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights recommended that the camps be closed as they violated fundamental human rights.[58] While more research about the camps is difficult because of state hostility, testimony needs to be collected from the graduates of the camps and those who fled because of hunger and abuse. I think the real purpose for training youths was to indoctrinate them with ZANU (PF) propaganda. Officially, the National Youth Training Service recruited young adults between 18 and 30 years of age. However, the BBC Panorama programme revealed that children as young as 11 have been recruited for training. Graduates from a six-month training stint were sent back to the community, where they were easily mobilised to harass civilians and to create public fear of the ruling party. In the rural areas where it is difficult for the ruling party to restrain the green bombers, they were often an authority unto themselves, ordering villagers to attend ruling party rallies and sometimes officiating in the distribution of food aid and farming inputs. In my opinion, the age groups that were targeted for training reveal the vision of nation building by Zimbabwe's ruling party and government.

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[57] BBC1 "Panorama: Secrets of the Camps" Excerpt accessed on www.zwnews.com, March 30, 2004.

[58] *Cape Times*, February 8, 2005, cited on www.zwnews.com, (same date).

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It has to be noted that Zimbabwe's younger generation never participated in the 1970s war of liberation which ZANU (PF) has continued to evoke. This generation constitutes a vital support base for the MDC because many are hit by unemployment and frustration after completing school, and they have a deep hatred for ZANU (PF). On the other hand, African nationalists derisively label the younger generation *masalala* - meaning those who grew up eating salad foods and are soft. The youths are often contrasted with the war veterans who were toughened by the war experience.[59] Therefore, the nationalists accuse the youths of what can be called false consciousness, often citing their consumption of information from the mass media as one of the instruments eroding African cultural authenticity. From the belief that youths have been mentally colonised beyond their realization, the nationalists have carved a niche for themselves as the genuine guarantors of Africanness, hence the urgent need to reorient youths through indoctrination. Thus, it is important to cite the youth training program as one of the key method used to intimidate the public and to reconsolidate the autocracy.

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[59] The Minister of Youth, Gender and Employment Creation, Elliot Manyika cited in *The Financial Gazette*, December 24, 2003.

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CONCLUSION

My thesis focused on the factors which combined to cause the Zimbabwean crisis. I argued that the origins of the crisis lay in colonialism and the nature of the country's transition to self-rule. I noted that at the time of independence in 1980. Zimbabwe inherited legacies from the colonial period which strongly prevented the adoption of a sustainable path for future development. Chief among these legacies was the skewed nature of access to land and capital along racial lines. The Lancaster House Constitution acted as the bridge between the colonial past and the post-independence future by curbing available options for resource reallocation. This fact upheld the marginalisation of land claimants such as peasants, some war veterans and other working class people interested in farming, sowing the seeds for future conflict over national resources. This conflict reached a boiling point in 2000 when the government initiated the chaotic land reform program.

Besides legacies from the colonial period. the current crisis in Zimbabwe is linked to the nature of political consolidation by ZANU (PF) after independence. I think that it was the practice of entrenchment by Mugabe and the ruling party which caused the elimination of perceived opposition in Matebeleland and the Midlands provinces in the 1980s. This process of consolidation resulted in the 1987 Unity Accord: while it brought peace and stability to the country, it strengthened Mugabe and the ruling party's grip on power. The absence of a culture of democracy and tolerance explains why the current rapport between the ruling and opposition parties is marked by violence and persecution.

In this thesis I also argued that economic decline in the late 1980s and the espousal of economic structural adjustment policies are essential factors explaining the

present crisis in Zimbabwe. Structural adjustment policies worsened levels of poverty for the bulk of the population, while promoting the concentration of wealth in the ruling elite and a small bourgeoisie class. Moreover, it was after the introduction of macroeconomic reforms the Zimbabwe's economy entered a tailspin marked by de-industrialisation, soaring unemployment and the escalation of rural and urban poverty. I argued that economic troubles widened the gap between the government and the populace, particularly the working class, but also the rural population facing declining incomes. I noted that the fundamental factors which explain the roots of the crisis are mainly inseparable. The present condition of turmoil is a product of the country's contradictory developmental trajectory over time.

As one of the factors that account for the present crisis in Zimbabwe, I cited the loss of legitimacy by the ruling elite in the mid to late 1990s. This originated from latent forms of unhappiness with the government over the failure to fulfil popular expectations about restitution and redistribution. However, economic problems and the lack of accountability after the first decade of self rule also fuelled public discontent against the ruling party and government. The collapse of public faith with the government was expressed in the rise of social movements that openly challenged its authority. War veterans, workers unions and a cross-section of civil society forged alliances blaming the government for the rising national challenges. During these crucial moments the political see-saw swung against the ruling party in favour of the opposition forces.

I posited that the formation of the MDC as an alternative to ZANU (PF) was a critical stage in the development of the Zimbabwean crisis. This marked the point when the crisis deepened as the struggle for power between the ruling and opposition parties

began. The MDC created the possibility of the ruling party losing power. thus animating Mugabe's resolve to govern using authoritarian modes of rule. Moreover. it was the prospect of displacement that led the ruling party to initiate a chaotic land reform program as a way of sprucing up its shattered support base. In turn. the land reform program resulted in dwindling agrarian production and further economic meltdown. Taking all the reasons to account for the crisis presented in this thesis. I argue that Zimbabwe's plunge has multiple origins. It was structural in nature. being a culmination of a series of interlinked events and developments over a period of time.

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