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The Anatomy of Political Predation: Leaders, Elites and Coalitions in Zimbabwe, 1980-2010

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ABSTRACT

This essay offers an interpretation of the rise and fall of Zimbabwe's political economy through the lens of leadership.

Of special interest are the actions of elite coalitions that link political parties, the state bureaucracy, and the security sector. We argue that, over time, the civil-military coalition within Zimbabwe's former ruling party placed its own political survival and welfare above broader developmental goals. In consolidating state power, the rulers violently suppressed political opposition, engaged in predatory corruption, and challenged the economic interests of commercial farming and business elites. In so doing, leaders undermined the rule of law and alienated the labor movement and civil society, which went on to form a rival opposition coalition.

The paper also casts light on the limits of externally driven, hastily negotiated and reluctantly accepted political settlements. At critical junctures in the country's history – notably at independence in 1980 and a Global Political Agreement in 2008 – leaders entered compromise power-sharing arrangements. Lacking strong leadership commitments, however, the rules underpinning political settlements in Zimbabwe never took root, thus inhibiting the country's progress toward democracy and development.

ACRONYMS

AAG	Affirmative Action Group
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
AU	African Union
CFU	Commercial Farmers' Union
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
CZI	Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries
EMCOZ	Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Program
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
IBDC	Indigenous Business Development Centre
JOC	Joint Operations Command
JOMIC	Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change – Mutambara
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai
NANGO	National Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NEC	National Economic Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOCZIM	National Oil Company of Zimbabwe
NRZ	National Railways of Zimbabwe
NSC	National Security Council
PF-ZAPU	Patriotic Front –Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PPFA	Political Parties (Finance) Act
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RF	Rhodesian Front
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UANC	United African National Council
WOZA	Women of Zimbabwe Arise
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Confederation of Trade Unions
ZDF	Zimbabwe Defense Forces
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZFTU	Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions
ZFU	Zimbabwe Farmers' Union
ZINASU	Zimbabwe National Students' Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe Peoples' Revolutionary Army
ZMC	Zimbabwe Media Commission
ZNCC	Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce
ZNLWVA	Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veteran's Association
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement

Executive Summary

This essay offers an interpretation of the rise and fall of Zimbabwe's political economy through the lens of leadership. Of special interest are the actions of elite coalitions that link political parties, the state bureaucracy, and the security sector. We argue that, in Zimbabwe, a predatory civil-military coalition – even when participating in negotiated political settlements – always placed its own political survival and welfare above broader developmental goals.

Research Questions

The paper addresses two main research questions:

- (a) Why, after independence, did a ruling political elite resort more to predation than development?
- (b) Why, even in the face of a current political and economic crisis, have rival elites failed to forge a common developmental coalition?

Overview of the Argument

In addressing the first question, we show that, in consolidating state power, civilian rulers and their military allies violently suppressed political opposition, engaged in corruption, and challenged the economic interests of commercial farming and business elites. In so doing, leaders undermined the institutions of the state and the rule of law. Politically, they alienated the labor movement and civil society, which went on to form a rival opposition coalition.

Our proposed answer to the second question casts light on the limits of negotiated political settlements. At critical junctures in the country's history – notably at independence in 1980 and with a Global Political Agreement in 2008 – leaders accepted power-sharing arrangements that restricted their freedom of maneuver. Lacking strong leadership commitments, however, the rules underpinning these externally driven, hastily negotiated and reluctantly accepted political settlements in Zimbabwe have never taken root.

Other factors also help to explain Zimbabwe's post-colonial trajectory:

- (a) The inherited structure of a diversified economy enabled an increment of development in the early years of independence. But, by the same token, the legacy of a strong state provided ready-made instruments for repression.

(b) The political culture of militarized elite, which was forged in the crucible of a national liberation war, led rulers to feel entitled, not only to rule Zimbabwe in perpetuity, but to seize the nation's wealth as they saw fit.

The paper takes the form of an analytic narrative organized chronologically by historical periods. The narrative is framed in terms of key concepts of leadership: namely how elites, as agents operating within inherited structures and negotiated political settlements, form coalitions for development or predation.

The Independence Decade (1980-1989)

At independence, a favorable institutional legacy and an influx of foreign aid enabled the ZANU-PF government led by Robert Mugabe to deliver development benefits to its rural political base. A constitutional settlement imposed by the departing British government and influence from white farming and business elites initially led to moderate economic policies, for instance on land reform. At the same time, the president pardoned political allies involved in corruption scandals in an early signal that the rule of law would be sacrificed to predation. Indeed, far from concentrating on broad-based economic development, the rulers gave priority to the consolidation of state power by installing party loyalists in the armed forces, civil service and local government. As part of this process, rulers cracked down violently on nationalist rivals in Matabeleland, ultimately absorbing the leaders of PF-ZAPU into the elite coalition.

The Adjustment Decade (1990-1999)

The second decade of independence began with leaders pushing for a *de jure* one-party state, a move ultimately made unnecessary by ZANU-PF's easy *de facto* dominance at the polls. The regime grew increasingly intolerant of dissent and ever more willing to use violence as a campaign tool. The party asserted supremacy over the state by politicizing the bureaucracy and army and turning a blind eye to rent-seeking. Yet, faced with deficits and debts, the government had little choice but to accept reforms to structurally adjust Zimbabwe's outdated economy. Under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai, the ZCTU reacted with a series of strikes and stay-aways and, in coalition with civic associations bent on constitutional reform, formed the MDC, an opposition party. For his part, Mugabe was only able to hold together his splintering ruling coalition by using unbudgeted state resources to buy off the militant war veterans.

The Crisis Decade (2000-2008)

The millennium marked the onset of Zimbabwe's descent into political terror and economic collapse. The turning point was a constitutional referendum, in which the opposition scored its first electoral victory. The incumbent elite struck back with land invasions, purges of judges, and the mobilization of militias. A Joint Operations Command (JOC) of security chiefs usurped key policy making functions from the Cabinet and the Reserve Bank became a slush fund for the ruling party and armed forces. The predictable results of these ill-advised policies were economic contraction, disintegrating public services, runaway inflation, and widespread public discontent. After MDC leaders were assaulted at a peaceful rally, external actors from the Southern Africa region stepped up pressure for a political settlement. When a June 2008 presidential election – the most violent in Zimbabwe's history – was blatantly stolen by Mugabe, SADC forced Zimbabwe's rival elite coalitions into an awkward power-sharing settlement.

A Period of Transition (2008-present)

The Global Political Agreement (GPA) of September 2008 led to the formation of a transitional “government of national unity” (GNU) in February 2009. This new settlement was no leader’s first choice; both Mugabe and Tsvangirai entered reluctantly. On one hand, the elite accord restored a welcome modicum of peace and economic stability. On the other hand, it papered over key issues, especially how to divide executive power, manage the economy, and ensure civilian control of the armed forces. In practice, the GNU has been unable to implement the central provisions of the GPA, leading to repeated breakdowns in communication and cooperation between President and Prime Minister. The roots of the impasse lie in the Mugabe’s unwillingness to share power and resistance to political reform by senior military elements in the dominant coalition. But the divisions, inexperience and organizational weaknesses of the rival MDC coalition are also to blame.

The Way Forward?

The occurrence of a new political settlement marks a critical juncture in Zimbabwe’s political evolution. Even if flawed, the current power-sharing agreement signals a break in the monopoly of the ZANU-PF party-state and the onset of some sort of regime transition. Over time, the politics of survival have led the decadent ZANU-PF elites into an increasingly narrow coalition, which now constitutes little more than a cabal of 200 or so military and civilian leaders targeted by Western sanctions. MDC leaders appear to have less self-serving and more broadly developmental aspirations. But the constraints of power-sharing – obstacles imposed by incumbents, a prostrate economy, and lukewarm reengagement by international donors – limit the ability of these inexperienced leaders to blossom into a fully-fledged development coalition.

Results and Lessons

- Like developmental leaders, predatory leaders rely on elite coalitions. In the case of Zimbabwe, the top echelons of the ruling party have always been deeply fused with leaders from military and intelligence backgrounds. This legacy from the liberation war carried over into the postcolonial period.
- As governments mismanage the economy, and as patronage resources shrink, so political elites tend to coalesce around a smaller and smaller set of players. In Zimbabwe, a civil-military coalition radiated hostility to all other sectors, including both business and labor. Over time, it contracted inwardly into the very antithesis of a developmental coalition.
- Political settlements that are externally driven by international actors, hastily negotiated under pressure of time, and reluctantly accepted by the principal parties are unlikely to prove durable or legitimate. Such pacts may quell violence in the short run but they are unlikely to resolve the root causes of political conflict over the long term. One lesson of the Global Political Agreement of 2008 in Zimbabwe is that power-sharing agreements imposed from above by international third parties upon unwilling domestic partners are destined for deadlock, even stalemate.
- Narrow settlements that focus on political power sharing alone are less likely to endure than comprehensive settlements that also address the stakeholders’ economic and military interests.
- In a political culture of predation, civil society organizations can sometimes reproduce the pathological characteristics of state organizations. For example, CSOs or opposition political parties may display a founder’s syndrome, a lack of leadership accountability, and reliance of rents and patronage. In this regard, civil society is not always a viable source of an alternative developmental coalition.

- Reformers, whether external or internal, are likely to have most influence over political and developmental outcomes during critical junctures. At moments when old political regimes begin to break down, but before a new set of political rules is put in place, there is room for assertive leaders to mobilize people and resources.
- By the same token, the window of opportunity for reform usually opens only for short periods. The beneficiaries of old political and economic regimes, who are loath to abandon structures that have served them well, can be expected to mount rearguard actions to protect privileges. Unless developmental leaders act quickly and decisively, they can soon find themselves hemmed in by familiar obstacles that permit few points of leverage over outcomes.
- There is need for external actors to undertake informed political analysis in order to understand structural, cultural and institutional contexts and to be able to recognize both the limits of the possible and the political opportunities that sometimes present themselves.

Policy Implications

In Zimbabwe in 2010, the international community should consider the following policies:

- Insist on the full implementation of the terms of the 2008 Global Political Agreement.
- Continue to offer “humanitarian plus” aid programs that help improve the conditions of life for ordinary Zimbabweans (mainly through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and NGOs).
- Resist the temptation to back particular leaders or coalitions (i.e. picking winners) but, instead, favor the construction of rules, procedures and institutions.
- Working through the new SADC contact group – South Africa, Mozambique and Zambia – require a free and fair election and a transfer of power to the winner.
- Selectively offer support to civil society organizations, independent media, and democratic political parties that can help ensure that the next national elections are administered freely and fairly. Help build the organizational, professional, analytical, diplomatic and advocacy skills and potentials of these prospective partners.
- Without promising unconditional amnesty to human rights abusers or corrupt predators, provide assurances to ease potential political spoilers out of power.
- Recognizing the West’s limited leverage, carefully consider the appropriate time to relax, suspend, or remove targeted sanctions on the ZANU-PF elite. Require prior compliance with a SADC roadmap for political progress toward a durable democratic settlement.

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“You have inherited a jewel: Keep it that way.”

President Julius Nyerere to Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, 1980.

“In Zimbabwe today, virtually everything that can go wrong has gone wrong. There is political chaos and anarchy. Economic meltdown is nearly complete. ...The ‘Jewel of Africa’ is in the intensive care unit.”

The Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform, 2004.

“Nearer home, we had seen...the tragic failure of leadership in our neighbouring Zimbabwe.”

Nelson Mandela, June 2008.

“The MDC leadership totally underestimated Mugabe. They believed the struggle for democracy would be hard, but they never understood that he was prepared to destroy everything – them, the economy, the institutions, the infrastructure, the whole country and everything in it – to survive”

Wilfred Mhanda (also known as Dzinashe Machingura), former ZANU freedom fighter, 2005
(quoted by Judith Garfield Todd, *Through the Darkness: A Life in Zimbabwe*, 2007, p.438)

1.0

Analytic Concepts

Introduction

What happened to Zimbabwe? How did one of Africa's most bountiful and promising countries descend into violence, deprivation and decay? Why do Zimbabweans today – or at least those who have not fled the country – face standards of living and life expectancies far lower than at the time of independence? Why does the state now abuse its own people?

This essay offers an interpretation of the rise and fall of independent Zimbabwe through the lens of leadership. We argue that the country's leaders failed to craft a political settlement that reconciled and addressed the diverse interests of political, military, business and labor elites. Instead, a narrow coalition of political leaders, backed by their military allies, made self-interested and ill-advised policy decisions that, intentionally or not, caused institutional and socio-economic breakdown.

It was by no means inevitable that Zimbabwe would come to more closely resemble the violence-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo than peaceful and stable Botswana.¹ Had Zimbabwe's top leaders chosen to build on the legacy of a strong and capable state to expand and reorient an already diversified private economy, Zimbabwe could have registered broad-based economic growth and social development. But in opting instead to prioritize political control and self-enrichment, a predatory coalition of party and security elites turned the coercive and extractive powers of the state towards more destructive ends.

Framework

Leadership

Commentators routinely suggest that badly governed African countries suffer a deficit of leadership. Insofar as journalists and scholars analyze the concept of leadership, they emphasize the high-profile behavior of the often-charismatic individual who occupies the top political office in the land. While a grain of understanding can be gleaned from observing Africa's chief political executives, accounts of leadership are all too often reduced to the proclivities of particular "big men," as if individuals were all that matter.

In this analysis we employ an expanded conception of leadership that focuses on coalitions of elites. Following Leftwich (2009), we define elites as those "small groups of leaders... (who occupy) positions

¹ *Foreign Policy* and the Fund for Peace list Zimbabwe next to DRC as fourth- and fifth-worst performers respectively on the Failed States Index for 2010. By contrast, Botswana ranked in 113th place out of 177 countries worldwide. <http://www.foreignpolicy.com>.

of authority and power in public or private organizations or sectors.” Of special interest are the *political* elites who reside within the apparatus of the state – including its security sector – and in the political parties that seek to obtain state power. Coalitions are “formal or informal groups which come together to achieve goals which they could not achieve on their own.” In order to perform well, political elites must invariably reach out – vertically and horizontally – by building popular support and by creating alliances with elites in the economic and social sectors.

In short, leadership is not a solo performance. Rather, it is a collective political process of mobilizing people and resources in pursuit of shared goals.² Ideally, an effective leader starts by articulating a vision that inspires others. He or she then assembles a coalition of supporters, often organized in the form of a political party that can win political office, preferably by appealing to an electorate. Since unanimity of policy preferences can never be attained, a key leadership skill is forging compromise political settlements with rivals including, if necessary, sharing power with them. Once in official positions, developmental political leaders further recognize that they cannot govern alone, which leads them to reach out to organized allies in the business, labor and civic communities. By drawing together the resources – human and material – of broad-based coalitions, effective leaders seek to build lasting institutions that outlive the time span of any single individual.

Agency and Outcomes

The intent of this essay is to “bring agency back in” by examining the political and policy choices made by coalitions of elites. We explicitly recognize that the goals and methods of leaders may have a darker side than allowed by the ideal model of leadership spelled out in the previous paragraph. Crudely speaking, elite coalitions may be developmental, but they can also be predatory. Developmental coalitions seek to deliver public goods, to exercise state power with restraint, and to respect human rights. By contrast, predatory coalitions rely heavily on political violence and narrowly focus on the extraction of resources for factional or personal gain. Of course, in pure form, these binary concepts do not accurately capture the complexities of leaders’ motivations. Rather, political actors usually have mixed motives – some ruthless and self-serving and others peaceful and public-oriented. Thus actual leadership tendencies are best regarded on a continuum between the extreme poles of development and predation. Further, these tendencies may shift over time.

We intend to apply this approach to an account of Zimbabwe’s postcolonial trajectory and an explanation of the country’s institutional and development outcomes. Institutional outcomes concern the rules of the political game (whether democratic or authoritarian) and the procedures of administration (whether civilian or militarized). Development outcomes are understood in terms of political order, economic growth and social welfare.

So what explains institutional and development outcomes? Our general argument is that the leadership (i.e. collective agency) of elite coalitions shapes outcomes. But leaders (i.e. agents) do not operate in a vacuum; rather they take account of the opportunities and constraints embedded in inherited political, social and economic contexts. We hold that outcomes – whether representing continuity or change – arise from the interactions of agents and structures. The resulting balance can be expected to vary over time. On some occasions, structures set limits to change. But, at other times, agents find ways to break the bonds of inertia. In short, we do not intend to swing the explanatory pendulum entirely away from structural analysis. Leadership is contextually contingent precisely because it is never exercised under conditions entirely of leaders’ choosing.

² We conceive of resources along at least five dimensions: (a) organizational (b) financial (c) human (d) popular and (e) symbolic.

Research Questions

With reference to Zimbabwe, the paper addresses two main research questions:

- (c) Why, after independence, did a ruling political elite resort more to predation than development?
- (d) Why, even in the face of a current political and economic crisis, have rival elites failed to forge a common developmental coalition?

Overview of the Argument

In addressing the first question, we see Zimbabwe as an extreme case of the general phenomenon of post-colonial institutional decay in Africa. We argue that the ruling elite always placed its own political survival and control above broad-based social and economic development. It used the strength of the inherited state apparatus to suppress political opposition and to curtail the independent economic power of business elites, most of whom were white settlers or agents of international companies. In this defensive process, the ruling party undermined the capacity of formal state institutions, including the rule of law, and alienated the labor movement, which formed the basis of a rival opposition coalition.

Our proposed answer to the second question casts light on the limits of elite political settlements. At critical junctures in the country's history – notably at independence in 1980 and by means of a Global Political Agreement in 2008 – political elites accepted compromise power-sharing arrangements that restricted their freedom of maneuver. But these deals were catalyzed by crisis and initiated by external agents. Never fully or voluntarily owned by all stakeholders, these temporary agreements may have eased violence in the short run but exacerbated conflict in the long run. Lacking widespread legitimacy, political settlements in Zimbabwe have always unraveled, thus far failing to reliably launch the country along a path to democracy and development.

The paper takes the form of an analytic narrative organized chronologically by historical periods. The era of interest is from independence (1980) to the present (2010). Processes of elite coalition formation and decision-making are traced over four distinct periods:

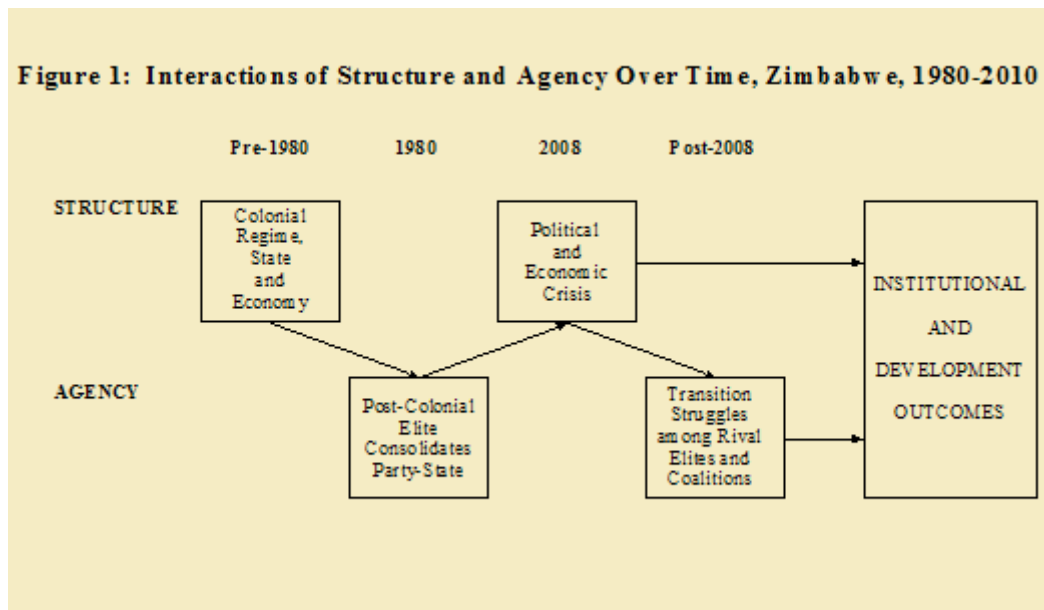
- (a) the “independence decade” of the 1980s;
- (b) the “adjustment decade” of the 1990s;
- (c) the “crisis decade” of the 2000s; and
- (d) the “transition period” since September 2008 when the country embarked on a shaky coalition government.

Because political and economic trends do not always unfold in tandem – or neatly according to exact decades – this temporal framework is no more than a shorthand organizational device. But we find it helpful to explain the ebbs and flows of institution building and socioeconomic development in periodic terms. To avoid an overly historical analysis, however, the later periods receive more attention than earlier ones. And, because the emphasis is on human agency, the main explanatory factors are elites, coalitions and resources.

Agency and Structure

As political agents interact with institutional and economic structures, they sometimes succeed – for

better or worse – in initiating change. At other times, political agents fail to make meaningful adjustments to their contextual circumstances; the results are patterns of continuity. Our historical narrative of institution building and development in Zimbabwe acknowledges that agency and structure are each ascendant at different times. The main features of this argument are indicated in Figure 1. We propose that:



- (a) The country's initial development prospects derived from the inherited structures of colonial regime, state and economy;
- (b) During the early independence period, a leadership born in liberation war and prone to predation achieved a modicum of development;
- (c) As time passed, however, a growing economy and the removal of constitutional constraints allowed leaders to indulge predatory appetites;
- (d) By 2008, the political and policy decisions of a party-military coalition led Zimbabwe into almost complete institutional and economic failure;
- (e) This new structure in turn imposed limits on what a rival coalition of would-be developmental leaders would be able to achieve in the period of power-sharing that began in 2008.

In sum, we aim to account for the current status of the state and economy in Zimbabwe in terms of the decisions taken in the past and present by coalitions of political elites. At different times, leaders from Zimbabwe's government and opposition have leaned in developmental or predatory directions or quietly engaged in predation behind a developmental facade. But for all four post-colonial decades, we have a hard time finding evidence of sustained development leadership. Hence the emphasis in analysis is on the growth, pervasiveness and resilience of political predation.

Political Predation

We assume that political leaders are motivated principally by a desire to achieve, retain and exercise power. Based on this assumption, Margaret Levi sketches a theory of predatory rule that starts from "the Hobbesian dilemma that it is in every (ruler's) interest both to make a contract and then, at the first advantageous opportunity, to break it" (1981: 435). She adds that policies are the outcome of an

exchange between ruling and other elites. Moreover, all rulers are predatory in the sense that, “as much as they can, (they) design policies meant to maximize their own personal power and wealth” (ibid. 438).

With reference to Nigeria under the Babangida dictatorship, Peter Lewis (1996) defines predatory rule as “a personalistic regime ruling through coercion and material inducement...that tends to degrade the institutional foundations of the state as well as the economy.” Robert Fatton (1992) adds that predatory power relations have cultural as well as material roots. He depicts ruling classes in Africa as predatory in that they seek hegemony – meaning all-embracing social domination – over subordinate groups, whose political passivity is an element in their own oppression. We believe that, to apply well to Zimbabwe, the concept of political predation must also include the proclivity of leaders to unleash violence against (to “prey” upon) their own people. In other words, a predatory leadership not only fails to deliver developmental outcomes; it also kills, maims and terrorizes its citizens. In this regard, Alnaswari’s depiction of predatory rule in Iraq under Saddam Hussein is more apropos for Zimbabwe, where “the ruling group became preoccupied with its own survival” and employed “conspiracies, purges and counter purges, violent seizure of power and ruthless suppression of dissent” (2000, 2-3).

In *Strong Societies and Weak States* (1988), Joel Migdal attributes rulers’ policy decisions to a perverse paradox embedded in what he calls “the politics of survival.” In order to accomplish developmental goals, political elites must establish strong institutions that are capable of mobilizing resources, including political support. But political rivals can use these self-same institutions to build independent power bases from which to mount challenges to incumbents. Therefore rulers impose strict limits on the extent of institutional development, for example by appointing officials according to political loyalty rather than technical merit, regularly shuffling underlings among official positions, and creating informal channels for cementing loyalty and checking rivals. In *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa* (2009), Robert Bates argues that institutional and development outcomes depend on how ruling elites – whom he characterizes as “specialists in violence” – employ instruments of coercion to extract wealth from society. When the elite’s political and economic interests are served by taxing production, they will establish the infrastructure of lawful state. If, however, they conclude that the costs of providing protection to society’s producers outweigh the expected benefits, then they will be tempted to turn the state apparatus into an instrument of violent predation.

Elite Political Culture

An additional element is required for comprehending leadership choices in Zimbabwe: the political culture of the ruling elite. Masunungure (1998, 2004) has argued that the coalition that led the country to national independence shared a common body of political values, which originated from existing streams of authoritarianism. First, based on pre-colonial political precedents, the new leaders gravitated towards new forms of chieftaincy, eldership and gerontocracy (rule by older people). In searching for authentic institutions, they cultivated (at least in their own minds) the convenient expectations that top leaders would govern according to norms of social unity and political consensus, and that they would do so for life.

Second, most members of the incoming elite had suffered under the heavy hand of colonial repression having been jailed or exiled for daring to organize nationalist resistance. These experiences imprinted in their minds an appreciation of the awesome power of the modern state, especially insofar as its legal and military arms could be used to stifle opposition political activity.

Third, and most importantly, Zimbabwe’s ruling coalition was forged in the crucible of a war of national liberation. The country’s two guerrilla movements – the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe Peoples’ Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) –

“were not structured democratically. Authoritarian militarism was the chief and common feature of the liberation war...the movements ‘paid scant attention to issues of individual and civic rights’...and both advocated an implacable internal unity. The liberation struggle was fraught with intense intrigues, factionalism, violent purges and assassinations...there was a lot of witch-hunting, intimidation and torture, ‘enemies’ being summarily dealt with” (ibid. 150-1).

The liberation war was seminal in several respects. It gave birth to a coalition in which civilian and military elements were in periodic tension over political leadership. Indeed, at key moments in the life of Zimbabwe’s dominant party – including the initial choice of top leader and struggles over leadership survival and succession – the military have been more likely to control civilians than vice-versa. Moreover, the tense atmosphere of the liberation struggle encouraged a polarized outlook among leaders in which the political world was divided starkly between a small circle of trusted confidants and a hostile environment full of “enemies.” Secrecy and loyalty were valued above all. This distrustful worldview was more conducive to factionalism, splits and purges than to the construction of broad-based political coalitions (Sithole 1999). Indeed, the inward-looking “laager mentality” – ironically also the defensive outlook of the severely outnumbered white settlers of colonial Rhodesia – is not conducive to forming alliances with outsiders.

In addition, the war also ensured that the ruling elite readily resorts to violence as a standard operating procedure. The logic of political survival suggests that the end (power) justifies the means, including what the ICG (2007) calls the “architecture of violence”. Whenever their political dominance is threatened, Zimbabwe’s incumbent rulers have defaulted to the means of coercion – both formal state forces and informal party militias – as political trump cards. By resorting to violence, however, rulers have exposed themselves to the risk of prosecution for rights abuses, either in national tribunals or an international criminal court. As such, predatory tactics are usually followed by leaders’ efforts to co-opt or emasculate institutions dedicated to legal redress. In short, the more that leaders have blood on their hands, the more – for reasons of sheer self-preservation – they seek to dismantle the rule of law.

Finally, the top leaders have used the sacrifices of the guerrilla fighters – “we died for this country” – as the ultimate justification for their own political and economic entitlement. As liberators, they claim to “own” Zimbabwe in the fullest sense of the term, namely that the country “belongs” to them and not to anyone else. Not only have they won a right to rule in perpetuity; they are warranted to seize the nation’s wealth as they see fit. On the other side of the coin, leaders who the rulers deem did not partake in the liberation war (or did not do so with sufficient vigor) are permanently ineligible to rule or even to enjoy the fruits of independence. In fact, by challenging the ruling coalition, they are by that very act guilty of being agents (“lackeys”) of imperialism.

We explore the agency of Zimbabwean leaders within the context of these structural and cultural parameters. For example, we argue that the incoming political elite was initially constrained by the terms of a political settlement at the time of independence to build a developmental state based on aid from international donors and export revenues from the country’s vibrant agricultural and mineral sectors. While predatory tendencies were evident from the outset within the ruling party – especially with regard to the use of violence to “consume” political opponents – political leaders did not completely abandon a developmental agenda until confronted by a combination of pressures from international financial institutions, their own restive political base, and an emergent political opposition. From the late 1990s onward, however, the ruling coalition adopted a “laager” mentality in which the goals of state building and economic development were sacrificed at the altar of elite political survival. An increasingly narrow coalition of civilian and military leaders with roots in the country’s liberation war violently clung to state power and turned the instruments of coercion toward managing sham elections

and looting the country's wealth.

The limits of this strategy were apparent by 2008. At this historic inflection point, Zimbabwe's ruling elite was forced by domestic economic crisis and international political pressure to share power with a democratic opposition. On the surface, the advent of a would-be government of national unity seemed to signal that rival political coalitions had arrived at a new political settlement.

Political Settlements

A political settlement is: "a common understanding, usually between elites, that their best interests or beliefs are served by a particular way of organizing political power" (DFID, 2010, 11; see also DiJohn and Putzel 2009). Parks and Cole unpack the concept by proposing that "the key elements... are powerful *actors*, operating in pursuit of their *interests*, leading to the establishment or reshaping of *institutions*" (2009:6). This approach nicely depicts how the most influential players in the political game seek to mold the institutions of the state to address their own ends. Far from being formal mechanisms fixed over time, state institutions usually evolve to reflect an underlying, "elite-driven social order." This is so because, over time, political agents use the power at their disposal, both formal and informal, to manipulate institutions in order to best serve their interests. As Khan has noted, "if powerful groups are not getting an acceptable distribution of benefits from an institutional structure, they will strive to change it" (2010, 4).

Over time in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) chose to govern on a base of political exclusion and predatory extraction. State-sponsored violence was targeted at the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), an emergent mass movement professing a pacifist agenda and aspirations for democracy and development. Yet, by 2008, the old regime had become unsustainable. The ruling elite was driven by a collapsing economy and pressure from neighboring countries to enter a power-sharing agreement with the opposition. This elite pact seemed to promise a transition from an authoritarian rule to a more democratic regime (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). To date, the "unity" government has managed to reduce political violence and attain a measure of economic stabilization. But it has yet to resolve major outstanding issues of civil-military relations and economic management. Indeed, the new political settlement has failed to induce credible commitments from all stakeholders in good part because rival elites do not share a vision of the future disposition of economic resources or military power (Hartzell and Hoddie 2007). Above all, the halting performance of the "unity" government provides compelling evidence that the old ruling coalition has not yet abandoned its main goal of ruling forever.

2.0

Analytic Narrative

The Independence Decade (1980-1989)

Summary

At independence, a favorable institutional legacy and an influx of foreign aid enabled the ZANU-PF government led by Robert Mugabe to deliver development benefits to its rural political base. A constitutional settlement imposed by the departing British government and influence from white farming and business elites initially led to moderate economic policies, for instance on land reform. At the same time, the president pardoned political allies involved in corruption scandals in an early signal that the rule of law would be sacrificed to predation. Indeed, far from concentrating on broad-based economic development, the rulers gave priority to the consolidation of state power by installing party loyalists in the armed forces, civil service and local government. As part of this process, rulers cracked down violently on nationalist rivals in Matabeleland, ultimately absorbing the leaders of PF-ZAPU into the elite coalition.

Zimbabwe's Structural Inheritance

To understand the limited freedom of action available to African political elites at the time of independence, reference must be made to structures inherited from the past. The settler regime in self-governing (Southern) Rhodesia (1923-1979) had built an interventionist state. Its purpose was to protect the welfare of a racially defined ruling minority against the interests of international capital and a majority black population. White settlers benefited from the reservation of senior posts in the civil service, preferential property and marketing laws, and tariffs and subsidies that encouraged commercial agriculture, investment in mining, and the emergence of a modest manufacturing sector. The Rhodesian Front (RF) government of Prime Minister Ian Smith (1962-1979) suppressed black political and economic aspirations, declaring a state of emergency in 1965 with extensive arbitrary powers. In short, when independence under a black majority arrived in 1980, the new African leaders of Zimbabwe inherited a state that deeply penetrated the economy and society and that offered various instruments of repressive rule.

The mode of decolonization also mattered. Despite a hard-fought guerrilla campaign (1972-1979), Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF gained power as the result of a military standoff rather than battlefield victory. Since nationalist leaders thus could not prescribe the terms of independence, they entered instead into a negotiated political settlement brokered by the departing colonial authority. The independence Constitution contained embedded legal constraints: for example, twenty seats in parliament were temporarily reserved for whites, civil service pensions were guaranteed, and private property rights, including in land, were protected. The elite pact reached at Lancaster House, London on 21 December 1979 involved an implicit bargain: blacks would ascend to positions of political leadership while whites would continue to enjoy ownership of the means of economic production. Because the

independence settlement envisaged a division of political and economic power; it did not address the aspirations of black Zimbabweans to redress stark economic inequalities. And because power was divided asymmetrically, the pact did not survive the test of time.

Responding to the constraints of the structural inheritance, Mugabe surprised his critics by emulating Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya and announcing a policy of racial reconciliation. His sincerity in this regard has never been ascertained – one of our informants insisted that the departing British Governor, Lord Soames, had drafted the reconciliation speech – but, at least provisionally, ZANU-PF acknowledged the need for a truce with white business and administrative elites. The new Prime Minister appointed two white Cabinet Ministers, including a leader of the commercial farmers as Minister of Agriculture, and briefly retained the sitting heads of the national army and national intelligence agency. After all, the members of the ZANU-PF elite had grown to political maturity in prison, combat or exile and thus lacked the requisite technical and managerial experience to easily assume control of an extensive state apparatus. They knew from first-hand familiarity with Mozambique that a rapid evacuation of white settlers risked institutional and economic collapse. And they feared that Zimbabwe's close infrastructural links to, and economic dependence on, the *apartheid* regime in South Africa made the inherited state and economy vulnerable to external destabilization.

Consolidating State Power

Perhaps guided by Kwame Nkrumah's injunction to "seek ye first the political kingdom," the ZANU-PF government of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe instead gave priority to the consolidation of political power, especially by strengthening the coercive organs of the state. The first task was to ensure party control over key institutions by appointing loyalists from the nationalist struggle to top positions in Cabinet and the state security apparatus. The latter included Emmerson Mnangagwa and Rex Nhongo (later Solomon Mujuru) who took up leadership posts in the intelligence service and armed forces respectively and who were later to emerge as the key faction leaders within the party. Because other senior leaders from the front lines of the liberation struggle – Leopold Takawira, Herbert Chitepo, Josiah Tongogara, and J.Z. Moyo – had died or been killed, the composition of the Cabinet tilted toward younger intellectuals like Dzingai Mutumbuka, who drew the Education portfolio, and Herbert Ushewokunze, initially appointed Minister of Health. And provincial barons like Eddison Zvogbo (from Masvingo) and Kumbirai Kangai (from Manicaland) were brought on board, not only for their professional expertise but also for regional balance. Initially, Mugabe even sought to bring nationalist rivals into the fold: as well as appointing four Cabinet Ministers from the Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF-ZAPU), he offered Joshua Nkomo the ceremonial position of President of Zimbabwe, who turned it down in favor of a ministerial post.

Thus the leadership of ZANU-PF at independence was a coalition of old-guard nationalists, young radicals, battle-hardened guerrilla commanders, and professionals returned from exile. Unlike Nkomo, who bestrode the pinnacle of his party in the typical dominant style of an African "big man," Mugabe at first occupied a less secure position. Historically, ZANU had always been split by roiling internal divisions between generations of political activists (some free and some in prison), among armed factions within the guerrilla armies, and between the fighting forces on the frontlines and the political leaders involved in international negotiations. Mugabe emerged in 1977 as a compromise leader who was minimally acceptable to all sides including, critically, the military commanders. Between 1977 and 1979 the party collectively established its first reliable organization for coordinating warfare on the ground with diplomatic, logistic, informational, educational and other functions, both inside and outside the country. Although Mugabe had secured the title of President of the party while still in exile in Maputo, there was a sense, even after independence, that he was merely *primus inter pares*. There remained much military influence over civilians. Acceding to the job of Prime Minister clearly enhanced Mugabe's political status; but not until ZANU-PF's second Congress in 1984 was he confirmed as President of the party and, therefore,

supreme leader.

On the military front, a Joint High Command was set up to merge three rival forces – ZANLA, ZIPRA, and elements of the Rhodesian Army – into a unified Zimbabwe National Army. At this time the Zimbabwe Republic Police, while Africanized, was not politicized. From the outset, Mugabe drew defense affairs into the Office of the Prime Minister, adding intelligence and provincial administration to his portfolio by 1985. The promotion of ex-ZANLA commanders as heads of the security forces and the creation of an exclusively Shona Fifth Brigade ensured the loyalty of the army, both to the party and to the top leader personally. The coherence of the security forces was tested in the early 1980s by sporadic insurgent activities by ex-ZIPRA “dissidents,” which gave Mugabe an excuse to dismiss Nkomo and other PF-ZAPU ministers from the Cabinet in 1982 and unleash a violent pogrom against the rural population of Matabeleland, whom he accused of aiding and abetting South African interests. In addition, senior ex-ZIPRA officers, including Lookout Masuku, then deputy commander of the army, and Dumiso Dabengwa were arrested and charged with treason.

Thus, the elite coalition between the two leading nationalist parties – ZANU(PF) and (PF)ZAPU – effectively unraveled within a couple of years of independence. Former allies were castigated as “enemies of the state,” fit only for destruction.³ Moreover, atrocities committed by the army’s Fifth Brigade in the *Gukurahundi* campaign⁴ in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands Province led to the permanent alienation of most Ndebele-speakers from the governing authorities. However, a Unity Accord of 1987 revived the grand coalition established at independence, rehabilitated Nkomo and other senior PF-ZAPU leaders, and restored a semblance of peace in the countryside. The Unity Accord aimed to do what *Gukurahundi* had failed to do, that is, conquer the last frontier of resistance to ZANU-PF hegemony by delivering the Sindebele-speaking region to the Shona-dominated party. In the same year, Constitutional Amendment Act (No.7) created an executive presidency with Mugabe as President and Nkomo as one of two national Vice-Presidents. One salutary effect of this rapprochement was that former PF-ZAPU leaders were now positioned to urge moderation against the push to create a *de jure* one-party state in Zimbabwe (see next section).

Given its roots as a national liberation movement, ZANU-PF also moved quickly to penetrate the state apparatus in the peasant farming areas, for example by appointing party loyalists as District Administrators and replacing the old system of native administration with representative District Councils. The party leadership worked hard to get its candidates elected to these local government bodies and to a hierarchy of provincial and district planning boards and ward and village development committees, successfully so in all areas but Matabeleland. Because District Councils were responsible for the delivery of an expanded range of social services after independence, ZANU-PF used this presence in the locality to claim political legitimacy for itself. At the same time, the party made the most of the patronage opportunities presented by a District Development Fund disbursed to councils by the powerful Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development. Reflecting the dualistic nature of the inherited state, however, the white-controlled Rural Councils governed the commercial agricultural areas. Only commercial farmers were eligible to vote for these bodies and they used this power to protect their favorable tax base and to resist amalgamation with neighboring District Councils, which were black-controlled. Thus ZANU-PF was much less successful in capturing institutions controlled by white agricultural elites. And, because black farm workers – many of whose families hailed from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique – were ineligible to vote in Rural Council elections before 1998, the party also failed to build alliances with this constituency.

3 At this time, Mugabe likened PF-ZAPU and its leader to “a cobra in the house... the only way to deal effectively with a snake is to strike and destroy its head.” See Nkomo (2001), p.2.

4 Translated from the Shona to mean “the spring rain that washes away the chaff from the last harvest.” It suggests cleaning the previous season’s dirt to prepare for a new one.

To assert political control over the strong settler state at the center, ZANU-PF elite moved quickly to Africanize the civil service. On one hand, the Cabinet constituted a thin veneer atop a largely untransformed state apparatus still manned by unsympathetic white personnel who could not be relied upon to implement reform policies. At the outset, a politically neutral and professional Public Service Commission protected the principle of merit recruitment. On the other hand, Africanization was facilitated by a doubling of the size of the civil service, the promotion of blacks long held back from advancement, and an influx of skilled returnees from the overseas *diaspora*. These institutional developments strengthened the state bureaucracy in relation to the ruling party and helped to maintain commitments to legal and technocratic standards in public management. As a signal of reassurance to the West, Prime Minister Mugabe appointed Bernard Chidzero, a former senior United Nations official noted for his orthodox approach to economic policy, as Minister for Economic Planning and Development. By contrast, Enos Nkala, a hard-line party loyalist, was soon moved out of his position as the first Minister of Finance. Over the course of the next few years, Chidzero gradually expanded his influence by taking over the finance portfolio, moving economic decisions from party to Cabinet, and emerging as the chief architect of the country's economic strategy.

Development or Corruption?

At independence, Zimbabweans could boast with some justification that their country possessed the youngest and best-educated cohort of cabinet ministers in Africa. But there remained an ideological gulf between the “comrades” in the party – whose organization was nominally modeled on Leninist lines, complete with Presidium, Politburo and Central Committee – and the bureaucrats trained in colonial-era public administration. The *Growth With Equity* (1981) strategy developed by Chidzero was a compromise tailored to adapt to the structural inheritance of a state capitalist economy. Despite rhetorical commitments to Marxism-Leninism as the party's ideology, ZANU-PF did not attempt radical reforms that would have pushed the economy in an explicitly socialist direction, most obviously with regard to land redistribution. But the core party elite, schooled in Marxist economics, could not extricate itself easily from the conviction that the economy was in foreign hands. When the country encountered maize meal shortages in the early 1980s, for example, Mugabe's knee-jerk reaction was to call for a state takeover of milling companies rather than to encourage greater competition in the sector. As a former senior cabinet minister told the authors of this report, Mugabe has always resisted face-to-face dialogue with business leaders, instead delegating the task to economic technocrats in the Cabinet. When a party elite is not well schooled in the basic principles of economics or empathetic to the mindset of business entrepreneurs, there are strict limits to the realization of a developmental state.

While not abandoning rhetoric about socialist revolution, Zimbabwe's new leaders adjusted to the economic situation in which they found themselves. *Growth with Equity* sought to build selectively on the strengths of the past while eliminating discriminatory parts of the inherited system. At this stage, political leaders seemed to recognize that the country's productive assets, if competently managed, could generate valuable resources for uplifting black living standards. Take land for example. In the short run, the government found itself dependent on white farmers to feed the hundreds of thousands of rural dwellers who had been displaced from smallholdings during the liberation war. And, even though inequality in land distribution had been a central motive of the liberation struggle, the new political elite avoided radical land reform in the medium term too. Instead of expropriating land without compensation, the government opted to tax the export revenues of the commercial farm sector. This outcome was partly a product of legal constraints – the Constitution mandated that land could only change hands between “willing sellers” and “willing buyers” – and partly a consequence of resource shortages: aid donors were reluctant to foot the bill for land reform. Moreover, the new government's fledgling Ministry of Lands lacked the technical and organizational expertise to operate an extensive land reset-

tlement program.

Instead, government leaders chose to invest heavily in improving access to agricultural and social services for the bulk of the population, most of whom were small-scale “communal area” farmers. Policies were revised to raise the prices paid for food crops, extend agricultural credit and technical services to smallholders, and to build secondary schools and health clinics throughout the country. On some issues – notably producer prices – there was a coincidence of interest between large- and small-scale farmers which meant that the government was able to mollify two key constituencies while at the same time meeting national goals of food security. Although the thrust of these development policies can be read as fulfillment of development promises made by ZANU-PF, the government often adopted plans to expand services directly from the short-lived Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government headed by Abel Muzorewa in 1979. The party played little if any role in actual allocation decisions, which were made mainly on technical grounds by officers in Cabinet (e.g. prices) established central ministries (e.g. education), state-owned enterprises (e.g. credit), and provincial bureaucracies (e.g. health). Rather, some regional party leaders attempted to exert informal influence at the local level, for example by mobilizing landless peasants and war veterans to occupy commercial farms in a bid to pressure the government to move faster on land reform. In the first decade of independence, however, the government usually sided with the rule of law by removing squatters, sometimes forcefully.

In attempting to accommodate the demands of organized interest groups, the ZANU-PF elite had to scale down some of its stated developmental goals. Incomes policy is a good example. The party had come to power with the goal of rectifying the anomaly of national wage levels that did not meet minimum subsistence. (The colonial regime had assumed that, in a labor reserve economy, migrant workers would have rural smallholdings that would supplement basic needs and to which they would return upon retirement). Soon after independence, a Commission of Inquiry had recommended the establishment of a national minimum wage that would lift earners above a poverty datum line. A struggle ensued over wage levels between employers, represented by the Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ) and labor, represented by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). Ultimately, in 1984, the government enacted legislation that restricted the unions' right to strike and, in 1986, established a tripartite wage review board that essentially accepted the employers' argument that wage increases should be contained in the interest of increasing employment. This defeat for the labor movement not only revealed the unrealistic demands and weak organization of the ZCTU. It also deepened a latent political rift between industrial workers – who had formed the first support base of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) – and ZANU-PF, a predominantly rural party. And it set the stage for an estrangement between workers and the ruling party over the course of the next decade.

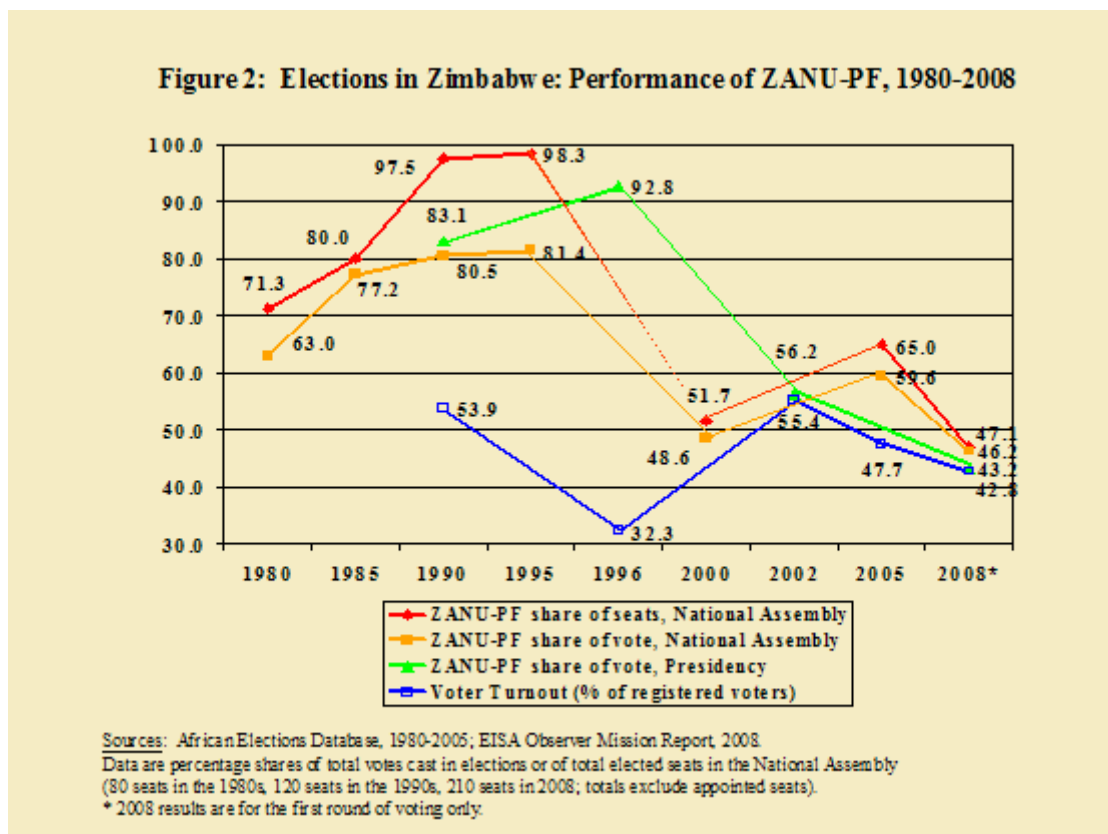
Although, during the 1980s, ZANU-PF strove to promote socio-economic development, party leaders were not immune from predatory temptations: as early as 1982, a scandal erupted over a food aid swindle;⁵ in 1983 students and women's groups demonstrated against official corruption; and in 1984, Mugabe warned ministers against “bourgeois” proclivities. The government subsequently introduced a (toothless) Leadership Code to prohibit ownership of businesses, rental properties and large farms. Then the notorious “Willowgate” affair burst into public view in 1989, which involved Ministers illegally selling cars secured at subsidized prices from the state's Willowvale assembly plant. It revealed the vulnerability of state-owned enterprises to political interference and a web of personal ties between politicians and businessmen who were profiteering outside of the law. When the media broke the story, Mugabe hastened to set up a commission of inquiry that led to the resignation of five Cabinet ministers

⁵ Businessman Samson Paweni was arrested for cheating the government of some Z\$5million in foreign-sourced famine relief during the 1982-4 drought. Though Paweni was convicted and jailed for the offence, most of the high-ranking government officials implicated in the fraud (including a Minister, Kumbirai Kangai) escaped the net.

and one provincial governor, including senior officials like Maurice Nyagumbo, who soon committed suicide.⁶ But the President ultimately granted pardons to all those who were implicated, subsequently returning Ministers like Enos Nkala and Frederick Shava to the top party leadership. Following this high-profile series of events, ordinary Zimbabweans began to question the motivations of the ruling elite and to wonder whether the country's judicial and administrative institutions were up to the task of controlling official corruption.

An Increment of Development

Generally speaking, however, the 1980s were a decade of moderate economic growth and rapid social development in Zimbabwe. The country's gross domestic product expanded at an average rate of 4.5 percent per annum between 1980 and 1989, though droughts in 1982-4 and 1987 caused the growth rate to fluctuate from year to year. The economy benefited from a peace dividend at the end of the guerrilla war, the removal of trade sanctions against the former settler regime, a generous influx of aid from the international community, and pent-up demand for goods and services from a growing population. In a context of higher agricultural prices and better rural services, small-scale farmers proved that they could contribute to the national economy, quadrupling output of maize and doubling production of cotton between 1980 and 1985. Indeed, within five years of independence, nearly all children of primary school age were in school and more than 80 percent of eligible students were moving on to secondary school. And the Minister of Health was able to make the landmark announcement that the infant mortality rate had been cut in half. But a former Cabinet Minister interviewed for this study attributed these outcomes "more to good fortune than to good leadership."



As for institutional outcomes, ZANU-PF met its main goal of becoming the dominant party in the land. It had accumulated substantial political capital from its leading role in the national liberation struggle and,

⁶ According to Todd (2007) "Nyagumbo had watched the spread of corruption in Zimbabwe, initially particularly evident in the various arms of the defence forces... (and saw) Mugabe cold shoulder the parliamentary committee of accounts and any other attempt to bring accountability in government" (p.292).

at least in the early years, enjoyed considerable leeway for missteps. Outside of Matabeleland, where a culture of political intolerance and fear was taking root, the government's legitimacy was apparently undamaged by the *Gukurahundi* atrocities, thanks to the Unity Accord that had delivered PF-ZAPU to a united ZANU-PF. Indeed, the ruling party was able to secure over 80 percent of the votes cast in 1990 elections and 117 out of 120 elected National Assembly seats (see Figure 2).

But these figures obscure the fact that leaders created a narrower elite coalition than policies of racial reconciliation or economic redistribution might predict. Mugabe began to withdraw the hand of friendship from the white community, bitten when Ian Smith's party (renamed the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe) won fifteen of the twenty white seats in the 1985 election. Emmerson Mnangagwa, then Minister of State for National Security, labeled the white vote a deceptive betrayal of the reconciliation policy. In response, ZANU-PF marshaled a cross-party parliamentary coalition to promulgate Constitutional Amendment No. 6 of 1986, which scrapped the white voters' roll. And because of persistent mutual distrust, especially over the government-controlled system for allocating foreign exchange, the (black) ruling party and established (white) business community warily held each other at arm's length.

Importantly, while the 1987 Unity Accord enticed a top layer of ZAPU leaders into the ruling group, it failed to cement a durable grand coalition. The entry of these individuals into the ZANU-PF fold suggests that they either saw surrender as the only way to bring peace or that they placed career ambition ahead of collective regional interests. For their part, the residents of Matabeleland and Midlands found scant evidence of developmental outcomes from a predatory *Gukurahundi* campaign that had "consumed" 20,000 victims in less than seven years. Instead, the region remained a reservoir of discontent. In the 1985 elections they voted unanimously for PF-ZAPU, provoking in some places violent retaliation from mobs led by ZANU-PF women's and youth leagues. Indeed, residents of the southwest provinces resolutely rebuffed ZANU-PF's efforts to build a party organization in their midst. Instead, the ZANU-PF government focused its development efforts on Shona-speaking regions, making full use of state patronage – fueled by export taxes and international donor largesse – to broaden popular support. Not only did peasant populations in these northeast areas of the country value the delivery of new agricultural, educational, health and transport services. But the rapid growth of the civil service during this period was led by the mass appointment of schoolteachers and health assistants, who, in return, granted political loyalty to the ruling party that had created so many attractive job opportunities.

On balance, however, Zimbabwe's upward development trajectory in the 1980s was more a product of the structural inheritance of settler colonialism – which endowed opportunities for growth along with constraints on fundamental social transformation – than of the active agency of a coalition of political leaders fully in command of their circumstances. As Stoneman and Cliffe observe,

"Few elements in the leadership had any coherent and specific plans for a programme of social and economic change when they took power. They were thus more likely to be victims (sic) initially of the conservative advice of senior white civil servants, of the economic orthodoxy brought in by Chidzero and his planners, and of the advice and priorities of aid agencies, in a context where they operated under very severe constraints" (1989, 36).

Instead, ZANU-PF's major achievement during this decade was to consolidate its own political position *vis a vis* the white settler community and rival nationalist blocs like PF-ZAPU. In so doing, it reminded the residents of Matabeleland that any dissent, real or imagined, would be met with a violent reaction from the coercive arms of the state. By establishing party hegemony under a banner of "national unity," ZANU-PF ensured that political competition would center increasingly on factional rivalries within the ruling party itself. At the same time, the governing coalition created a protected political space in which leaders could pursue their own personal and sectional interests, even as objective conditions began to turn against the economy as a whole.

The Adjustment Decade (1990-1999)

Summary

The second decade of independence began with leaders pushing for a *de jure* one-party state, a move ultimately made unnecessary by ZANU-PF's easy *de facto* dominance at the polls. The regime grew increasingly intolerant of dissent and ever more willing to use violence as a campaign tool. The party asserted supremacy over the state by politicizing the bureaucracy and army and turning a blind eye to rent-seeking. Yet, faced with deficits and debts, the government had little choice but to accept reforms to structurally adjust Zimbabwe's outdated economy. Under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai, the ZCTU reacted with a series of strikes and stay-aways and, in coalition with civic associations bent on constitutional reform, formed the MDC, an opposition party. For his part, Mugabe was only able to hold together his splintering ruling coalition by using unbudgeted state resources to buy off the militant war veterans.

A One-Party Regime?

With the expiry in April 1990 of the Lancaster House agreement, the ruling coalition in Zimbabwe was freed from a restrictive political constraint: the last legal obstacle was removed to the creation of a *de jure* one-party state in Zimbabwe. Leaders had already ensured the passage of a resolution favoring the one-party idea at ZANU-PF's National Congress of December 1989 and incorporated a clause to this effect in the Unity Accord. They made the same well-worn arguments as their predecessors in other African countries: that single-party rule was consistent with African traditions, suitable for a "unified" and "classless" African society, a necessary alternative to imported multi-party models, internally democratic, and a prerequisite for coherent development planning. Mugabe was especially effusive on the theme that Britain had no right to teach democracy to Zimbabweans.

But party leaders could not prevent debates breaking out in the Politiburo and Central Committee, as well as in the independent press and civil society, about the implications of a one-party system for democratic accountability. The idea had always had less elite and popular support than imagined by the inner circle of the ruling party. In a 1985 public opinion survey conducted by the University of Zimbabwe, some 60 percent of respondents favored one-party rule, whereas the remainder opposed it; but by 1990, the proportions had reversed, with 60 percent now opposed (Moyo 1992: 16, 129). In the end, mounting internal and societal opposition ensured that the position articulated by former President Canaan Banana carried the day, namely that, since ZANU-PF had already attained a *de facto* one-party state via popular acclaim at the ballot box, there was no need to legally entrench the arrangement in the constitution. In any event, such a move would have been anachronistic since, at the time, other countries – notably neighboring Zambia, Kenya, and Mozambique – were in the process of abandoning one-party rule and opening up to multiparty competition.⁷

Regardless of the formal rules of the political game, the ruling elite in Zimbabwe had long demonstrated an inability to tolerate the expression of political dissent. In 1990, ZANU-PF marshaled all its efforts, legal and otherwise, to frustrate an emerging opposition movement. Edgar Tekere, a firebrand populist who was once ZANU-PF's Secretary-General and a cabinet minister, had been dismissed from the party in 1988 for blowing the whistle on what he called a "vampire class" of corrupt leaders. In 1989 Tekere formed the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) on a platform that promised employment, housing and market reforms, as well as opposition to a one-party state. In a move guaranteed to infuriate the incumbent leadership, ZUM formed an electoral coalition with the white-led Conservative Alliance of

⁷ Moyo notes the "sobering irony that Ceausescu's one-party rule in Romania ended violently on the same day, December 22, 1989, when PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF signed a unity agreement with a pledge to establish a similar one-party state in Zimbabwe" (Mandaza and Sachikonye, 1990, 87).

Zimbabwe. Although Tekere made national appeals and ran strongly in Harare and Bulawayo in the 1990 elections, he enjoyed his largest popular base in Manicaland, his home province. ZANU-PF had reason to fear a political challenge from a region where people were still asking awkward questions about the mysterious death of favorite son Herbert Chitepo in 1975 – was he a victim of intra-party fratricide? – and where pockets of supporters of Abel Muzorewa (UANC) and Ndabaningi Sithole (ZANU-Ndonga) continued to resist ruling party hegemony.

The incumbents therefore resorted to a standard bag of dirty tricks in the 1990 elections – monopolizing the public airwaves, disrupting opposition rallies, and directing official resources into the ruling party campaign. Even though ZUM ran a disorganized crusade, ZANU-PF overreacted, falling back instinctively on violence as a campaign tool. Just days before the poll, attempts were made by state security agents to assassinate Patrick Kombayi, National Organizing Secretary of ZUM. Following the vote, some ZUM candidates and supporters found it necessary to go into hiding for fear of victimization by revengeful ZANU-PF mobs. To his great discredit, Mugabe later used the power of the presidency to pardon youths and security personnel convicted of electoral violence, thus adding to a growing culture of impunity that had begun with Willowgate. Moreover, the ruling party's domination – and ZUM's critique that the election process was not fair – seemingly alienated ordinary citizens from the political process. Expecting a foregone outcome, barely half of the eligible electorate bothered to turn out on the day of the election, a sign of mass political apathy that undermined ZANU-PF's otherwise impressive shares of votes and seats (see Figure 2). And, in good part due to Zimbabwe's plurality voting system, ZUM's 17 percent share of the vote translated into only two parliamentary seats.

Once reelected, the ruling elite developed a systematic set of control mechanisms to organize its own supporters while weakening would-be opponents. Although a long-standing state of emergency had been allowed to lapse in 1990, ZANU-PF retained the colonial Law and Order Maintenance Act, which enabled the prohibition of political meetings and movements. In order to penetrate and politicize society, the President's office set up its own Ministry of Political Affairs⁸ in 1988, housed at party headquarters in Harare and, in 1992, expanded the Cabinet to add residential ministers in every province. Needless to say, all such positions went to the most reliable party loyalists. When certain backbench Members of Parliament tried to exercise their legal authority to question the government budget, the ZANU-PF Speaker of the National Assembly condemned their efforts as treasonous. And when independent-minded individuals ran, and sometimes won, in party primary elections, the central organs of ZANU-PF intervened to overturn election results, for example by appointing favored personnel to head the ZANU-PF Women's League. The election to parliament of Margaret Dongo, a former ZANLA combatant who broke with the party in 1995, was an exception that only drew attention to the rule that independent candidacies were usually futile.

Politicizing the State

With regard to party-state relations, the Politburo and Central Committee of ZANU-PF gradually usurped the policy-making roles of the Cabinet and parliament, thereafter “ensuring that (the party) dominates virtually every political institution in Zimbabwe” (Makumbe, 2003). For example, the Politburo established watchdog committees to establish the supremacy of the party, prompting a public clash between Moven Mahachi, Minister of Home Affairs and Eddison Zvogbo, Minister of the Public Service over whether the party had the right to supervise the work of civil servants. The slow pace of policy reform and delays in routine administration in Zimbabwe during this period were partly due to such political struggles. But the weakening of the technocratic capacities of the state was also due to the strictures of economic structural adjustment (see below): many competent senior officials, including experienced permanent secretaries, opted for generous early retirement schemes offered under ESAP.

⁸ Later renamed the Ministry of National Affairs, then disbanded, with its functions absorbed into the Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation.

ZANU-PF chose to fill these and other vacant civil service posts with individuals whose qualifications leaned more toward party loyalty than technical skills. These personnel changes resulted in the politicization of the bureaucracy; henceforth, Cabinet Ministers could rely on permanent secretaries who would dependably execute the party's bidding. And those who resisted risked punishment: in the run-up to the 1995 elections, for example, cabinet ministers threatened to dismiss civil servants who might support any opposition party.

The state is the most valuable prize in African politics because state power can be used to create opportunities for private gain. Where private sector opportunities are limited, the occupation of public office remains the most reliable means of accumulating wealth. Mandaza lays out this logic in Zimbabwean context:

“...The quest for power and wealth expressed itself sometimes in open corruption and nepotism. The long years of colonial domination and deprivation, not to mention imprisonment and the hard days of the struggle, became almost the licence – albeit for only a few among the many who might claim such a licence – to accumulate quickly; and the state ... appeared the most viable agency for such accumulation.” (1986, 56-7).

Thus Zimbabwean *chefs* (a term borrowed from Mozambique to denote top politicians) succumbed to predatory temptations, in the process transforming themselves into wealthy political patrons. By the turn of the decade, senior party leaders – including the two national Vice-Presidents and the sister of the President, among others – had received ownership of commercial farms under the land reform program. At the local level, and as early as 1990, ZANU-PF town councilors in Masvingo became embroiled in scandals involving the use of their powers to allocate housing stands to themselves, their families and their followers. By 1993, the Economist Intelligence Unit reported that fraud in Zimbabwe's parastatal enterprises and corruption in the public service had seemingly reached “epidemic” proportions. Most brazenly, the corrupt allocation of public resources was institutionalized in Zimbabwe in the Political Party Finance Act of 1992. It provided that “any” party with at least fifteen representatives in parliament – which in practice meant ZANU-PF alone – would receive government financial support. In this way, the ruling party openly appropriated taxpayer resources to finance the construction of its own partisan clientele.

Once predatory leaders come to enjoy power, they are loath to surrender its perquisites. The strong tendency of dominant-party elites in Africa to express intolerance of political opposition can be understood in these economic terms. Because loss of public office threatens material livelihood, incumbents try to uphold the political *status quo* by seeking to control all independent centers of power within and beyond the state. Claiming themselves as the only legitimate holders of power, they demonize legitimate political dissent as treachery and polarize the political landscape between “loyalists” and “enemies” (LeBas 2006). In Zimbabwe in the 1990s this official discourse was cast not only in the language of anti-imperialism but, increasingly with the racist charge that political opposition was tantamount to support for the restoration of white settler colonialism. Add to that the leadership's systematic plan to construct a politicized party-state and “the question of alternation in power, or transfer of power from one party to another, does not arise” (Masunungure, 2004, 149).

The leaders' quest for control extended even to those parts of the economy where private entrepreneurs sought to operate beyond the bounds of official patronage. The case of local businessman Strive Masiyiwa, who between 1993 and 1996 attempted to establish a cellular phone network (Econet) in Zimbabwe, is illustrative. After the Supreme Court ruled on constitutional grounds that the government had no monopoly over communications, the state quickly invoked the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act that created new licensing requirements. Meanwhile, individuals close to the ruling party established a rival consortium (Telecel) which, under instructions from the Secretary to the Cabinet,

evaded standard tender board procedures to win the sole government contract.

Liberalizing the Economy

The positive performance of the Zimbabwe economy in the short term (see previous section) masked these and other fundamental, long-term problems. The government's fiscal deficit – over 10 percent of GDP in 1990 – was high and rising and an excess of imports over exports led to ballooning balance of payments shortfalls. Prospects for economic growth were hampered by a lack of foreign investment and the obsolescence of the country's productive infrastructure. In a context where over 100,000 graduates were leaving secondary school each year, a modestly growing economy was generating little employment. Within ten years, real wages for workers in the mining and industrial sectors had fallen to levels not seen since before independence. And, with the emergence of a free South Africa in 1994, Zimbabwe began to face a formidable regional competitor whose economy was by far the largest and most sophisticated on the continent.

The ruling elite thus faced a basic policy choice. Would leaders stick with professed commitments to economic self-reliance and socialist transformation? The prevailing policy regime included extensive government controls on wages and prices, restrictions on currency exchange, protection of local industries against imports, and an expanding role for the state in social-service delivery. Or would they reverse direction by choosing to follow other African countries that were undertaking liberalization reforms? This would necessitate opening up to global trade, promoting exports, and adjusting the structure of the economy to allow a larger role for free markets. As it happened, Zimbabwe adopted an Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in 1991 with support from the World Bank. The politics underpinning this policy shift involved a partial realignment of the governing coalition: the ruling party moved decisively against urban workers and consumers – for example by cutting maize-meal subsidies – in favor of a well-organized lobby of industrial and manufacturing interest groups. The apparent ease of the policy turnabout suggests that, despite ideological rhetoric, there were few authentic Marxist-Leninists in the party hierarchy. Rather than being deeply attached to leftist economic principles, the ZANU-PF leadership was instead most strongly attracted to pragmatic policies that promised to expand the economic pie. In the words of Jonathan Moyo:

“It was not surprising that the pre-independence socialist rhetoric of ZANU-PF dwindled with the tick of time...in 1980, the party was subjected to lofty talk about egalitarianism. Now the same public is being subjected to talk, under the veil of socialism, about long overdue economic liberalization and structural adjustment” (in Mandaza and Sachikonye, 1990, 89).

One of the effects of ESAP was a reconfiguration of the governing coalition by which state leaders forged new alliances with both established and newly formed business association and allowed old alliances – for example with labor – to erode. The most influential lobby group was the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI). Throughout the settler colonial period and under the First National Development Plan, manufacturers and government alike favored protectionist policies that encouraged import substitution. By the end of the 1980s, however, the CZI began to advocate gradual trade liberalization that would allow a renewal of plant and equipment in Zimbabwe's outdated factories and create opportunities for Zimbabwean firms to compete again on export markets. The CZI leadership combined forces with bilateral donors and international financial institutions to cultivate allies within the dwindling technocratic corps of the government. They explicitly recognized the advantage of avoiding direct confrontation with the political authorities, a strategy that had been lost on white voters and commercial farmers; instead they engaged in a campaign of persuasion that resulted in a set of policies – currency convertibility, open imports, export incentives, foreign exchange retention, remittance of profits by foreign investors – that closely corresponded to CZI's wish list.

That is not to imply that the government partnership with manufacturing interests led to completely free trade. Rather, economic policy in Zimbabwe in the 1990s exemplified a “partial reform syndrome” in which administrative controls were selectively retained (Hellman 1998, van de Walle 2001). Public marketing boards continued to set agricultural producer prices, a uniform set of lower tariffs replaced quota restrictions on imports, and parastatals were made more commercially competitive rather than completely privatized. As such, economic liberalization did not eliminate opportunities for strategically placed administrators to continue to extract economic rents. Nor did adjustment policies necessarily lead to economic success. A vicious drought in 1992 led to economy-wide recession. Inflation in bread prices led to food riots in Harare in 1993. And the plan to finance ESAP through growth in exports fell flat, which required the government to turn to bilateral donors, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to finance huge fiscal and current account deficits. Thus, one of the major outcomes of the economic reform program was mounting national debt.

Moreover, few economic interest groups were as successful as the manufacturers in CZI at aligning with policymakers. For their part, ZANU-PF politicians repeatedly tried to enforce state corporatism from the top down (rather than the CZI model of societal corporatism from the bottom up) by seeking to amalgamate diverse interest groups according to a government formula of “one sector, one organization.” But these leadership initiatives met with mixed results. White and black business organizations initially agreed to join hands in a Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce (ZNCC), a move that further enhanced communication between government and the business community. In time, however, newly established associations of black entrepreneurs such as the Indigenous Business Development Centre (IBDC) and the Affirmative Action Group (AAG) won preferential services and ownership quotas by ingratiating themselves with ZANU-PF. “Indigenization” of productive enterprise based on racial criteria became a guide, not only to policy, but also to patronage. At the same time, the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) resisted a merger with the Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU), which represented small- and medium-scale farmers, citing divergent economic interests. As a result, and despite collaboration among agricultural unions on producer price submissions, the commercial farmers found themselves at loggerheads with government, especially on matters of rural security and land reform. On the other hand, the ZFU firmly supported land reform and, indeed, the ruling party.⁹ And workers’ unions, led by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), were dead set against ESAP, especially the retrenchment of over 10,000 low-level public service workers.

The Rift with Labor

Because the labor movement emerged in the 1990s as a building block for an opposition coalition, its rocky relationship with the incumbent party is worth a closer look. Before independence, African workers had been split into four rival federations – the weakest affiliated to ZANU-PF – which were prohibited from strikes and collective bargaining. Immediately after independence the authorities forced unions to amalgamate beneath the ZCTU umbrella and under ruling party control. Party cadres (often ZANLA ex-combatants) were active in workplaces, seizing leadership of workers’ committees and pressuring employers to hire veterans from the liberation war. Further reflecting the political elite’s nervousness about independent centers of power, the new government passed a Labour Relations Act in 1985. It reproduced existing colonial restrictions on workers’ rights and continued to marginalize labor representatives from wage setting negotiations between government and the business community. Moreover, the government did not hesitate to deploy the police and army to put down the wildcat strikes that broke out when workers tried to claim the fruits of freedom in the 1980s or to protest ESAP austerity measures in the 1990s. In addition to opposing layoffs in the public and private sectors, the ZCTU railed against the erosion of real wages by inflation, which they attributed (largely incorrectly) to structural

⁹ The ZFU’s support for ZANU-PF was recognized when Gary Magadzire, the ZFU president, died in 1996. Despite not having actively participated in the liberation struggle, was declared a National Hero, becoming one of the very few with a non-liberation war history to be bestowed with that status.

adjustment rather than to periodic droughts and profligate government spending.

As a consequence, ZCTU gradually distanced itself from ZANU-PF, especially after the election of Morgan Tsvangirai as the union's Secretary-General in 1989. Once a foreman in the mining industry and a disaffected former political commissar in ZANU-PF, Tsvangirai emerged as the critical voice of the labor movement. Previously, in the 1980s, union leaders had called for worker representation in ZANU-PF structures; by the 1990s, they came out openly (much as Frederic Chiluba did in Zambia) in support of an alternate, multiparty political system. In 1989, Tsvangirai condemned the closure of the University of Zimbabwe and voiced solidarity with students protesting against corruption. For his pains he was detained for a month. When, in 1992, he led the unions in opposition to government legislation that undercut the ZCTU's financial base (by eliminating automatic union dues deductions from pay slips), the Minister of Labor warned ZCTU not to behave like an opposition political party or risk harsh treatment. Tsvangirai later survived at least three assassination attempts, including one in 1997 when assailants burst into his tenth story office and tried to throw him out of the window.

Under his leadership, the ZCTU began to correct some of its organizational weaknesses – including nepotism in job assignments and misappropriation of members' funds – that had led to turnover in union leadership in earlier years. Moreover, an economic context of rising inflation and lagging wages offered opportunities to revitalize the labor movement. By 2000, average real incomes were one fifth lower than in 1980 and three-quarters of the population was estimated to be living in poverty. Yet food subsidies had been withdrawn. Moreover, as the government turned to policies of cost recovery for social services, access to education and health care, after rising dramatically in the 1980s, reversed direction in the 1990s. Symbolizing these setbacks, schoolteachers refused to mark exam papers for want of adequate salaries, timely paid. In protest, ZCTU officials took the lead in organizing a national public sector strike in 1996, a general strike in 1997, and mass stay-aways in 1998 (see Table 1).

Importantly, the unions expanded their critique of the government beyond sadza-and-relish issues to broader demands for political accountability. Labor leaders nurtured alliances with other social groups, notably university students and human rights activists, which together demonstrated a newfound capacity to confront the government in coordinated fashion. According to Raftopoulos:

“The disparity between the *de jure* rights and freedoms enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution and the *de facto* political rules developed by the state...provided...important openings for contesting ZANU-PF domination. The battles in the courts over the abuse of executive powers and the uneven playing field provided by electoral laws became the focus for action by civil society groups, especially in the 1990s. Such issues were to feature as a central part of the campaign for constitutional reform after 1997” (in Harold-Barry 2004, 7).

The non-governmental sector in Zimbabwe expanded to fill gaps created by ESAP-driven state contraction. NGOs evolved from charitable and relief work before independence, through socio-economic development initiatives in the 1980s, to policy advocacy and human rights protection in the 1990s. Relatively well-funded, NGOs provided an alternative career path for young professionals interested in the democratic values, development *praxis* and technical standards that were fast disappearing within state bureaucracies. But because NGO leaders favored an extreme form of organizational autonomy, they discovered a measure of common cause only when faced with ZANU-PF's efforts to regulate the voluntary sector. The Private Voluntary Organizations Act of 1995 increased the discretion of the Minister over the registration (including deregistration) and activities of NGOs, especially those using foreign funds for democracy promotion. On one hand, some NGOs challenged the state. For example, the Association of Women's Clubs won a Supreme Court ruling dismissing the government's case that their leaders should be replaced for mismanaging funds. On the other hand, voluntary organizations were unable to establish their own umbrella body, though they did manage to sidestep a state-spon-

sored entity called NANGO. Instead, individual NGOs tended to shrink from frontal confrontation by evading or accommodating the state.

Table 1: Strikes, Zimbabwe 1991-2000

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1991												5	5
1992	1	2	2		1	3	1		1			3	14
1993	5	2	3	3	3		1		3	3			23
1994	2												2
1995	2	2	1	6	4	4	6	12	8	9	11		65
1996				12	9	6	8	3	4	13	7		62
1997	3	3	6	7	19	18	28	16	22	98	5	7	232
1998	6	9	21	9		20	3	3	16	10	5	17	119
1999	6	28	5	14	8	4	11	6	13	19	17	17	148
2000	5	12	14	8	16	12	10	22	10	9	12		130
Total	30	58	52	47	51	61	60	59	73	148	50	44	733

Source: Godfrey Kanyenze, 'The Zimbabwean Economy, 1980-2008: A ZCTU Perspective' in Harold Barry (ed.), 2004, p.130. Based on statistics from Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, 2001.

A Nascent Opposition Coalition

The emergence in 1997 of a National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) therefore represented a major step in the direction of collective civic action. Its objective was to raise popular awareness about the need to replace the Lancaster House Constitution (now amended multiple times to cement ZANU-PF's dominance) with a new national charter. The NCA – a broad alliance of professional, labor, women's and religious organizations, including prominently the ZCTU – created an educational campaign on constitutional issues disseminated through a network of meetings in all provinces. Using the courts, the NCA successfully forced the government to remove a ban on its advertisements in the electronic mass media, enabling the campaign to reach rural dwellers via radio. The government reacted to this perceived setback by threatening to regulate media houses, including by outlawing foreign ownership of independent newsweeklies. At the same time, the NCA prompted the government to form its own Presidential Commission of Inquiry into constitutional issues, a step the government would rather have avoided. By fostering a national public debate on the way Zimbabwe should be governed, the NCA "undermined the government's attempt to hegemonize the discussion as its own (and)...used the language and politics of constitutionalism to expand the meaning of development in Zimbabwean politics" (Raftopoulos in Moyo et al. 2000, 39).

By the end of the 1990s, therefore, the scattered social interests that had contested the one-party state at the beginning of the decade had begun to crystallize into a nascent opposition coalition. Formal organizations in political society started to align themselves with this civic movement. For example, all but two opposition parties¹⁰ boycotted the 1995 elections because of the absence of electoral and constitutional reforms. For its part, the NCA effectively advocated a popular boycott of the govern-

¹⁰ The Forum Party and ZANU (Ndonga).

ment's official constitutional commission. While some citizens heeded this call, others felt emboldened to speak up to the government's handpicked commissioners by presenting their own unvarnished views. As an independent civic organization, the NCA claimed (somewhat disingenuously) to have no partisan agenda. Instead, ZCTU took the lead, announcing in 1999 the formation of a political party known as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) whose principal objective was "a struggle for jobs, decency and democracy." Tsvangirai – then NCA Chair as well as ZCTU Secretary General – was elected as President of the MDC at an inaugural party congress in January 2000.

Thus, as the decade ended, an emergent popular movement born in civil society arose to challenge an entrenched ruling party whose mismanagement and corruption had called into question its right to rule. To offset a loss of political support, ZANU-PF tried to shore up its heartland among the Shona-speaking peasantry, for example by providing rural voters with food relief during droughts and distributing free seed and fertilizer afterwards. In addition, Rural and District Councils were legally merged, thus transferring tax revenues from commercial to communal farming areas. At the same time, ZANU-PF began to reverse its relations with traditional chiefs and headmen by restoring some of their lost powers and including them in the party's patronage network. Formerly the leading source of progressive ideas in Zimbabwe, the party elite thereby began to transform ZANU-PF into a force for social and political conservatism.

By the end of the 1990s, the ZANU-PF leadership coalition had become narrow and less cohesive: few former PF-ZAPU members remained in Cabinet, rifts had begun to emerge among rivals to succeed Mugabe (see below), and parliamentary backbenchers were restive. The party's loss of political legitimacy was starkly illustrated by the 1996 presidential elections: although Mugabe won over 90 percent of the vote, rival candidates withdrew because of irregularities and barely one-third of the registered electorate bothered to show up on polling day (see Figure 2).

In a serious internal convulsion, the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association (ZNLWVA) led by Chenjerai (Hitler) Hunzvi challenged the authority of the party in 1997. They bitterly protested their exclusion from the spoils of state patronage, especially after it came to light that senior members of the ZANU-PF inner circle had illicitly helped themselves to massive handouts from a War Victims' Compensation Fund. The rank-and-file "war vets" noisily interrupted the President's annual speech at Heroes' Acre and invaded party headquarters to hold hostage members of the Politburo. Unable to withstand the potential defection of a key constituency that the party used for mobilizing support and enforcing discipline, the President promptly conceded to demands for generous gratuities and pensions. These arbitrary and unbudgeted expenditures precipitated a crash in the value of the Zimbabwe dollar and set in motion a pattern of violent politics that characterized the subsequent decade. By caving in to the ex-combatants' demands and elevating war veterans into a strategic role in the ruling coalition, the ZANU-PF elite put a definitive end to the era of ESAP and the influence of technocrats on policy making in Zimbabwe. In its place, leaders launched a disastrous chapter in which economic rationality was abandoned in an increasingly reckless search for political survival.

The watershed entry (or rather re-entry) of the war veterans into a prominent place in national politics had far-reaching effects that stretched well beyond the sacking of the public treasury. Just as important was the radicalization – or for want of a better word, martialization – of ZANU-PF and national politics. In the next decade, violence and disorder would become the prime instruments of ZANU-PF rule, symbolized most clearly by chaotic invasions of commercial farmland. At the same time, an opposition movement growing out of civil society offered a more orderly and constitutional vision of the future.

The Crisis Decade (2000-2008)

Summary

The millennium marked the onset of Zimbabwe's descent into political terror and economic collapse. The turning point was a constitutional referendum, in which the opposition scored its first electoral victory. The incumbent elite struck back with land invasions, purges of judges, and the mobilization of militias. A Joint Operations Command (JOC) of security chiefs usurped key policy making functions from the Cabinet and the Reserve Bank became a slush fund for the ruling party and armed forces. The predictable results of these ill-advised policies were economic contraction, disintegrating public services, runaway inflation, and widespread public discontent. After MDC leaders were assaulted at a peaceful rally, external actors from the Southern Africa region stepped up pressure for a political settlement. When a June 2008 presidential election – the most violent in Zimbabwe's history – was blatantly stolen by Mugabe, SADC forced Zimbabwe's rival elite coalitions into an awkward power-sharing settlement.

Descent into Violence

The millennium was a critical juncture. The events of the year 2000 signaled that Zimbabwe's citizens were realigning politically. The ruling coalition, which represented the declining relevance of the politics of national liberation, was losing mass support to an emergent opposition that promoted a liberal discourse about peace, economic opportunity and human rights far better suited to a post-Cold War world. The year 2000 also marked an intensification of the ruling elite's strategy: finally abandoning any pretence of political toleration, ZANU-PF leaders endeavored to crush any opposition movement that threatened its permanent hold on power. They embarked on a no-holds-barred effort to retain office regardless of the costs to the country's legal and administrative institutions or to the development of the economy and society. For its part, the untested MDC struggled to make good on stated democratic principles amidst a pervasive political culture of predation, militarization and terror.

The turning point was the referendum on a new constitution. The government's official draft of the constitution ignored popular views – voiced more accurately by the NCA – for a reduction in presidential powers. In a vote in February 2000, a 55 percent majority voted “No” on a 20 percent turnout. It was the ruling party's first defeat at the polls.

The shocked official response was swift and brutal. The president and his colleagues blamed the loss on the emergent opposition movement, which it portrayed as a front for the white settler minority and Western imperial powers. Henceforth, these “unpatriotic” forces would be treated as “enemies of the state” who could expect no protection from the rule of law. Fearing another defeat in upcoming parliamentary elections in June 2000, the ruling party turned to a tried-and-true tactic: it whipped up grievances over land. War veterans and unemployed youth were manipulated into synchronizing a campaign of farm invasions, which was proclaimed as a third phase of *chimurenga* (liberation war). Since white commercial farmers had often openly supported MDC, they became targets of *jambanja* (chaos) by which unruly gangs occupied land, destroyed crops, livestock and equipment, and harassed landowners and farm-workers alike, forcing them to flee. Party leaders ordered the previously neutral police not to intervene. While some landless individuals received plots of land under the so-called “fast-track” land reform program, other land invaders were later ejected to make way for ZANU-PF *chefs*, some of whom now owned several farms. Between 2000 and 2002, some 11 million hectares were confiscated from 4000 white farmers and redistributed to an estimated 127,000 small-farm families and 7200 black commercial farmers.

The ruling party strategy for subsequent elections – in June 2000 (parliamentary), March 2002 (presidential) and March 2005 (parliamentary) – was to create “no-go” zones in the countryside that were closed to opposition campaigns. Under the direction of the party hierarchy, local ZANU-PF officials and members ignored constitutional guarantees of free association and assembly by effectively “banning” MDC from operating. In a mounting war of electoral violence, state-sponsored militias harassed, intimidated, raped and murdered MDC candidates and supporters. Table 2 shows how acts of state-sponsored violence peaked during the 2000 and 2002 election seasons. At the same time, the ruling party employed the mass media – especially government-controlled television and radio stations and daily newspapers – to restrict coverage of MDC, except to depict them as pawns of neocolonialism. For its part, the opposition used ZCTU and NCA structures to build a rival network of activists among public service workers like teachers, nurses and agricultural extension workers, including in the ruling party’s rural strongholds. The MDC slogan – *chinja maitiro* (“change your ways”) – held special appeal for urban youth, workers, professionals and the residents of disaffected regions: mainly Matabeleland, but also Manicaland. It was a new party with a fresh agenda whose coalition of supporters (including the private media, particularly the *Daily News*) had few associations with ruling or opposition political parties from the past.

Despite state-sponsored violence and electoral irregularities, MDC made significant electoral gains in June 2000, managing to win almost half the elected seats in parliament: 57, to ZANU-PF’s 62 (see Figure 2). The opposition challenged the announced election results in 39 constituencies and won four court cases, thereby forcing the ruling party to rely for a reliable majority in the National Assembly on the 30 members appointed by the President. ZANU-PF appealed to the Supreme Court, which compliantly delayed deciding on the cases until after the next general elections in 2005. Eventually, Tsvangirai grudgingly accepted the outcome and promised that MDC’s inexperienced parliamentary caucus would work constructively with the government. For the first time, Zimbabwe had a fully-fledged opposition party with a large enough bloc of legislative votes to prevent further constitutional amendments.

MDC was less successful in the March 2002 presidential contest, however, when Mugabe reportedly won 56 percent of the valid vote to Tsvangirai’s 42 percent (see Figure 2). The campaign was marred again by violence but also by the strict application of new legislation, such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which outlawed meetings of five or more people without police permission, and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), which required the registration of journalists and banned foreign correspondents. Together, these instruments amounted to the suspension of constitutional protections and the re-imposition of a state of emergency. Working outside the law, Mugabe used presidential decrees to manipulate electoral rules and to limit the availability of polling stations, thus disenfranchising many urban voters. As a result, observers from the Commonwealth, European Union and SADC Parliamentary Forum declined to endorse the 2002 elections as free and fair.

Tsvangirai contested the presidential election with a trumped-up treason charge hanging over his head for allegedly plotting to assassinate Mugabe; another treason charge was added in 2003. After a drawn-out trial that stalled the opposition politically, the MDC leader was acquitted of all charges. The March 2005 elections were relatively more peaceful. But fewer than half of the fatigued and battered electorate turned out to vote: of the 120 contested seats, ZANU-PF captured 78 to MDC’s 41, with the expanded ruling party majority a testament to the effects of violence, prosecution, hate speech and fear. However, the MDC was also in disarray, flip-flopping on whether to participate, thus confusing the electorate and later splitting apart over the issue of whether to take part in elections for a reintroduced Senate.

Table 2: Politically Motivated Human Rights Violations, 2000-2001

	February - June 2000	July - December 2000	January - June 2001	July - November 2001
Murder	8	1	2	5
Assault	569	176	192	548
Abduction	142	9	70	35
Assault Threats	439	33	199	805
Death Threats	567	10	71	73
Property Offences	263	74	66	360
Displacement	>2000	57	174	>4000
Percent State-Sponsored*	94.5	93.2	88.7	92.1

Source: Masunungure, Eldred, 'Travails of Opposition Politics in Zimbabwe since Independence' in Harold-Barry (ed.) 2004, p 182-3. Based on data in Amani Trust, *Analysis of Zimbabwe Presidential Election, March 9th and 10th, 2002*. Harare 2002, p 9

Abandoning the Rule of Law

In a further bid to reestablish lost authority, the ZANU-PF elite drastically curtailed the residual independence still enjoyed by institutions of the Zimbabwean state. The main victim was the rule of law. Until then, the judiciary had retained a good measure of professionalism and autonomy, often issuing verdicts against the government in constitutional test cases. But the anarchic events of 2000-2, whether land invasions, political intimidation, or election tampering – along with an amnesty cynically granted for perpetrators of violence – were all clearly illegal. In ruling on a case brought by the Commercial Farmers' Union, the Supreme Court found the fast-track land reform program had not been carried out in conformity with laws that the government had itself enacted. Rather than complying with the court, however, senior government officials including the Minister of Justice condemned the judges. And war veterans invaded the Supreme Court. Ultimately, in 2001, the Chief Justice and two High Court judges, who happened to be white, were forced into early retirement under threat of physical harm. In place of Chief Justice Gubbay, Robert Mugabe appointed Judge Godfrey Chidyaisiku a former ZANU-PF minister and reliable ally.

Following these events, the ruling elite dropped any pretence of constitutionalism. While they did not hesitate to rule *by law* – for example by concocting legal charges against their political opponents – they openly scoffed at a rule *of law* as represented by the independent authority of the Constitution and the courts. The "fast-track" land reform program was justified on political grounds as a return of land to its rightful owners, implying that all commercial farmers were illegal occupants, even those who had bought farms after independence, sometimes from the government itself. ZANU-PF leaders instead enquired rhetorically, "where was the rule of law when the land was being taken away from black people?" Indeed, by the time of writing, the government had defied three rulings from a legal tribunal of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) that had found that land illegally appropriated from South African landowners in Zimbabwe must be returned.

Beyond the judiciary, political purges also occurred at the grassroots, where public servants and local government employees who were deemed to have worked for MDC in the election were forced out of their jobs, especially in Matabeleland and Midlands. ZANU-PF dismissed the elected MDC mayors of Harare and Chitungwiza, replacing them with appointed city managers. And previously independent bodies like the University of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Republic Police were politicized by the appointment of ZANU-PF sympathizers in key management and command positions and by amending their governing legislation. The party even penetrated civil society by establishing parallel organizations to rival authentic church bodies and labor, student and municipal residents' associations. For example, the Anglican church became divided into pro- and anti-government congregations after the party openly sided with a deposed bishop and seized church property. In another instance, an *ad hoc* "labour committee" of senior ZANU-PF officials and war veterans prodded the party-sponsored ZFTU to embark on a series of factory occupations. In return for personal immunity for having embezzled war veterans' funds, Hunzvi delivered the ZNLWA to ZANU-PF where it became a key auxiliary force. Another ally of this ilk was Border Gezi, who transformed the National Youth Training Service into a school for paramilitary hit squads known as the "green bombers." While it remains unclear who petrol-bombed the printing press of the *Daily News*, once Zimbabwe's most popular newspaper, the tactics bore all the hallmarks of intelligence or militia forces sponsored by the ZANU-PF party-state.

The Militarization of the State

During the 2000s, Zimbabwe's electoral authoritarian regime hardened considerably: the polity became militarized and the military was politicized. Ever since the liberation struggle military commanders had always sat on the party's central policy-making bodies. But they remained largely behind the scenes until ZANU-PF began to lose elections, at which time senior officers were seconded into strategic political posts formerly occupied by civilians. Take the case of George Chiweshe, a former judge advocate responsible for military tribunals in the Zimbabwe National Army, who was appointed to the High Court in 2001. In 2004, Chiweshe was moved to the head of the Delimitation Commission to demarcate constituencies ahead of the 2005 parliamentary elections, for which he was accused of gerrymandering on behalf of ZANU-PF. And when the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) was created in 2005, Chiweshe was made its inaugural chair. Serving or retired military officers were also appointed to lead strategic public corporations such as the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM), the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) and the Grain Marketing Board (GMB).

By the early-2000s, a Joint Operations Command (JOC) of security agencies had sidelined the civilian Cabinet as the supreme, but unofficial, decision-making body in the party-state. The JOC originated in the colonial era as a counter-insurgency coordination organ chaired by the army commander. Now convened on a rotating basis by the heads of the army, police, air force, intelligence service and prisons, the JOC reports directly to the President. It takes on any policy issue deemed to impinge on national security, broadly defined, and has inflected the management of the party-state with military-style "operations." Without prior warning and with little advance planning, the regime suddenly announces "Operation X" or "Operation Y" for implementation by army, police or armed auxiliaries. The Cabinet, the line ministries, parliament and the local authorities are not usually consulted. This arbitrary and unconstitutional mode of governance originated in the fast track land reform program, but is now a standard operating procedure. Examples include "Operation Murambatsvina" in 2005, which was designed to stifle independent economic activity in the informal sector, especially trade in scarce commodities and foreign exchange. This campaign – in which some 700,000 urban Zimbabweans were rendered homeless or lost a business, and up to 2 million were indirectly affected – was condemned by the United Nations and other international agencies as a gross violation of human rights. It was followed by "Operation Garikayi," a housing scheme ostensibly meant for Murambatsvina victims but which ended up benefiting members of the security forces and ruling party. In "Operation Maguta" the armed forces were made

responsible for food production, not least to ensure that the troops themselves remained well fed.

The JOC and ruling party – whose roles and personnel are deeply fused – rely upon the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) and military intelligence to provide surveillance of the population and on the police to crack down on unauthorized political activity. As added elements to this lethal mix, “war veterans” and “green bombers” have been recruited into the police and army, blurring the distinction between regular and paramilitary forces. Because shadowy militias act as proxies, it is often unclear exactly who is ordering abductions and torture and who is executing these orders. And even when abuses in police or intelligence services are documented, perpetrators are rarely charged and invariably escape penalty. Ordinary Zimbabweans have been traumatized by such developments. Public opinion research shows that more than four out of five citizens fear to speak openly about politics. Political fear has in turn led people to adopt a risk-averse approach to public life: in contrast to the 1990s, citizens now manifest unwillingness to organize resistance, for example by joining strikes or protests.

A Collapsing Economy

As the decade began, economic management was already unsteady: runaway spending and unrestrained borrowing produced a mountain of debt, along with galloping inflation and exorbitant interest rates. In 1998, the President deployed the Zimbabwe National Army to prop up the fragile regime of Laurent Kabila in Democratic Republic of Congo, an ill-advised move partly motivated by a search for new sources of national income. Instead, the Congo adventure ended up squandering vast sums of public money and led mainly to the personal enrichment of a handful of senior military commanders and strategically placed politicians who won lucrative mining concessions and transport contracts. Meanwhile, health and education spending were sacrificed to a ballooning military budget. Looking for scapegoats, the President attacked the business sector (accused of being “in sympathy with white landed interest”) at a December 2002 meeting of the ZANU-PF Central Committee, blaming it for profiteering and inflation. Desperate for foreign exchange, the government formulated unworkable on-again, off-again rules requiring exporters to surrender export earnings in convertible currencies at official rates. This hostile business climate led to the failure or downsizing of many firms, thereby swelling the ranks of the unemployed, conservatively estimated by 2003 at 50 percent of the workforce.

Over time, the economic policies promulgated by the ZANU-PF elite became increasingly erratic and delusional. An alphabet soup of emergency recovery programs – ZIMPREST, MERP, NERP, and NECF – was introduced and abandoned in quick succession. Like King Canute trying to halt the incoming waves, the President used arbitrary decree powers in a vain effort to repeal the basic laws of market economics. Faced with sky-high inflation at the end of 2006, for example, the government announced “Operation Sunrise,” which required citizens to turn in their old currency in order to receive devalued banknotes marked in higher denominations. To address the dwindling purchasing power of the Zimbabwe dollar, the government then suddenly announced “Operation Reduce Prices” in June 2007, which mandated that retailers cut the prices of basic commodities by fifty percent. Not surprisingly, stocks of basic commodities like maize-meal, bread, sugar and cooking oil soon disappeared from shop shelves as producers found themselves unable to supply goods at prices below the cost of production. Instead, parallel markets thrived, where goods were sold at even higher prices and often only in foreign currency.

Despite these policy failures, few within the political elite “dared to suggest a course of action at odds with the preferences of the president” (Kanyenze in Harold-Barry 2004, 139). As a result, the last of the remaining technocrats in the inner circle resigned in frustration, like Nkosana Moyo, Minister of Industry and International Trade and Simba Makoni, Minister of Finance and Economic Development. In 2004 Mugabe appointed Gideon Gono as Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ), whose remit was to generate the resources for the party’s core political projects, which now included the regular

payment of the armed forces. Gono did so by pumping up the money supply and assuming quasi-fiscal functions previously held by the government's economic and spending ministries. The RBZ required commercial banks to place half of their assets in reserve accounts and raided the foreign exchange reserves of private companies, pension funds and NGOs. Side-stepping not only the Ministry of Finance and line ministries, but also the oversight of parliament, Gono acted as a *de facto* Prime Minister, decreeing all major economic policies and fiscal expenditures. By 2007, the RBZ's reckless policy of printing money led to six-digit hyperinflation that rendered the Zimbabwe dollar virtually worthless (see Table 3).

As for development outcomes, the period 2000-2008 ended in a full-blown economic crisis. At a time when real per capita incomes were beginning to rise in the rest of Africa and inflation was dropping in neighboring countries, Zimbabwe was battered by the world's lowest growth and highest inflation rates. The economy experienced negative growth in every year between 1998 and 2008, shrinking by half over the whole period; by the latter year it was close to collapse. The last official report on inflation in mid-2008 pegged the rate at 231 million percent, though private economists estimated far higher numbers. All key productive sectors – agricultural, industrial and manufacturing – operated at a fraction of former capacity. Consumers faced extreme shortages of staple foods, luxury goods, motor fuels, foreign currency and local banknotes. Unemployment surpassed 80 percent. Up to half the population was dependent on food relief. Basic social services crumpled: schools were closed countrywide and a cholera epidemic killed four thousand. Electricity blackouts were a serious problem. By then, perhaps a quarter of the country's 12 million people had taken the exit option by migrating to neighboring countries and overseas. This brain drain cut into the country's potential pool of qualified leaders, thus making eventual economic and institutional recovery all the more difficult.

Table 3: Key Economic Indicators, Zimbabwe 2000-2008

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
GDP growth (annual %)	-6.8	-2.7	-4.4	-10.4	-3.8	-5.3	-4.8	-7.4	-14.5
GDP per capita (PPP US\$)	3358	3144	3068	2775	2737	2606	2533	2346	2005
Fiscal deficit (% of GDP)	18.6	7.0	2.7	0.2	7.6	6.1	3.1	-	32.1
Inflation (annual %)	56	112	199	599	133	586	1281	100k	231m

Sources: IMF 2010, UNDP 2008.

Even as the mass of Zimbabweans sank into poverty, a small politically connected elite reaped benefits from arbitrage and corruption. Mugabe's key loyalists – an ever shrinking coalition – had vested interests in maintaining the *status quo*, which included preferential access, not only to land, but also to trading and import licenses, urban housing, petroleum products and many other commodities in short supply. The most valuable perk was insider trading of foreign exchange: purchased at favorable official rates, hard currencies could be transformed into small fortunes in local dollars when sold on the black market. In short, ZANU-PF leaders quite literally treated politics as a business. Through M&S Syndicate, a holding company, the party purchased interests in real estate properties, motor vehicle sales, the import and distribution of industrial machinery, water pumps, steel, building materials, and mining. These companies enjoyed sweetheart deals to supply government departments with essential goods and services. The Political Parties (Finance) Act (PPFA) is silent on limits on contributions from local corporate entities, a significant source of funding for the ruling party. Even more importantly, faction leaders within ZANU-PF (notably including Emmerson Mnangagwa and Solomon Mujuru) used political privileges to

build business empires, whose resources are deployed to advance personal political careers rather than corporate party interests.

Beyond the party, the extension of the official patronage network undermined the integrity of key governmental institutions. The judiciary became corrupted as judges, their salaries decimated by inflation, were wooed with gifts of commercial farms, SUVs and HDTV sets. With the creation of a Senate in 2005 and the expansion of the National Assembly (from 120 to 210 seats) in 2007, the legislature became bloated with new patronage posts, many of which accrued to ZANU-PF's rural supporters. The Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority was granted a Rural Electrification Fund to extend the national electricity grid to rural areas, especially chiefs' homesteads, thus further cementing their political loyalty. Agricultural inputs and maize intended for food relief were sold by party influentials or were awarded to card-carrying acolytes of ZANU-PF, even as these supplies were withheld from persons suspected of opposition sympathies.

The economic crisis had devastating effects on the quality of governance. Government operations broke down because poorly paid public sector workers lacked motivation or were absent from duty while seeking livelihood in informal markets or lining up to withdraw cash or buy petrol. By expanding the number of official jobs, ZANU-PF not only sought the loyalty of its own followers, but tempted MDC supporters to buy into a corrupt system. And, as ordinary citizens found that they could not survive without breaking currency or trading laws, corruption became a moral crisis that pervaded society as a whole. As parallel markets eclipsed the formal sector, daily life was unavoidably criminalized for everyone.

The Peak of the Crisis

The more the government lost control of the economy – which in turn reduced the amount of patronage available for distribution and shrank the inner core of the ruling coalition – the more it tightened control politically. In late 2006, the police beat and arrested leaders of the ZCTU and Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) who were protesting for economic rights and constitutional reform. The President labeled the ZCTU action as “a revolt to the system” and boasted that they deserved any thrashing. Teachers and junior doctors who went on strike in early 2007 were also detained. When the labor movement called for another national stay-away in April 2007, the state imposed a ban on political rallies and demonstrations. In a landmark event on March 11, 2007 the police prevented the Save Zimbabwe Campaign (a coalition of church and civic groups) from convening a “prayer meeting” in a residential area of Harare. Leaders of the opposition, including Morgan Tsvangirai, were brutally assaulted; one person was killed; 50 were hospitalized; and nearly 200 were arrested. Media coverage of these events evoked an international outcry, not only from the governments of Great Britain, the European Union and the United States, but also from the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. Internally, the Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter asserting that “black Zimbabweans today fight for the same basic rights they fought for during the liberation struggle.” Mugabe's reaction to this criticism was to announce: “If they (protest) again, we will bash them.”

Indeed, the period after March 2007 was marked by an upsurge of state-sponsored violence. The Open Society Institute, Human Rights Watch, the Solidarity Peace Trust, Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights, and the Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum have conducted careful research on the numbers and identities of victims. Collectively, their reports show that the frequency of arrests, assaults, and reports of torture increased in 2007 compared to previous years, especially in and around Harare. The principal targets were individuals holding leadership positions in MDC, whom the regime tried to brand as “terrorists.” Especially disturbing was the appearance of new tactics of home invasion and kidnapping in which victims were beaten in front of their families or abducted and removed to secret

torture sites. Also targeted for violence were lawyers who sought to defend victims.

As a result of the crackdown of March 2007 and growing regional unease about the broader national crisis, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) convened an extraordinary summit meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Even as SADC expressed continued solidarity with the ZANU-PF regime, the summit's final communiqué commissioned President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to facilitate dialogue between government and opposition in Zimbabwe. Whereas elements within the MDC seemingly committed themselves to the mediation process (though representatives of civil society unsuccessfully sought a seat at the table), ZANU-PF displayed much more reluctance. Mugabe delayed sending envoys to the talks in Pretoria and always refused to enter into face-to-face deliberations with MDC leaders.

Ultimately, a measure of progress was made. In December 2007, the ZANU-PF government announced piecemeal legislative reforms to POSA (to allow political rallies as long as police deemed no threat of violence) and the Broadcasting Services Act (to guarantee balanced coverage of election campaigns and selectively allow licensing of journalists and broadcasters). No sooner had agreement been reached, however, than Mugabe unilaterally declared a timetable for elections on March 29, 2008 without addressing MDC's precondition of comprehensive constitutional reform. Moreover, as soon became apparent, ZANU-PF did not intend to abide by the new laws: the police continued to block or harass opposition gatherings and the government-controlled media continued to praise the ruling party and castigate the opposition, if it covered their activities at all. And the ruling party – intent on bolstering its main social base among the peasantry – turned traditional leaders into appendages of the ruling party. Pampered with development services and consumer goods, the chiefs were expected to act as the eyes and ears of ZANU-PF in the locality and to deliver the rural vote (or, if necessary, coercively extracting it) in a typical clientelistic relationship.

The political crisis came to a head with general elections in March and June 2008. At first it looked as if the opposition had made the breakthrough that it had long sought when MDC-Tsvangirai won more seats (99) than ZANU PF (97) in the contest for the lower house of parliament (see Figure 2). The balance of legislative power was held by the MDC splinter group headed by Arthur Mutambara, which won 10 seats. After suspicious delays with the presidential election result, however, the ZEC announced that no candidate – neither Tsvangirai with 48 percent of valid votes nor Mugabe with 43 percent – had achieved the absolute majority necessary to be declared winner on the first round. A constitutionally mandated runoff election was therefore scheduled for June 27, 2008. But, in response to a vicious governmental crackdown – which killed more than 100 MDC officials and supporters, injured thousands in politically motivated beatings, and displaced up to 200,000 – Tsvangirai withdrew from the second contest. Mugabe went on to score a pyrrhic victory with 85 percent of the vote from a brutalized and shrunken electorate. But few in the West regard him as the legitimate president of Zimbabwe. And, for the first time, other African leaders began to call collectively for a transitional arrangement, perhaps via a government of national unity.

According to reliable accounts, Zimbabwe's top military leaders quietly seized political control in the immediate aftermath of the first round of the presidential election. There are credible reports that Mugabe informed the security chiefs that he had lost the presidential vote and intended to surrender power.¹¹ But the commander of the ZDF, Constantine Chiwenga – backed by police chief Augustine Chihuri, air force head Perance Shiri, and director of prisons, Paradzai Zimondi – allegedly vetoed this proposal. Perhaps fearing exposure to prosecution for rights abuses, they insisted that Mugabe

¹¹ The most authoritative rendition of the events leading to the JOC takeover is Craig Timberg's "Inside Mugabe's Violent Crackdown," *Washington Post*, July 5, 2008. See also Celia Dugger, "Slow Motion Coup," *New York Times*, April 26, 2008 and Allister Sparks, "Zimbabwe's Military Feels the Heat," *Cape Times*, April 30, 2008.

contest a runoff election, the campaign for which would be managed as a JOC operation. Code-named “Operation Mavhotera Papi” (How Did You Vote?) it would root out for retaliation all those suspected of casting a ballot for MDC in the March 2008 election.

As the International Crisis Group (ICG) observed:

The security establishment – police, intelligence and army – has always perceived itself as a praetorian guard for the country’s ‘nationalist revolution’ but it has progressively become a bastion of the ZANU-PF architecture of violence, eroding professional neutrality and making it a threat to public security and democracy.¹²

In June 2008, Tsvangirai claimed that, “the country has witnessed a *de facto* coup d’etat and is now effectively run by a military junta.”¹³ We prefer to characterize the military’s intervention as a silent coup and the resultant hybrid as a civilian-military coalition. The visible leadership continues to be drawn from ZANU-PF party ranks: Mugabe retained his position as national president and Emmerson Mnangagwa, a senior Politburo member and a contender for succession, now chairs the JOC.¹⁴ In part to deflect international condemnation, the Zimbabwean generals seemingly prefer to present a civilian political façade. But their apparent dominance in the tense 2008 election period points to the mutual interdependence of military and civilian elements in Zimbabwe’s governing coalition. And it raises the question for civilian-military relations, at least during moments of political crisis, as to which leaders are in ultimate control. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the civil-military coalition is today tilted in favor of the securocrats.

These developments represented an evolution of the governing coalition. Due to the requirements of armed struggle, the ZANU-PF that won independence was dual-faced: it had a military as well as a political visage. The exigencies of the independence decade – notably the integration of previously warring armies into a professional military establishment– forced ZANU-PF’s civilian and military wings to part company, at least temporarily (though Mugabe made sure to install political and ethnic loyalists in top security positions). By 2000, however, the ruling party faced a new situation, namely a mortal threat from the newly-formed MDC. The constitutional referendum defeat at the hands of an opposition alliance caused ZANU-PF’s political and security wings to close ranks again in a symbiotic party-military coalition. Crisis conditions in the economy and another resounding electoral defeat in 2008 apparently simulated in the minds of ZANU-PF leaders the conditions of a new liberation war. As such, with the party’s military wing in the lead, they resorted to the familiar tactics of armed struggle by forcing a peasant electorate to vote their way.

In sum, by mid-2008, Zimbabwe’s economic crisis was conjoined with a political crisis. A dictator, having rigged himself back into power after losing an election, faced a rapidly collapsing economy. Such was the leadership legacy of three decades of ZANU-PF. As a result, Zimbabwe’s politics had become profoundly polarized. The main contenders for political power could not agree on who had the right to rule. On one hand, the ruling party persisted in the hollow claim that it should rule forever by virtue of its contribution to liberating the country from white minority rule. On the other hand, the opposition insisted that political legitimacy requires regular renewal via free and fair elections conducted under a popularly approved constitution. They claimed that state violence and manipulated elections had invalidated ZANU-PF’s claim to authority. These political preferences hardened into non-negotiable positions. There was little middle ground or sense of the common good and scant appetite for dialogue. And yet, common sense led ordinary Zimbabweans to believe that a political settlement between rival coalitions was a prerequisite for a return to normalcy in the country.

¹² International Crisis Group, “Zimbabwe’s Continuing Self-Destruction,” Brussels, 6 June 2006, 8.

¹³ “Zimbabwe Opposition Leader Says Country Run by Military” *Voice of America*, 10 April 2008.

¹⁴ A hardliner with an intelligence background, Mnangagwa was Minister for State Security during the Matabeleland massacres. He was brought in to head Mugabe’s presidential runoff campaign reportedly because of his reputation for strong-arm tactics.

A Period of Transition (September 2008 – Present)

Summary.

The Global Political Agreement (GPA) of September 2008 led to the formation of a transitional “government of national unity” (GNU) in February 2009. This new settlement was no leader’s first choice; both Mugabe and Tsvangirai entered reluctantly. On one hand, the elite accord restored a welcome modicum of peace and economic stability. On the other hand, it papered over key issues, especially how to divide executive power, manage the economy, and ensure civilian control of the armed forces. In practice, the GNU has been unable to implement the central provisions of the GPA, leading to repeated breakdowns in communication and cooperation between President and Prime Minister. The roots of the impasse lie in the Mugabe’s unwillingness to share power and resistance to political reform by senior military elements in the dominant coalition. But the divisions, inexperience and organizational weaknesses of the rival MDC coalition are also to blame.

A Power-Sharing Settlement

Since late 2008, a regime transition has been underway in Zimbabwe on the basis of a fragile and contested elite political settlement. On September 15, ZANU-PF and the two wings of the MDC signed a self-styled “Global Political Agreement” (GPA). Three political protagonists – Mugabe, who stayed on as President, Tsvangirai, who assumed a newly created post of Prime Minister, and Mutambara as Deputy PM. – accepted a deal to divide state power and to govern cooperatively. An ostensible “government of national unity” (GNU) was sworn in along these lines on February 11, 2009. As discussed below, the advent of power sharing was both a landmark breakthrough and a flawed compromise.

Agreement was reached only under intense international pressure. No international observers, including those from the African Union, were willing to concede that Mugabe’s reelection was a legitimate reflection of the will of the Zimbabwean people. As a result, Mbeki reconvened the SADC mediation team in a last ditch-effort to extract a negotiated solution. By this time, conditions of political and economic crisis provided the necessary structure of incentives for leaders to come to terms (see Figure 1). Not only did the presidents of neighboring countries wish to avoid instability in the region, which would result in added flows of refugees, but rival elites within the country faced the prospect of presiding over deepening political schisms and impending economic collapse. And the general public was desperate for a return to a semblance of normal life.

Power sharing therefore seemed to promise several advantages. It offered an antidote to political polarization, a mechanism for the peaceful resolution of disputes, and an opportunity to attend to urgent humanitarian and development needs. Article 20 of the GPA required “a framework for a new government” in which “executive authority... shall vest in, and be shared among the President, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet” (Agreement 2008). Moreover, the President and the newly created Prime Minister would “agree on the allocation of Ministries” and other executive and legislative appointments shared in rough parity between ZANU-PF and the combined MDCs. On the face of it, a division and dispersion of executive authority seemed to signal the breakdown of the old party-state, even if the nature of the successor regime was far from clear.

But power sharing was no leader’s first choice. Each signed the GPA under duress and with considerable reluctance. Tsvangirai, having learned that he could win elections but still not achieve power, accepted the need for a change in political strategy that allowed MDC to get a foot in the door of

national government. Mugabe, humiliated in the 2008 elections and having lost support among fellow African leaders, needed to buy time in order to work out a fresh survival strategy. But the principals lacked the necessary level of mutual trust to make the arrangement work, especially since Mugabe had frequently shown bad faith in honoring previous agreements. Certainly, the parties lacked a shared vision for the future of the country: one side saw the GPA as a step towards completing a democratic transition and restoring a developmental agenda, whereas the other saw it as an opportunity to shore up the incumbent party's fading power and protect the privileges of its leaders.¹⁵ Moreover, in an effort to get to "Yes," the mediators papered over fundamental disagreements, the most important of which was the exact division of authority between President and Prime Minister. Because the devil of power sharing was in the details of GPA implementation, the settlement was a recipe for institutional deadlock. As such, the outcome of the transition was deeply uncertain.

Indeed, from the outset, rival coalitions contested the delicate equilibrium. Mugabe and ZANU-PF have repeatedly exercised the unilateral powers of the presidency and executive branch to make key political decisions without prior consultation. For their part, Tsvangirai and the MDC formations have attempted to resist the fate of PF-ZAPU in 1987, namely absorption into the governing coalition as a powerless junior partner.

This tense political standoff has inhibited the construction of effective or lasting institutions. Instead, almost every official and observer interviewed for this paper observed that all parties to the GNU are preoccupied with seeking short-term personal and partisan advantage. While leadership consensus can sometimes be obtained on narrow technical matters – for example, the mechanics of reopening schools or repairing water treatment systems – longer-term issues of political reform or socioeconomic development are disputed and blocked. Moreover, because the balance of power between rival coalitions is tilted in favor of ZANU-PF hard-liners and because the small number of determined reformers within MDC lack experience at governing, the unfolding political transition in Zimbabwe has been characterized by more setbacks than gains. Thus, by mid-2010, the "unity" government was so dysfunctional and deadlocked that both sides began to call for fresh elections as the only way forward.

Obstacles to Implementation

As a prelude to assessing the dynamics of leadership struggles within the GNU, this paper estimates a brief tally sheet of achievements and obstacles. On one hand, a coalition of reform elements on the MDC side was able to achieve a modicum of policy innovation and modest socioeconomic gains. On the other hand, entrenched elements in the ZANU-PF coalition were able, more often than not, to offset meaningful reforms by countermanding MDC political initiatives. Their strategy centered on provoking MDC to withdraw from the unity accord, thus ensuring its failure without ZANU-PF incurring blame. Indeed, a critic might argue that the post-2008 transition period barely alleviated prior conditions of political crisis.

On the positive side, hyperinflation was rapidly tamed. In January 2009, the government bowed to market realities by abandoning the Zimbabwe dollar and adopting as legal tender a basket of foreign currencies including the U.S. dollar and South African rand. The incoming MDC Minister of Finance, Tendai Biti announced monthly foreign currency allowances for all public employees, which, while token, provided a much-needed morale booster. He also moved quickly to mobilize seasonal credit for agriculture, to curb the overextended activities of the Reserve Bank, and to initiate reforms to the civil service systems for personnel and financial management. Consumer goods – both imported and locally produced – reappeared on supermarket shelves, albeit at prices that many citizens could not afford.

¹⁵ One MDC-T Minister argued that they were "sharing power in order to transfer it." While the MDC sees the coalition government as launching a process of incremental democratization in Zimbabwe, ZANU-PF views the power-sharing government as an incremental process of reclaiming power i.e. returning to an undiluted ZANU-PF government.

Schools and hospitals began to reopen. And economic growth rebounded to 5 percent in 2009 and 8 percent in 2010. In perhaps the biggest achievement of the transition to date, popular hope was born that *détente* between rival political elites would lead to brighter economic future (see below).

Political gains were much more limited. To be sure, the level of political violence declined from a peak in mid-2008 and the government convened bodies to undertake constitutional reform and national healing. But political persecution persisted: human rights advocates and MDC activists detained in 2008 languished in jail until April 2009, where some reportedly underwent torture. To this day, the MDC's nominee for Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Roy Bennett, has been hounded through the courts on ill-defined charges of treason and is now back in exile in South Africa. And militants launched a fresh wave of land invasions, including at the direct behest of senior security officials. In addition, ZANU-PF's informal infrastructure of political intimidation remained in place in the countryside in the form of youth militias encamped around rural schools; these auxiliaries were redeployed as the constitutional reform process and talk of upcoming elections got underway in 2010.

The fundamental problem with the transitional government is that power is not shared, but divided. ZANU-PF and MDC-T exercise power separately within largely exclusive, and often competing, zones of authority. Moreover the distribution of power is unequal, with the balance tilted in favor of old guard elements from the previous regime. Thanks to its intransigent stance during power-sharing talks, ZANU-PF managed to retain exclusive control over the coercive instruments of state, including the security, intelligence, and judicial services, as well as the politically strategic ministries responsible for land, agriculture, and local government. MDC was unsuccessful in a bid to obtain a Deputy Minister post in the Ministry of Defense, instead accepting that ZANU-PF would be denied a similar position in the Ministry of Finance. And, under intense pressure on an issue that threatened to derail the entire settlement, MDC was forced by the South African negotiators to accept co-leadership with ZANU-PF of the Ministry of Home Affairs, which controls the police. For its part, MDC has an edge (though hardly complete control) in the representative agencies of state, namely the House of Assembly and the elected chambers of many local government councils. In addition, as nominal heads of economic and social ministries, MDC ministers are well placed to serve as gatekeepers between the government and the purveyors of aid. But, because no party enjoys ultimate control, a divided government is unlikely to push through major pieces of economic or political reform that can meaningfully change the rules of governance. Instead, democratization and development are largely stalled for as long as Zimbabwe remains one country with two rival governments.

Moreover, a patronage culture endures. The Global Political Agreement called for a six-person executive (a president and prime minister, each with two deputies) and a large cabinet of 31 ministers and 16 deputy ministers. Yet the accord was violated at birth when ZANU-PF and the two MDCs colluded to appoint 41 ministers and 19 deputies, the largest and most expensive cabinet in Zimbabwe's history. The expansion of official posts to accommodate political allies suggests that both sides are willing expediently to sacrifice the careful management of scarce public resources in order to distribute political spoils. And some MDC cadres may well regard a government position as an opportunity to gain access to assets and rents previously enjoyed by ZANU-PF, as reflected in demands for state-of-the-art vehicles and other perks by MPs across the three parties.

But, so far in Zimbabwe (in contrast to the dynamics of power sharing in Kenya), contestation between rival elites is far more common than collusion. The GPA signatories rarely work well together. Indeed, Mugabe treats Tsvangirai with open contempt. For example, he has systematically prevented the PM from chairing the Cabinet in the President's absence, despite a GPA provision codifying this understanding. And, in practice, the Council of Ministers – which the PM does chair – has been sidelined

from a central role in policy debate and is treated as a subcommittee of Cabinet. Nagging disputes over “outstanding issues” of GPA implementation have led MDC Ministers to boycott Cabinet meetings, appeal for the intervention of SADC negotiators, and, in October 2009, to temporarily suspend participation in the coalition government.

Leadership Disputes

The sticking points are manifold. First, dissent wracks top appointments. Despite promising to “consult and agree,” President Mugabe unilaterally reappointed Gideon Gono as RBZ Governor and Johannes Tomana – responsible for arresting and prosecuting MDC leaders – as Attorney General. After months of wrangling, Tsvangirai announced that permanent secretaries would be allocated proportionally between parties, as would provincial governors (of which MDC-T would get 5, ZANU-PF four, and MDC-M one). But it transpired that presidential authority had secretly been used to reappoint all existing secretaries and that no date had been set to swear in new provincial governors. Then, in October 2010, Mugabe unilaterally reappointed the old ZANU-PF governors without, as required by the GPA, consulting the Prime Minister, prompting yet another walkout from Cabinet by Tsvangirai and charges that the country had entered a constitutional crisis. A generous interpretation of these events was that Mugabe was unable to sell an even-handed division of positions to his own party; a more cynical view is that he acted in bad faith throughout (Bratton 2010b).

Second, MDC’s control of the legislature – symbolically represented by a victory in electing its own candidate as Speaker of the National Assembly (including with crossover votes from MDC-M and ZANU-PF backbenchers) – has not been used to full effect. The party has been slow to develop a legislative agenda – just seven bills were passed in Parliament’s first session, all with little debate – or to amend or repeal repressive laws. Like other MDC principals who hold multiple leadership positions, the Speaker finds himself torn between party and government business and too easily tempted by offers to travel outside the country. And like MDC Ministers who face unsympathetic permanent secretaries, the Speaker must work with a Clerk of the House who is attached to the old regime and experienced at the obstructive arts of parliamentary procedure. As for the judiciary, it remains populated more by ZANU-PF functionaries than independent reformers (General Council 2010). Its ability to stand apart from the executive was further undermined in May 2010 when the President – without consulting the Prime Minister as required in the GPA – appointed George Chiweshe, formerly of ZEC, to the position of Judge President of the High Court to replace the respected Judge Rita Makarau who was kicked upstairs to the Supreme Court. This move can be interpreted as a preemptive strike by ZANU-PF to prepare for favorable court rulings in the next round of election disputes.

Third, progress has been slow in setting up independent commissions on the mass media, human rights, anti-corruption and the management of elections. For instance, new rules for reporting and broadcasting were delayed by partisan struggle over appointments to a newly constituted Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC). In the subsequent policy vacuum, the Prime Minister announced that journalists – local and international – were free to report on Zimbabwe without first obtaining official permission. Yet the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Information, who doubles as the President’s official spokesman, promptly issued a rebuttal, instead threatening non-accredited journalists with arrest and jail. In rare positive developments, the government announced that the BBC could resume reporting from Zimbabwe and that the *Daily News* would be issued with a license to operate. But the state-owned daily newspapers and monopoly broadcasters continue to ignore public statements by the Prime Minister and MDC Ministers and instead continue to pump out ZANU-PF propaganda (including jingles insulting to the PM), sometimes verging on hate speech. And ZANU-PF succeeded in getting its own candidate – known colloquially as “the media hangman” – appointed to head the ZMC. In November 2010, the President’s spokesman and permanent secretary in the information ministry announced that no private

broadcasting licenses would be issued before future elections.

Fourth, the constitutional reform process quickly became an object of dispute. The Prime Minister warned that the Parliamentary Select Committee should not restrict itself to using the so-called Kariba Draft constitution hammered out by politicians in 2007 as the sole reference material for the country's new supreme law. President Mugabe immediately countered that the new constitution must be anchored on the Kariba Draft (it retains a strong executive presidency) and that the constitutional review committee should regard it as the only legitimate starting point. The tight 18-month timetable for constitutional reform has already lapsed, with provincial-level public hearings postponed in squabbles over the size and allocation of budgets. Some observers fear that, as with the last constitutional referendum, ZANU-PF legislators or legal drafters in the Ministry of Justice will tamper with any new draft constitution, thus vitiating popular input into the process. Moreover, it is far from clear that, even following a popular vote, that Parliament could muster the required two-thirds majority to effect constitutional reform.

Fifth, the parties to the power-sharing agreement cannot agree on who represents the transitional government to the outside world. For example, the Prime Minister has traveled to the U.S. and Europe in search of donor pledges to increase assistance to a recovery and reconstruction program. Yet the President sought to belittle and sabotage these overtures. The *Herald* portrayed the trips as an initiative of Mugabe, who had reportedly "tasked" Tsvangirai to go to Western capitals in order to secure the repeal of travel bans and other targeted sanctions on the ZANU-PF elite. Apart from deliberately misrepresenting the purpose of the missions, this gloss on the truth set up the President to charge that the Prime Minister had "failed" in his "task." While the Prime Minister continues to look West to the U.S. and European Union for resources for the GNU, the President persists with a "Look East" policy that welcomes Chinese government investments and state visits from the likes of Mahmoud Ahmedinejad of Iran.

Thus, to date, disputes between rival coalitions in Zimbabwe's power-sharing government have usually resulted in victories by hardliners over moderates. After one year of joint governmental custody, only a handful of the two-dozen clauses in the GPA had been fully implemented and about half had not been implemented at all (World Bank 2009, Idasa 2009-10).

To date, SADC has been slow to enforce its role as monitor and guarantor of the power-sharing agreement, responding only reluctantly when one of the parties (usually MDC) raises complaints about unresolved issues. The non-implementation of the GPA has become the standard by which international donors ascertain the sincerity of the partners to Zimbabwe's political settlement. Judging that ZANU-PF lacks serious commitment to reform, donors have been cautious in disbursing aid to the government and have renewed targeted sanctions against party hardliners.

An Unreformed Military

Perhaps most importantly, security sector reform has yet to begin. Because civilian-military relations lie at the heart of Zimbabwe's fraught power-sharing experiment, we devote special attention to this topic here. A leading security sector specialist declares that, "Zimbabwe's security sector is both the lock, and the key, to the success or failure of the GNU" and asserts that "de-politicizing and re-professionalizing the military is a critical objective, but cannot be done overnight" (Chitiyo 2009). And yet, the MDC is under tremendous pressure to reign in the security forces, a matter of considerable interest to external stakeholders. For example, the U.S. Senate recently called for "civilian control over security forces" as one of the preconditions for full normalization of relations between Zimbabwe and the United States (U.S. Senate 2009).

The security sector – army, air force, police, intelligence and prisons – reports directly to the President and is given funding from the President's office, the costs of which do not appear fully in the finance minister's annual budget. The most powerful arm is the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) whose operatives have infiltrated government ministries, NGOs and political parties (including the two MDC formations). Prior to the transition, top leaders of the defense forces vowed publicly not to recognize Prime Minister Tsvangirai in any official capacity. Some security chiefs – the Commander of the Zimbabwe Defense Forces, the Commissioner-General of Police, and the Commissioner of Prisons – still refuse to salute him. These holdouts from the old order have also declined to attend milestone events in the life of the transitional government, including the inauguration ceremony for the Prime Minister and official gatherings to launch the *Short-Term Economic Recovery Program* and *100-Day Plan*. Thus, Zimbabwe's transitional government inherited a deeply politicized security establishment whose loyalty to elected civilian leaders is in open doubt.

In accordance with the power-sharing deal, a National Security Council (NSC) with multiparty civilian representation was intended to replace the Joint Operations Command. Chaired by the President, it has as its membership the two national Vice-Presidents (ZANU-PF), the Prime Minister and his two deputies (MDC), ten other ministers, five security chiefs, and two top bureaucrats. The Act specifies that the Council reviews national policies affecting security, defense, law and order (nationally, regionally and internationally) and directs appropriate action. The Act provides for at least one NSC meeting per month and for decisions to be reached by consensus. Although the Act establishes the Council's supremacy over any law other than the Constitution, it applies only for the duration of the transitional government and therefore will cease to have effect on the date on which the GPA terminates.

In practice, six months passed before the NSC held a *pro forma* introductory meeting. But it transacted no serious business and now only meets sporadically. Given the improbable requirement that its decisions must be made by consensus, the NSC is an unlikely vehicle to engineer the necessary security sector reforms. In reality, the civilians in the MDC lack the expertise and authority to compel the military to renovate itself (Pion-Berlin 2005, Trinkunas 2005). Unlike ZANU-PF, which had a military wing when it gained power in 1980 and could therefore bargain effectively with the generals in the Rhodesian Security Forces, the MDC has no armed structure. As Chitiyo notes, the MDC is "an overwhelmingly civilian organization" which "will have to learn the language of the military if it is to engage with them" (ibid.). Thus, Prime Minister Tsvangirai seems to have tacitly resigned himself to playing second fiddle to President Mugabe with regard to the critical security sector.

Much depends on whether ZANU-PF is able to sustain the nexus between guns and cash that the JOC hard-liners used to such callous effect in the run-up to the June 2008 presidential election. This model of election management involved the mobilization of both regular and irregular armed forces: the military provided the guns while the RBZ delivered the cash. With the dollarization of the currency, the RBZ is no longer able to print money and the Ministry of Finance has begun to reassert its authority over the central bank. If it is unable to pay agents of violence, ZANU-PF will have difficulty in again unleashing a brutal campaign of political intimidation. For this reason, hard-line party and military forces can be expected to redouble efforts to secure alternative sources of revenue, including illicit ones. The army's seizure of the diamond fields in eastern Zimbabwe in October 2008 – at the reported cost of 200 lives and with apparent forced labor abuses – should be understood in the light of the party's need to secure the resources necessary for maintaining the loyalty of the military (Centre for Research and Development 2009, Partnership Africa Canada 2010, Global Witness 2010). In the words of a watchdog group:

"army brigades have been rotated into Marange to ensure that key front-line units have an opportunity to benefit from the diamond trade...the enrichment of soldiers serves to mollify a constituency whose loyalty to ZANU-PF, in the context of ongoing political strife, is essential (Human Rights Watch 2009b, 3).

A Weak Rival Coalition

The limited impact of the GNU on institutional change and economic development is due as much to the MDC's weaknesses as ZANU-PF's residual strengths. For a variety of reasons, the Prime Minister – nominally the head of government business – has so far failed to activate a coherent development agenda. The MDC's policy documents and medium-term plan are vague on action steps. Undisciplined MDC ministers too often make off-the-cuff policy statements without party approval. Moreover, due to both institutional inertia and intentional obstruction, the fledgling Prime Minister's office (which did not exist before 2009) is routinely bypassed on policy decisions. The instruments for policy formulation, legislation, and coordination have yet to be transferred from the President's office, where they remain under centralized control. And the hard core of ZANU-PF permanent secretaries and department heads all too easily outmaneuver the small and inexperienced staff in the Prime Minister's office (PMO). Above all, the PMO is not an implementing agency; it proposes policy but does not execute it. That much became clear when the PM's 2009 drought mitigation scheme to distribute agricultural inputs to small farmers was hijacked by ZANU-PF structures at the local level. As one MDC interlocutor said to us: "We are in office, but not in power."

Under these circumstances, some civic leaders, journalists, and diplomats – and even reformers within the MDC-T – criticize Tsvangirai for being overly accommodating to Mugabe. As one of our interlocutors put it: "MT always backs down; RM never does so." The Prime Minister states that the President, rather than a key source of Zimbabwe's problems, is now "part of the solution." In short, the PM has claimed a "functioning working relationship" with the man who previously had him jailed, beaten and threatened with death. Yet the critics wonder why the MDC leader has not been more forceful in speaking out about continuing abuses by the security forces and their auxiliaries or for making use of his party's parliamentary strength.

As for building social alliances, the MDC has made modest progress in restoring government's relations with the business community, which had become deeply strained when ZANU-PF began to seize property. Even before the MDC was formed, business interests had offered covert support to the stay-aways organized by the ZCTU. And the MDC's neo-liberal economic program and good governance discourse resonate well with the business community. Eddie Cross – a former head of CZI – is the party's Secretary for Economic Affairs and is well connected to the wider financial and diplomatic community. When the coalition government was formed the business community was heartened when the key economic ministries were allocated to the MDC, especially the Ministry of Finance but also the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion. Of course, ZANU-PF ministers often countermand MDC initiatives, as when the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenization and Employment Creation enacted indigenization regulations (see below), a move destined to scare off investors.

Nonetheless, the "dollarization" of the currency has had salutary effects on the economy: even though demand remains suppressed, some normalcy has returned. The CZI reports that capacity utilization is rising in the manufacturing sector, up to 40 percent in some factories, especially among the few remaining export-oriented enterprises. Many companies that had closed are resuming operations and foreign investors are showing renewed interest. There is rising business confidence, especially in the new Minister of Finance. But there is also considerable uncertainty regarding the policies of the coalition government. Proposals by the RBZ Governor to re-introduce the Zimbabwe dollar were received with consternation, including by the Minister of Finance, who said that this policy change would occur only over his "dead body." And the MDC was blindsided in early 2010 when the President's office gazetted a surprise announcement of Indigenization regulations that would require 51 percent Zimbabwean ownership of all major economic enterprises. The Chamber of Commerce, whose members were

shouted down in public debates about indigenization, interpreted these moves as preparations by the old regime for further rounds of self-serving asset stripping.

In sum, business leaders still worry that politicians – MDC leaders included -- do not fully realize the extent of the damage incurred by the economy and the length of time it will take to recover. And they are not convinced that MDC can fully block all of ZANU-PF's continuing attempts at predation. They are discouraged by the failure of the GNU to so far convene a National Economic Council (NEC) as required by the GPA, a problem that signals the absence of an institutionalized forum for government and business and labor to resolve policy differences. To restore stability and confidence, private sector interests would rather see a longer period of political transition than that envisaged in the GPA. They generally support the deferment of elections to allow for a political cooling off period in which the government can put into place business-friendly policies and a stronger recovery. But, contrasted with the proactive role taken by the business community in searching for an end to apartheid in South Africa, the private sector in Zimbabwe is politically timid by comparison.

The mining sector is a special area of policy dispute and governance concern. With the collapse of commercial agriculture, the mines have become the leading export sector, accounting for 46 percent of external revenues in 2010. Yet the mining sector is particularly vulnerable to the opportunistic push for indigenization of asset ownership, which is unlikely to disappear completely as long as hard-line Ministers like Obert Mpofu (responsible for mines) and Savior Kasukuwere (indigenization) remain in office. The contracting economy has caused mines to close, for example among the high-value platinum group, throwing many out of work. Moreover, the ownership of key mines has become murky. Individual members of the political class, the former ruling party and national army, as well as international speculators, have apparently become personally involved in extracting wealth from gold, platinum and diamond enterprises.

Relations between the state and civil society have metamorphosed over time. Civic organizations played midwife to the opposition politics of the MDC in the 1990s and have sought an influential autonomous role *vis-a-vis* the transitional government since 2008. But tensions emerged within the opposition-civil society alliance when it became clear that SADC intended to exclude civic actors from political negotiations over the country's future. Thereafter, civil society hesitated to lend full support to the MDC during the March 2008 election campaign and has held its own "peoples' conferences" to call for economic and constitutional reform. Some civic associations remain active in monitoring the implementation of the GPA: a ZZZICOMP coalition is more active than the official Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC), which has barely got off the ground. And civic organizations have taken the lead in preparing the ground for a free and fair election including by raising concerns about voter registration, press freedom, election observation, and campaign violence.

But the installation of a transitional government and the terms of the GPA have created divisions within civil society itself. Emblematic is the rift over the constitution-making process with key organisations like the NCA, ZCTU and the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) vehemently opposed to a leading role for Parliament. They argue that the process of crafting the new constitution is insufficiently "people-driven," implicitly calling into question the legitimacy of the "inclusive" government. Recognizing that constitutional reform requires political power and technical expertise, other Zimbabwean civics and NGOs participated in events sponsored by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Constitutional Reform. Yet, by collaborating with the MDC-in-government, many civic organizations have laid themselves open to the charge that they are abandoning their appointed roles as the watchdogs of public accountability. As such, even the most influential and effective civil society organizations have yet to develop the sort of neutral and non-partisan stance that would enable them to serve in mediating roles

between rival elite coalitions.

As with the government itself, serious governance problems afflict voluntary organizations, most which operate with little or no oversight. Reflecting elite political culture (see above), a “founder’s syndrome” is prevalent, whereby the first leader of the organisation runs it like a private fiefdom, sometimes for life. While the rest of the economy was shrinking after 2000, a civil society “industry” was booming courtesy of donor funding, often with little accountability. Moreover, CSOs suffer technical deficits, in part because their best talent was drawn into the unity government. Masunungure has observed that, “political economy analysis in particular, but policy analyses in general, are Zimbabwean civil society’s weakest areas... especially evident in complex policy fields like land and agrarian issues” (2008, 66). Notable exceptions include the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, the Counselling Services Unit and, to some extent, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network. Women’s organizations – notably Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) – have repeatedly kept the flame of street protest alive in a context where most citizens have retreated into more passive political roles.

The Evolving Popular Mood

Just as a majority of civil society leaders grant more legitimacy to the transitional government than to the *ancien regime*, so does the citizenry at large. A public opinion poll conducted in May 2009 indicated that two thirds (66 percent) of adults interviewed agreed that, “creating a coalition government was the best way to resolve the recent post-election crisis”; only one quarter (26 percent) thought that “coalition government is ineffective; leaders should have found another way to resolve the crisis” (Afrobarometer 2009). Remarkably, the balance of favorable public opinion on this item actually increased to 72 percent by October 2010 (Afrobarometer 2011). Thus, widespread public support for power sharing constitutes a major political resource for the current constellation of leaders in Zimbabwe.

Importantly, however, Zimbabweans also view the GNU with their eyes wide open. Fewer than half see the power sharing deal as “genuine” (46 percent), with 32 percent considering the commitments of the principals to be insincere and 23 percent saying they “don’t know.” A specialized survey that probed the perceived dynamics of leadership in the GNU in September 2009 revealed that more citizens see MDC-T than ZANU-PF as “fully committed” to “making the Inclusive Government succeed” (42 versus 15 percent) (MPOI 2009). Realistically, they recognize that political power in the GNU rests more with the President (58 percent) than with the Prime Minister (10 percent). Finally, the general public is evenly split on the expected fate of the GNU: 47 percent expect it to survive and 44 expect it to collapse. And a majority of MDC-T partisans hold the latter view.

Despite such political uncertainties and power imbalances, the MDC-T leader is the principal beneficiary of popular support for power sharing. As of May 2009, some 78 percent of adult Zimbabweans said they trust the Prime Minister “somewhat” or “a lot” compared to 36 percent who expressed the same levels of trust in the President. And, whereas 81 percent approved the job performance of Prime Minister Tsvangirai after three months in office, just 24 percent said the same about President Mugabe.

On the economic front, the general public gives high marks to the transitional government, with 87 percent saying it has performed “well” or “very well.” It is seen as doing exponentially better than the previous ZANU-PF government at controlling price inflation (82 versus 3 percent), managing the economy (71 percent in 2009 versus 6 percent in 2005), and reducing income gaps (45 versus 4 percent). Given the government’s modest achievements to date, this groundswell of approval may have as much to do with a sense of relief and hope as to real improvements in concrete conditions and prospects. Overall, popular expectations for the delivery of wellbeing may be so high as to constitute a danger to a fragile new administration with an unproven track record. Almost three quarters of Zimba-

bweans anticipate that economic conditions will improve over the year ahead, both for the country (73 percent) and for their own families (72 percent). If these expectations are not met, public approval could quickly evaporate.¹⁶

Finally, as Masunungure (2006) has noted, experience with a violent predatory regime has led Zimbabweans to develop an aversion to political risk. Faced with an armed adversary that will stop at nothing to retain power, it is rational for citizens to maintain a low political profile. By 2009, fewer Zimbabweans reported participating in demonstrations or protest marches during the past year (8 percent), a figure that had dropped threefold (from 24 percent) from the height of anti-government mobilization in 1999. And in 2009, many fewer Zimbabweans (52 percent) than any other Africans interviewed by the Afrobarometer in 2008 (averaging 78 percent) said they felt “free to say what (they) think.” By October 2010, this figure had dropped further to just 32 percent (Afrobarometer 2011).

¹⁶ In a November 2009 survey, the Mass Public Opinion Institute found that optimism about future macro- and micro-economic conditions had fallen dramatically to 52 and 53 percent respectively.

3.0

Which Way Forward?

Towards Regime Transition?

The occurrence of a new elite settlement in 2008 marks a critical juncture in Zimbabwe's political evolution.¹⁷ Even if flawed, the agreement between rival leaders to share power signals a break in the hegemony of the ZANU-PF party-state and the onset of some sort of regime transition. There is no going back from this watershed. True, the pace of change is not pleasing to reformers, many roadblocks remain, and the final destination is vague. But, on balance and at the margins, the trajectory of the transition is positive for both democratization and development.

In the debate about the relative influence of social structure and human agency, analysts tend to agree that leaders play especially influential roles during periods of regime transition (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). When the routines of daily political and economic life are disrupted by crisis and ambiguity, then opportunity knocks for leadership. When old political regimes begin to break down, but before a new set of political rules is put in place, there is room for assertive leaders to mobilize people and resources. For that reason, the post-2008 period of transition in Zimbabwe represents a changed political landscape that holds the potential for setting the country on a new path.

The same applies for external agents, who may be able to help but not determine what happens. If critical junctures are to become developmental turning points then it is important for all actors to recognize their potential and make the right interventions. This implies, for external actors at least, the need to be informed sound political analysis and understanding of structural and cultural contexts. They need to be equipped to recognize the opportunities that lie at the frontier of the possible.

By the same token, the window of opportunity for structural reform usually opens only for short periods. The beneficiaries of old political and economic regimes, who are loath to abandon structures that have served them well, can be expected to mount rearguard actions to protect privileges. Unless developmental leaders act quickly and decisively, they can soon find themselves hemmed in by familiar obstacles that permit few points of leverage over outcomes. Some reformists may even be tempted to succumb to the same culture of entitlement and impunity that benefited their predecessors. In 2010, Zimbabwe was finely balanced on a knife-edge between reform and relapse, with the most likely outcome being a prolonged transition marked by continued contestation between pro- and anti-change forces.

One of the interviewees for this project characterized the actors in Zimbabwe's GNU as practicing "survival leadership," by which he meant that all parties are trying first and foremost to stay politically alive. In this regard, the current transitional period differs little from the "politics of survival" that char-

¹⁷ See Giovanni Cappoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism," *World Politics*, 59, 3:341-369. They define a critical junctures as "relatively short periods of time during which time there is a substantially heightened probability that agent's choice will affect the outcome if interest."

acterized the era of ZANU-PF hegemony except that, now, rival coalitions are struggling to outlast and displace the other. Whether political leaders emphasize development or predation depends largely on how secure they feel about their hold on power. Moreover, the former ruling party is not accustomed to sharing power; at best, it can only insist on controlling the division of authority on its own terms. This resistance to compromise is what makes the GPA an extremely anomalous arrangement for ZANU-PF; it finds itself compelled to embrace a rival coalition which it would rather eliminate, both politically and physically.

Over time, the politics of survival have led a decadent ZANU-PF elite into an increasingly narrow coalition, which now constitutes little more than a cabal of 200 or so military and civilian leaders targeted by Western sanctions. Indeed, the bankruptcy of ZANU-PF rule is well illustrated by the fact that the removal of these sanctions (which prevent leaders from traveling abroad and from enjoying access to their externalized assets) is now the number-one policy priority of the old guard. Fortunately, MDC leaders appear to have less self-serving and more broadly developmental aspirations. But the constraints of the political power-sharing agreement – obstacles imposed by incumbents, a prostrate economy, and lukewarm reengagement by international donors – limit the ability of these leaders to blossom into a fully-fledged development coalition.

If rival coalitions agree on anything, ZANU-PF and MDC concur that the current political settlement is merely transitional. But they envisage different scenarios on how, and how quickly, it will terminate. Without a shared strategic vision about regime transition, economic recovery or institutional development, however, participants in the GNU have been prone to fall back on tactical struggles for political gain.

In a context where all actors are short of resources,¹⁸ much depends on which rival coalition remains the most cohesive. Each side is rent with internecine cleavages, a subject that we address in conclusion as a way of trying to discern the way ahead.

The Old “Ruling” Coalition

In the midst of Zimbabwe's would-be democratic transition, ZANU-PF is undergoing an authoritarian succession crisis. The party is divided by factional splits that widen and grow with the advancing age (soon to be 87) of the top leader. A three-dimensional contest involves Mugabe as chief of the mainstream faction, with Defence Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa and Vice-President Joice Mujuru as potential successors. And the security chiefs wait ominously in the wings, potentially poised to strike in the event of a sudden act of God (Matyszak 2010). Factionalism deepened in 2009 with the death of Vice-President Joseph Msika, a stabilizer in the party's internal “struggles after the struggle.” And three ZANU-PF gatherings late in that year – the Youth League Congress, the Women's League Congress, and the main National Congress – saw each faction trying to position itself to control strategic organs of the party. While Mnangagwa's star rose when he managed the 2008 election crisis, Mujuru (and her husband) reasserted control over party organs by December 2009, outcomes that did little to ease the political and policy uncertainty surrounding ZANU-PF's future leadership.

How do ZANU-PF leaders hold their fractious coalition together? As best we can tell, they do so through fear and reward. On one hand, hardliners know that the party secured power by eliminating opponents and stealing the nation's wealth. As such, they cling together in shared guilt, disciplining any of their number (including Mugabe) who might feel tempted to break ranks in order to seek solo guarantees of legal immunity. The party also continues to wield force against the electorate, which means that

¹⁸ The old guard has gained a new lease on life by virtue of access to diamond revenues. The ability of ZANU-PF barons to deploy these revenues to secure political support, especially from the rank and file military, is a potential “game-changer” in the future struggle between rival coalitions.

Zimbabweans remain deeply wary about expressing themselves on political matters. As for patronage, the ruling party adapted over time to the declining availability of material goods, rewarding political loyalists with government jobs, public services, official pensions, commercial farmland, foreign currency, and now mining concessions. But as the country's economic crisis deepened, so the party's shrinking inner circle faced dwindling patronage resources. International economic sanctions bit hard, prompting top party and military leaders to worry about the future financial security of their families. As such, one of our interviewees suggested that, under the GNU, ZANU-PF *chefs* are "preoccupied with accumulation...more predatory now that they are politically insecure... and desperate to remove sanctions." Another commented that, "compared with MDC ministers who want to demonstrate competence, ZANU-PF Ministers don't care about governance."

Despite the apparently dominant role played by Robert Mugabe in the ZANU-PF coalition, the future of Zimbabwe cannot be reduced to the fate of one man. Along with his coalition colleagues, Mugabe has established an institutionalized system of authority with clear rules, structures and incentives. Because this authoritarian regime is underpinned by vested interests, it is likely to outlast the career of any particular dictator. Nor, amid the obvious signs of authoritarian erosion, should we overlook the capacity of ZANU-PF to rejuvenate itself, as it did after being challenged in the period 2000-2002. One can expect, however, that the military will play an increasingly prominent role in any ZANU-PF revival, a subject to which we now turn.

The Military Wild Card

The biggest threat to the completion of a democratic transition is a veto from the security establishment. The challenge for MDC is not so much to win an election as to actually obtain a transfer of state power. This final step hinges on winning the allegiance – or at least the neutrality – of the armed forces in relation to civilian political power. How then, do reformers get *securocrats* – who are said to align mainly with the Mnangagwa faction in ZANU-PF – to cooperate in the transition and not dread change? What combination of carrots and sticks would induce military elements to take a stake in a peaceful transition process? Presumably the intransigence of the security forces is rooted in fear of losing ill-gotten material gains or of being prosecuted for human rights abuses. If so, then reformers may have no alternative but to negotiate a further pact or supplementary settlement with explicit military and economic dimensions. As in several Latin America cases (and as with the independence settlement in Zimbabwe itself), the completion of a political transition may require an amnesty to protect perpetrators from transitional justice measures, guarantees of *de facto* property rights, or measures to professionalize or otherwise enhance the status of the armed forces. Or all of the above. In a *sine qua non* requirement for democratization, however, military commanders must in turn recognize the authority of a duly elected civilian government.

Note, however, that Zimbabwe's security forces are not homogenous. There are strains and frictions between units in the Joint Operations Command, including even alleged assassination attempts among its members. There are also indications of a hierarchical and generational divide between, on one hand, the senior officer corps (from colonel upward) and, on the other hand, middle and lower ranking officers and enlistees. The younger officers are better educated than their commanders and, blocked from promotion, may long to put the security forces back on a professional footing. As observed earlier, elements in the lower rank and file have publicly demonstrated their frustrations by rioting in support of demands for pay. It is beyond dispute that the army has encountered increasing difficulty in adequately feeding, clothing, equipping and transporting the men in barracks. And police recruits are reportedly running away from induction courses before completion. Together, these unprecedented developments threaten to fracture ZANU-PF's base of coercion and call into question the reliability of the security forces in putting down popular protest in the future. Experience with transitions elsewhere in Africa

suggests that, if parts of the military establishment defect to the opposition, then prospects for a democratic transition are greatly enhanced (Bratton and van de Walle 1997).

In a cause for concern, however, Zimbabwe's generals may already have moved beyond merely wanting to block transition; rather they may now be seeking to govern. So far, evidence of this threat is circumstantial. The Commander of the Defense Forces, Constantine Chiwenga, is reportedly angling for the party post of National Political Commissar as a stepping stone to State House (i.e. the President's residence). He is initiating graduate programs at a national defense college, perhaps to prepare loyalists for governing. There are even unconfirmed rumors that he is building a private army with commanders in each of Zimbabwe's ten provinces. As one of our interviewees noted, "ZANLAs (i.e. ZANU-PF loyalists in the armed forces) think more like the private army of a warlord than a professional army in a constitutional democracy." For the moment, however, the military junta in Zimbabwe seems to eschew an overt *coup d'etat*, preferring instead to masquerade behind a civilian façade. Nonetheless, the security chiefs reportedly now have little respect for their ZANU-PF political elites whom they ridicule for having accepted defeat in the March 2008 elections. The military view themselves as having rescued the situation and are therefore entitled to go beyond merely supporting civilian authority. They reason that, as custodians of "the gains of the liberation war," it is high time that they govern.

The New "Opposition" Coalition

Does the MDC offer an alternative mode of governance? The main complication is that the party cleaved into two in 2006: a main body under Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and a splinter group led by Arthur Mutambara (MDC-M). Internally, MDC-M is a dying political entity whose power base in western Zimbabwe is decomposing. At leadership level, both its chairman and deputy president died of natural causes in 2010. And turmoil in the party has led to the expulsion of three members of parliament and other top leaders from the party.¹⁹ Many MDC-M local government councillors in Matabeleland have defected to the MDC-T. Its leaders now seem preoccupied with hanging on to elected office and avoiding having to again face the electorate. Moreover, new parties have been formed, including Simba Makoni's Mavambo-Kusile-Dawn (formerly a movement) and a revived version of the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU).²⁰ Both formations, however, are tainted by their leaders' previous collaborations with ZANU-PF and face state-sponsored obstacles to building a grassroots base. As such, neither new party constitutes a serious threat to either MDC-T or ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe's two-party polity.

Even so, the MDC breakup, which was motivated more by personal political ambition than real policy differences, has split the opposition vote and hampered reformers from presenting a clear alternative to ZANU-PF. Both formations (but mainly the MDC-T) suffered heavily during the April-June 2008 run-off election period, when their leaders were scattered outside the country or were intimidated, abducted or killed by the agents of the state. As a consequence, party structures are presently weak, and, like those of ZANU-PF, must be rebuilt. But the leaders who could devote their efforts and expertise to this task have been co-opted into the transitional government. For example, the Secretary General of the MDC-T doubles as the Minister of Finance in the GNU and his party deputy is Minister of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion.

Moreover, the top ranks of MDC-T are thin with personnel who have any experience at governing. On these grounds alone, the MDC is ill-prepared to complete a regime transition, to take power, or to govern. Moreover, neither MDC party is internally democratic, with top leaders revealing tendencies to

¹⁹ The MDC-M split at a December 2010 congress. Former Secretary-General Welshman Ncube was elected as the new party president. For now, Mutambara remains as Deputy Prime Minister even as Ncube replaces him as GPA principal. This party is now being called MDC-N. To avoid confusion, this essay will continue to use the old MDC-M acronym.

²⁰ MPO's latest survey (August 2010) suggests that ZAPU is gaining ground in Matabeleland and has overtaken MDC-M as Zimbabwe's (distantly) third largest party.

ignore party rules, overrule popular decisions, and dismiss dissident voices.²¹ Indeed, the qualities and depth of Morgan Tsvangirai as a leader have been questioned. A biographer described him as “a hit-and-miss politician – capable of strokes of genius but also prone to periods of wayward and ineffectual leadership” (Chan 2008).²² For example, he has been slow to mediate a growing rivalry inside MDC-T between Tendai Biti, party Secretary General and Ian Makone, secretary to the PM who serves as a major private donor and the party’s last Director of Elections. On the other hand, Tsvangirai has shown an even temperament as Prime Minister, along with genuine concern for popular suffering and flashes of statesmanship. And in the treacherous terrain of Zimbabwe’s elite politics he has displayed exceptional bravery and citizens have credited him for this and rewarded him with their votes. Despite the best efforts of ZANU-PF to portray otherwise, there is little sign of a serious internal leadership challenge to Tsvangirai. In this regard, MDC-T is far less factionalized and consumed by internal succession struggles than ZANU-PF.

In terms of future prospects, a key consideration is whether MDC leaders, now that they enjoy a share of power, will succumb to the same predatory temptations as their ZANU-PF counterparts. In a concerted effort to explore this question, we asked all interviewees for this study whether they detected any such signs in the performance of the former opposition coalition now that some of its leaders are officials of government. On balance, the responses were reassuring. At the political center, MDC leaders were portrayed as “professionals and people of substance with their own means of support” who had no need for predation. A strategically placed interlocutor in the GNU argued that, even if MDC ministers wanted to be predatory, there are now fewer opportunities: “ZANU-PF has already grabbed them all.” To be sure, all senior GNU officials enjoy the standard perks of government office (like subsidized car loans) and a few individual ministers and deputies were named as displaying greedy – or at least entrepreneurial – tendencies. But we were told that the top MDC leader is “dead set against corruption,” which he would root out of the party because “his own credibility is at stake.” There is some evidence to support this claim since at least two of the MDC ministers who are rumored to have taken bribes were demoted in a Cabinet reshuffle in July 2010. And Tsvangirai took immediate action to suspend, investigate and dismiss local government councilors from MDC when they were charged with misallocating council houses and other improprieties.

Culture and Agency

But political cultures are slow to change. In African countries, political relationships remain highly personal, especially within elite coalitions but also between leaders and followers. Formal rules take second place to cultural norms like kinship, reciprocity and redistribution. When perverted, these norms fuel pathologies like nepotism and corruption. Indeed, African state elites – even those who are freely and fairly elected – invariably act as political patrons whose main goal is to attract a loyal group of clients. They manipulate the structures of the state and the procedures of democracy in order to distribute official goods in return for votes. In this climate of informal exchange, democracy takes on new and often unrecognizable forms in which ordinary citizens find great difficulty in holding their leaders accountable.

This last discussion brings us back to human agency. It is often said by casual observers of African politics that the continent needs better leaders. While there is a germ of truth to this insight, it places agency in the wrong place. Unless they are selfless public servants, political leaders are unlikely to voluntarily submit themselves to a rule of law, to strengthen formal political institutions, or to invest in economic

21 In conducting research for this paper we uncovered an interesting controversy. The original MDC constitution stipulated two five-year terms for party president, an incumbency that Morgan Tsvangirai would have met by 2011. But when the party constitution was rewritten in 2006, the pertinent clause mysteriously disappeared, apparently clearing the way for Tsvangirai to retain his leadership.

22 According to Wikileaks, a former American Ambassador to Zimbabwe described Tsvangirai as: “a brave, committed man and, by and large, a democrat. He is also the only player on the scene right now with real star quality and the ability to rally the masses. But Tsvangirai is also a flawed figure, not readily open to advice, indecisive and with questionable judgment in electing those around him”.

growth rather than political patronage. In short, democratic leaders rarely emerge of their own accord. They have to be held accountable by an active citizenry. And this is where democracy comes in.

Postscript: The Role of International Actors

This paper has focused on the dynamics of leadership formation and competition within Zimbabwe's domestic political economy. Yet international actors have always played important, if secondary, roles in supporting elite coalitions and continue to do so. This last section of the paper briefly draws out implications for international actors, first in relation to learning from past experiences and, second, in the form of recommendations for future policies.

Lessons

Retrospectively, the following lessons seem relevant:

- The departing colonial power was pivotal in negotiating a political settlement and encouraging policies of racial reconciliation at the time of Zimbabwe's independence. The key mechanisms of the 1980 Lancaster House pact were constitutional provisions that required an interim period of political power sharing and guarantees of economic property rights. But these conditions were only reluctantly accepted by the incoming ZANU-PF leadership as a short-term tactical means of securing independence.
- Along with technocratic elements in the domestic leadership, the international community helped sponsor the brief interlude of development enjoyed by Zimbabweans in the 1980s. Foreign aid underwrote the expansion of agricultural, educational, medical and infrastructural services to neglected populations in the rural areas. Under the right conditions, donors could do so again.
- Because Western donors initially wanted to see Zimbabwe succeed, they looked the other way while the party-state engaged in gross human rights violations in the southwestern part of the country. They preferred to regard Zimbabwe as a "good enough" democracy because it held regular elections in which small parties were represented in parliament. At best, this oversight represented a shortcoming in political analysis; at worst it represented a failure of moral principle.
- Intentionally or not (most likely not), the austerity measures associated with the economic structural adjustment program recommended by international financial institutions were instrumental in precipitating a mass mobilization of urban opposition against an increasingly incompetent, lawless and predatory regime. In this regard, economic structural adjustment had profound, if unplanned, political consequences.
- In the decade up to 2008 –which featured Zimbabwe's withdrawal from the Commonwealth, the beginnings of Mugabe's "Look East" policy, and targeted international sanctions – the West experienced a loss of direct leverage over the government in Harare (Lyman 2007). From 2000 onwards, Western embassies had few if any direct lines of communication with ZANU-PF. By isolating Zimba-

bwe, the West inadvertently helped Mugabe's party portray itself as a champion of anti-imperialism.

- As a consequence, Western governments have had little choice but allow SADC to take the lead in pressing for political transition in Zimbabwe. One lesson of the Global Political Agreement of 2008, however, is that power-sharing agreements imposed from above by international third parties upon unwilling domestic partners are destined for deadlock, even stalemate.

Policies

Given the present existence of a nominally "inclusive" government in Zimbabwe, the international community may wish to consider the following policies going forward:

- Insist on evidence of good faith by all parties to implement the terms of the Global Political Agreement as the main precondition for fulsome donor reengagement with the Government of Zimbabwe.
- In the meantime, continue to offer "humanitarian plus" aid programs that help improve the conditions of life of the Zimbabwean people. For the moment, international agencies (such as the African Development Bank, which manages a Zimbabwe Multi-Donor Trust Fund) or non-governmental agencies should be charged with implementing these programs.
- While acknowledging that Morgan Tsvangirai is the most popular politician in Zimbabwe, resist the temptation to back particular leaders or leadership coalitions. Instead of trying to pick winners, international actors should instead encourage the construction of durable rules, procedures and institutions. In particular, they should offer support to those civil society organizations, independent media, and democratic political parties that can help ensure that the next national elections are administered freely and fairly. Such assistance may require helping to build the organizational, professional, analytical, diplomatic and advocacy skills and potentials of non-governmental entities.
- Recognize that the immediate goal of international assistance is to facilitate a legal transfer of political power. The mere convocation of yet one more flawed election or the second-best compromise of another power-sharing arrangement is not enough. Instead, international actors should stand firm in insisting that Zimbabwe's next government reflects the electoral will of the people.
- The present political settlement lacks economic and military dimensions. Another round of elite pact-making will therefore be necessary, perhaps by including token moderates from the old regime in any future democratic government. A successful transfer of power must also provide assurances to potential political spoilers: that is, those who have committed abuses under ZANU-PF rule or who have benefited from the ill-gotten gains of state patronage. Distasteful as it may seem, offers of future financial and physical security may have to be made selectively to key members of the ruling party and security apparatus in order to ease them out of power.
- This having been said, the West should not be party to any final transition settlement that rules out the prosecution of leaders who have ordered gross abuses of human rights. Responsibility for the culture of impunity in Zimbabwe is broadly shared. It can be traced to blanket amnesties granted over the years by the Rhodesian regime, the British governor at independence, and by the president of Zimbabwe (Huysse 2003). This cycle must now be broken.
- Despite the ambiguity of its stance as an honest broker, SADC remains key to a resolution of the Zimbabwe crisis. The international community should support and encourage the new SADC con-

tact group – South Africa, Mozambique and Zambia – to engage the ZANU-PF elite and to move them towards peaceful acceptance of the results of a free and fair election. But the precise terms of any permanent settlement are best determined by domestic leadership coalitions rather than by outsiders.

- Western agencies should strategically and skillfully deploy their only real instruments of leverage – policies on international sanctions and promises of future assistance – in support of the above results. Any fruitful approach must involve considering carefully the appropriate time to relax, suspend, or remove sanctions once the Zimbabwe government has sufficiently complied with the SADC roadmap for political progress toward a genuinely democratic settlement.

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Background Papers

1. Adrian Leftwich & Steve Hogg (2007) "Leaders, Elites and Coalitions: The case for leadership and the primacy of politics in building effective states, institutions and governance for sustainable growth and social development".
2. Adrian Leftwich & Steve Hogg (2008) "The Politics of Institutional Indigenization: leaders, elites and coalitions in building appropriate and legitimate institutions for sustainable growth and social development".
3. Heather Lyne de Ver (2008) "Leadership Politics and Development: A Literature Survey".
4. Heather Lyne de Ver (2009) "Conceptions of Leadership".
5. Adrian Leftwich & Steve Hogg (2010) "The Leadership Program: Overview & Objectives".
6. Adrian Leftwich (2010) "An Overview of the Research in Progress for the Leadership Program: Developmental Leaders, Elites and Coalitions".
7. Isabelle van Notten (2010) "Integrity, Leadership, Women's Coalitions and the Politics of Institutional Reform. Bringing Agency Back In. Mid-Term Workshop Report, Cape Town 25-26 May 2010".
8. Edward Laws (2010) "The 'Revolutionary Settlement' in 17th Century England: Deploying a Political Settlements Analysis".



The Developmental Leadership Program (DLP) addresses an important gap in international thinking and policy about the critical role played by leaders, elites and coalitions in the politics of development. This growing program brings together business, academic and civil society partners from around the world to explore the role of human agency in the processes of development. DLP will address the policy, strategic, and operational implications about 'thinking and working politically' - for example, about how to help key players solve collective action problems, negotiate effective institutions and build stable states.

The Developmental Leadership Program

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