DEMOCRATIZATION IN ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

A comprehensive look at the social, political, and economic state of Zimbabwe both prior to and after independence. Provides a general overview of democracy and its shortfalls and reviews its applicability in the case of Zimbabwe. Through these three categorizes analyzes the feasibility of democracy in Zimbabwe and the way ahead for the nation.
PREFACE

This paper focuses on democracy building in Zimbabwe. While Zimbabwe may be the subject at hand, I hope this paper can be an example of how to implement the broader context of the democratization processes on a country by country basis.

What prompted the writing of this paper was the fact that many politicians, journalists, academics, and those in both the public and private field of development often times put blanket band aids on problems that need specific solutions. This is not to say that general ideas and solutions are not a good starting off point, they are, but what is needed is a whittling down and tailoring of those generalizations and criteria to fit a specific instance or problem. That is what I try to lay out and make clear in this paper; generic approaches to democratization will be analyzed through the lens of Zimbabwe. I believe fitting a solution to the problem will lead to a greater rate of success and long term democratic stability. Much like a doctor, in trying to better treat a particular patient, takes general medical knowledge and applies it depending on the circumstances at hand; I will take my (and other scholars) knowledge of democratization and apply it to the specific case of Zimbabwe.

By applying this methodology of putting generally accepted criteria for democracy and placing them in the context of an ethnographic study, I hope to illustrate that democracy is in fact feasible in Zimbabwe. Even more importantly I hope that as a by product of this work it can become a model for how to approach democratization worldwide.
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INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe, like much of Africa, has a rich history, spanning many periods of time. This paper will mainly cover contemporary society, but I feel it necessary to give you as the reader some historical and contextual background in order to better equip you in understanding the country that is Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe derives its name from the Great Zimbabwe Empire. Zimbabwe encompasses nearly 400,000 square kilometers. It is a land locked country bordered by Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia. Its main geographical feature is Victoria Falls. There are eight provinces and two cities with provincial status. The capital is Harare. The current population estimate is about 12.5 million. The majority of the population (75 percent) identify as Shona while sixteen percent identify as Ndebele. The language of the state is English.

Zimbabwe was a British colony from 1890 until 1965, when it was known as Rhodesia. In 1965 the Prime Minister unilaterally separated from the British Government and for 15 years the country was run under a unilateral government. In 1979 the British, white settlers, and blacks signed the Lancaster House Agreement giving the country its freedom and independence.

To date he ruling political party is the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). The President of the country is Robert Mugabe. The opposition party is the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) lead by Morgan Tsvangirai, who is currently the Prime Minister.
CHAPTER 1
WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

Introduction

Democracy is a ubiquitous term throughout contemporary society, everyone from politicians to journalists to academics and even lay persons throw the word about, but what does it really mean? This chapter attempts to give you a general overview of democracy in its various forms as to establish a working definition for use throughout this paper. This chapter will review what fundamental conditions are necessary for democracy, both generally and in regards to Africa specifically. Most importantly it will review and lay out what problems face democracy.

Liberal Democracy

The most common form of democracy is liberal democracy. Liberal democracy encompasses a vast arena of characteristics including, “respect for the rule of law, competition among individuals and organized groups, political pluralism, inclusive participation in the selection of leaders and policies, dynamic civil society, individual civil and political liberties, and constitutionalism.”1 It also includes human rights.

John Locke and many current political philosophers believe that the fundamental element of a democratic state is a government based on consent of the governed, and the

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preservation of individual liberty and property while respecting the rights of others.\textsuperscript{2} Thomas Hobbes also espouses the notion of political stability in order to preserve individual and community security. Samuel Huntington notes that maintaining political stability involves developing political and economic institutions. These individuals all believe that in a state sans such institutions there is no hope for the development of democracy. Yet these two things go hand in hand: institutions build democracy, while democracy fosters institutions.

The important thing to note about institutions is that they are never completely dissolved. In a country that is broken and attempting to rebuild itself based on democratic principles it must keep in mind that residual institutions still exist. When rebuilding a country it must be recognized that they are not working from a clean canvas, but rather that certain elements of the former society still remain, of which institutions are often the most important.

\textit{Western Democracy}

The West, namely the United States, has taken up the cause of democracy worldwide, especially in Africa over the past 40 years. The United States feels it is their role to “usher in a new world order” using a democratic framework they believe will foster democracy, peace, and development.\textsuperscript{3} The West believes it is its role to be the agent for the creation of African democracy.

\textsuperscript{2} Leonardo Villalon and Peter VonDoepp ed., \textit{The Fate of Africa’s Democratic Experiments: Elites and Institutions} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 271.

The democratic framework that the West deems appropriate consists of a constitution, multi-party system, free and fair elections, a strong civil society, and capitalism. If a country is able to fulfill all these criteria they will ultimately become a democracy. The constitution will lay out the legal and political structure of the state as well as its institutions. Free and fair elections keep in line with the Lockeian notion discussed previously, where citizens control the government through their ability to vote. A strong civil society will also bring together the divergent sectors of society and create policy through negotiation, agreement, and compromise that will accommodate the interests of all. Civil society will also keep the government in check. Lastly capitalism and the privatization of the economy with little to no political interference will help lead to economic prosperity and stability, and therefore democracy.

However, the West must recognize that their path to democracy has been vastly different from that of Africa and as such cannot superimpose their experiences and solutions. While “it is important for African countries to learn from the experiences of Western countries, it is unrealistic and counterproductive for Western countries to require African countries to replicate their models of governance and economic development verbatim.”

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4 Ibid., 107.
**Election Based Democracy**

What initially comes to mind when the word democracy is brought up is free and fair elections, but “democracy is more than the outward appearance of elections” alone.⁵ Political scientists such as Samuel Huntington call elections a minimal requirement for democracy. Elections are crucial to building democracy, and many academics believe it is the foundation on which all other aspects of democracy will spring from. Those with opposing views to Huntington note that while elections may be a baseline for democracy they “cannot in itself decisively contribute to the building of a democratic culture.”⁶

Elections do however provide means to simultaneous elect and oust leadership in a fair and structured manner. It is a means of checking and balancing the government, and the chance to alter the status quo. Ultimately elections boil down to the selection of leaders and the individuals chosen to run a country hold the keys to its success.

**African Democracy**

For Africa contemporary democracy has had a much shorter timeline than the western world due to colonization. “African states were not [originally] built on democratic foundations.”⁷ Traditionally African societies emphasized group rights over individual rights.⁸

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⁶ Ibid.,4.


While Africa had been well aware of democracy implementation of it did not begin until the 1960s and 1970s, and in some cases not until the 1990s. It was at this critical juncture that Africans began to throw off their colonial masters and regain ownership over their own governance. Each new liberated African country had to decide under what form of government they wished to proceed. “Of the thirty-six countries which gained independence in Africa… between 1956 and 1970, thirty-three” opted against democracy.9 Colonization had given democracy a bad name throughout the continent, yet some African nations were willing to move forward under the auspices of democracy.

A majority of African democratization began in earnest in the 1990s, in the aftermath of the Cold War. The Cold War had posed problems to those African countries attempting to shore up their political system. Africa was a pawn in the great chess game between the United States (democracy) and the Soviet Union (communism). Africa became an “instrument of control and manipulation” by these two great super powers attempting to flex their political muscles.10 Both nations felt little need to monitor where their financial and military support was going as long as they had a tally mark in their favor they were content. For the African countries the repercussions were astounding. “Both civil and political rights, the [core] foundations of democracy, were limited and constrained by the…dominant global ideologies” of the United State and the Soviet


10 Ibid., 127.
Union. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War democracy was given the opportunity to flourish on its own, and it began to take root in Africa.

More than a dozen African states threw off the shackles of their autocratic rulers or one party systems in the post-Cold War era. Multiparty systems and overall political and social activism began to spring up across the continent. Social and political awareness grew as more and more individuals recognized that their success and prosperity lay in the hands of their leaders.

New opportunities arose for Africans to grasp at the prospect for democracy. Yet for Africa democracy has become a “mixed bag of accomplishments, challenges, and largely unmet aspirations.” In academic and political circles this resurgence of democracy in Africa has been known as the third wave of democracy.

Each time democracy has sprung up around the world it takes on somewhat of a new flavor. Democracy is a complex set of processes and policies which must be tailored and fitted to a society. It is not a form of government which can be mechanically engineered. Democracy is remodeled and remolded to best fit the people of that

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11 Ibid.


13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

particular society. Each African country which did opt for democracy began the democratization process in their own unique way.

The “democratization process [is] first and foremost the result of complex pressures and developments” within a country.16 As noted earlier each country is not working from a blank slate, and there are certain constraints which must be acknowledged in order for the process to successfully move forward. Jon Abbink states that “establishing institutional democracy in African conditions will be a long-term process, dependent on the reduction of elite competition at the national level, on broadening the social basis for effective political communication, on economic stability and on international relations with encouraging donor-countries and trade partners.”17 In my opinion it is critical that a country moving towards democracy works with the resources as it has on hand and improve upon them. Most importantly Abbink points out that in most African countries there are in fact “underlying ideals of democratic culture” which must be garnered and tapped into if a country is to make a successful change to democracy.18

**Leadership**

In newly emerging democratic countries “strong, principled leadership is key to establishing and sustaining democratic governance…Studies of the relationship between

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16 Ibid., 93.

17 Abbink and Hesseling, *Election Observation*, 3.

18 Ibid.
democracy and long-term economic development cite the leadership factor as critical for producing sustainable results.”19

In African society these new leaders were usually the opposition leaders who lead the revolt against the colonial powers. Often times they had little to no political training, and if they had been educated in politics they had rarely if ever been given the opportunity to exercise their knowledge in the real world. While many of the leaders had been educated overseas in England, France, or even the United States they had no technical and hands on experience. Without practical experience they only had academic theories and policies to run on rather than tangible and tested means. More times than naught many African leaders were imprisoned or exiled during the colonial and liberation periods, and as a result they had little access to day to day happenings in their countries. Being cut off from their people lead to a gap in their understanding of the situation at hand and left them unable to provide proper solutions which would best benefit their nation and constituents.

Often times African leaders are elected into difficult circumstances, for instance ethnic cleansing, famine, and economic poverty. Therefore it is necessary that contemporary democracies lend their support and “provide capacity building [and strategic leadership assistance] to new political leaders” to deal with and overcome such hardships.20


20 Ibid.
Opposition

As was mentioned in the Elections portion of this chapter a crucial part of the democratic process is the ability to change the current state of things. This is only possible if there is someone challenging the status quo. There needs to be an alternative put forth otherwise change will be impossible. This is where opposition parties fit in. Opposition parties or groups contest the status quo and most importantly challenge a one party state. Chapter 2 will extensively outline the opposition movement within Zimbabwe.

Good Governance

Good governance has become the basis of democratization in Africa. Good governance has multiple facets. First is that the people have a say, but more importantly that they have a say in the governments actions. This in turn means that the government must be transparent and honest, and that corruption must be eradicated. Those in leadership roles must be competent and responsible, and as some scholars note they must have a sense of morality and right from wrong.

Problems Facing Democracy

As we have seen democracy is general as well as specific, however the problems it faces are universal. This section will attempt to sum up these problems, which in turn will provide the basis for the analysis of the rest of this paper in regards to analyzing the feasibility of democracy in Zimbabwe.
Free and Fair Elections

Elections as previously discussed in this chapter are a means to balance and check political powers. Numerous pieces of literature have been written on elections and many of them identify common and recurring problems. These problems include the need for enhanced election observation and a review of the political and legal constraints on elections, most importantly looking at the way in which elections are conducted and held. If elections are not held in a structured and legitimate manner then the results will be hard to uphold. The repercussions that stem from flawed elections can cause a major rift in society and lead to instability throughout the nation. If a country is unstable and elections are contentious this leaves a window of opportunity for authoritarian regimes to arise as opposed to democracy.

Leadership

(For more on this section see Leadership on page 8)

“Leadership is crucial to successful democratic transition and consolidation.”21 Leaders of newly emerging nations are often times lacking in political capital. They do not fully understand their role or how to interact with their counterparts whether in the executive, legislative or judicial branches. Leaders who do not have civic virtue are almost certain to fail based on historical precedence. Leaders that put their own self-

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21 Ibid.
interest and desire for power above those of community, and do not look out for national interest can lead to the breakdown of democracy in their nation.\textsuperscript{22}

Capital

Democratic development must have a monetary base. Money to help alleviate the social, economic, and political problems facing a nation is often deficient in countries attempting to form a democratic society, especially those in Africa. Therefore they must rely on external donors to assist them. Donors, either other countries government or non-governmental organizations, almost always tie stipulations to their donations. This limits the newly formed government’s ability to mold the society as they see fit to most benefit their constituents, and allows external parties to dictate the focus of the government. This can lead lopsided to progress, where one sector is boosted while another is neglected.

Rule of Law

Rule of law is a crucial aspect of democracy and vital to its foundation. Rule of law is what holds a government accountable for its actions. Rule of law maintains that not even the government is above the law. Rule of law “requires a clear hierarchy of laws, interpreted by an independent judicial system and supported by a strong legal culture in civil society.”\textsuperscript{23} Rule of law in essence is another way of keeping the government in check, by ensuring that it is transparent and accountable for its actions. If rule of law is

\textsuperscript{22} Villalon, and VonDoepp, \textit{Democratic Experiments}, 281.

not standard in a society the state can abuse its power without fear of repercussions and lead the nation away from democracy.

**Constitution**

The primary basis of a democracy is its constitution. Most African nations that emerged from independence drafted and adopted one. However if the legislative branch has little control over it the constitution becomes null and void. If the power to amend it is left in the hands of the leader or executive branch the consequences can be dyer. Leaders can manipulate and edit the constitution based on their whims and what serve them best, particularly the ability to remain in office. Constitutional reform as well as a deepening of respect for its rules and regulations must be had to overcome this key obstacle. If the constitution of the nation is not upheld there is a tendency for the breakdown of democracy.

**Culture and Ethnicity**

Popular political and social movements compromised of civil society are a large piece of the democratic pie. However, this offers the population means to align with various groups on different aspects which can be harmful to the democratic process if not properly managed. Allegiances based on loyalty to “an ethnic group, a political party, [or] a religious organization” can lead to marginalization of a portion of the population.\(^\text{24}\) When individuals or groups are ostracized retaliation on their part becomes a threat to those in power and as a result they can be brutally suppressed by the government. The

vying for power is a direct threat to the stability needed for democracy. Democracy if properly managed and executed can afford the fine balance needed to manage multiple cultural and ethnic groups, as will be illustrated in Chapter 3.

Security Forces

In a democratic society the security apparatus of the state is meant to enforce and uphold the law and protect its citizens from abuses. Law enforcement is intended to act as an entity separate from that of the political sphere. If the two merge and law enforcement is run by the government violence can prevail and the law can be disregarded. This once again undermines democracy and the consolidation of political and military power often leads to a dictatorship.

Freedoms

Most democracies are defined by the freedoms they afford their citizens. Freedoms such as the right to assembly and free speech are deemed to be pillars for the cultivation of democracy. Citizen must be able to exercise their freedoms without the fear of retribution for their actions. If the government restricts and suppresses freedoms democracy will be unable to flourish.

Media

An independent press is one of the prerequisites for democracy.25 In most democratic societies the media provides an outlet for all voices. It also serves as an impartial observer for both social and political issues. Yet in many countries the media is

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25 Inoguchi et al., Nature of Democracy, 90.
state owned and run. This is in order to “control alternative opinions” and regulate information.26 If this becomes the case the media ends up being a propaganda machine rather than an outlet for public opinion.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed a number of democratic principles and its problems, the next few chapters will delve into various aspects of democracy using the particular case of Zimbabwe and analyze its political structures, cultural and social aspects, and economic issues and how they play into the building of democracy in that country. As has been espoused in this chapter it is imperative that one “take note of the local perspectives on power, legitimacy and governance…[in order] to enhance democracy.”27 This paper on Zimbabwe’s democracy takes such an approach as the author believes this is the only way to establish lasting and enduring democracy.


27 Abbink and Hesseling, Election Observation, 3.
CHAPTER 2
POLITICAL HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

In 1980 Zimbabwe became the beacon of hope for all of Africa when it came to building a democratic nation. It was one of the last African nations to gain independence and it was thought that they could learn from the mistakes of the African countries that had come before them. Much hope was also placed on the shoulders of the newly elected Prime Minister and eventual (and current) President Robert Mugabe. It was hoped that he could provide the political stability needed to get the country on its feet and running as a democratic and independent nation.

Initially under Mugabe’s auspices Zimbabwe flourished both politically, socially, and economically. Within the first few years of independence Zimbabwe was well on its way to prosperity, but with the increasing and ever tightening political grasp of Mugabe and his party the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) it seemed the country was destined for a fate similar to its fellow African nations. There soon began a “growing disenchantment with the ruling party” and its autocratic tendencies by a vast majority of Zimbabweans.1 This chapter will outline the political road that the country has in fact taken and its ups and downs along the way to democracy.

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Pre-Colonial Period

As Chapter 1 noted, Africa prior to colonization was not democratic and there was no one single system of government on the continent or even in each country. In Zimbabwe specifically “there were distinct types of political, social and military organizations” based on ethnic composition.² Most notable of these ethnic groups were the Shona and the Ndebele. The Shona were patriarchal and socio-economically based around the nuclear family. Families would come together communally for labor and agricultural purposes. Therefore while communalism was a part of Shona society it was far from democratic. The Ndebele on the other hand were extremely militaristic and highly centralized. Their society was based on a social and bureaucratic hierarchy, which included a king. What the two communities did have in common was that they were extremely authoritarian. As such authoritarianism is tied to Zimbabweans ethnic identity and has been invoked as a means of political consciousness in contemporary society.

Colonialism

Colonial rule began in Zimbabwe in 1890 with the introduction of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) run by Cecil John Rhodes. The BSAC, as opposed to the actual British government, were the ones who ran and managed the newly named country of Southern Rhodesia. Over time the BSAC solidified a civil service based government. This government was segregated, in essence it created a two tiered government, one run by the colonists and one supervised by the colonists but run by the natives. “Colonial rule

in Zimbabwe created a dual system of government.”³ In 1923 governance transitioned from the BSAC into the hands of the white settlers who created their own form of government, which Mavima calls “responsible government.” While the oversight body of the government may have changed hands for the indigenous groups little changed, and the dual system of government continued. As such the natives were “denied a real opportunity to participate in and appreciate the democratic processes that was evolving” under the auspices of the new colonial government.⁴ The natives were being managed rather than being contributors to the building of democracy. “Therefore to the native population the legacy of the colonial system of government…is one of authoritarianism.”⁵

Colonialism – UDI Government

Zimbabwe should have earned its independence in the 1960s along with the other African colonial territories held by the British. However British Prime Minister Ian Smith blocked such an action when in 1965 he unilaterally declared independence from Britain in order to impede natives from coming into power. Smith wanted to block the African majority from taking over the country from the settlers. To Smith and his party of settlers known as the Rhodesia Front (RF) they were the ones entitled to govern Zimbabwe, not the Africans. Therefore for 15 years under the UDI government Zimbabwe was in

³ Ibid., 52.
⁴ Ibid., 55.
⁵ Ibid., 52.
somewhat of a political limbo with a stalemate between the British, the white settlers, and the blacks.

**Liberation Movement**

Zimbabwe’s liberation movement was one that hoped to ultimately attain freedom from colonial repression and the UDI government once and for all. With numerous sanctions leveled by the white run government preventing them from thriving blacks began to come together in nationalist groups aimed at gaining political and social independence. They wanted political control over their own destinies and lives. Two main parties were formed the Zimbabwe African People’s Unions (ZAPU) and Patriotic Front - Zimbabwe African National Union (PF-ZANU). Each party began not only a political mission but a military one too, when it was realized that “majority rule would be very difficult to achieve through peaceful means” in light of the actions of the RF.6

These liberation groups are where the ideals of authoritarianism and socialism emanate from for the country. The idea of the equitable distribution of resources as espoused by socialism became a rallying point for Zimbabweans.7 The idea was to redistribute the wealth and land of the whites into the hands of the disenfranchised blacks. Force and intimidation, along with persuasion and coercion, were used to maintain order and the status quo amongst the nationalists. Anyone who attempted to subvert the groups were silenced and dealt with immediately. Civic activist Brian Kagoro

6 Ibid., 64.

7 Ibid., 65.
notes that dissent or opposition was viewed by the liberation groups as anti-revolutionary, and therefore divisive.\textsuperscript{8} This same manner of dealing with subversives in war time eventually transferred into the government’s dealings in post-independent Zimbabwe, and today there is a plethora of violence plaguing the nation.

As a result of the success achieved (independence) under the authoritarian model of the liberation movement it is easy to see how democracy fell to the way side. Authoritarianism had worked in gaining independence, so why break something that was not broken. “The former liberation movement failed to transform itself into a democratic political party.”\textsuperscript{9} A major factor in this as noted in Chapter 1, is that leaders of the nationalist movements are the ones who became the new leaders of the country.

\textit{Lancaster House Agreement}

The Lancaster House Agreement was intended to bring political independence to Zimbabwe by mediating the stipulations by which the various parties involved would have to abide by. The parties involved included the British, represented by Lord Carrington, the white Rhodesians by Bishop Muzorewa, and the liberation movement by Robert Mugabe (ZANU) and Joseph Nkomo (PF-ZAPU). There were certainly gaps in the agreement, but it appeased the parties enough to end their 15 week diplomatic struggle which was rife with military intervention. The black Zimbabweans felt that the agreement “was a sound basis on which to build a truly democratic society in Zimbabwe,

\textsuperscript{8} Harold-Barry, \textit{The Past is the Future}, 152.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
free of racism and the exploitation of man by man.”\textsuperscript{10} Included in the provisions of the agreement were outlines for a military ceasefire, constitution, and elections including campaign regulations. The main concerns voiced by the liberation movement groups were in regards to the autonomy and sovereignty of the nation including how judicial officials would be dealt with, who would run public service ventures, how the army would be composed, and lastly if land ownership rights would be restored.\textsuperscript{11} Yet despite these pitfalls and unanswered questions the agreement was approved by all parties and signed on December 21, 1979.

\textit{ZANU-PF}

In order to properly grasp the political situation in Zimbabwe there must be an understanding of the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) which is the ruling party in the country. ZANU began in the later 1970s as an opposition group to the rule of Ian Smith. The group was founded on the ideals of Marxism-Leninism, with a goal of achieving socialist revolution in the country. ZANU was the largest and most active player in the liberation movement and upon the signing of the Lancaster Agreement were given the rights to rule the country.

As such ZANU-PF feels a sense of entitlement to run the country seeing as how they delivered it from its colonial shackles. As a result of this entitlement ZANU-PF has become more of a self-serving group than one which looks out for the publics well being


\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 27.
and best interest. ZANU-PF leaders have taken for themselves with little regard for the repercussions exacted on the nation. Despite these abuses ZANU-PF has been able to retain its power and stronghold of the country through intimidation and fear. The principles of the party under Robert Mugabe are far from laudable and certainly undemocratic, and therefore it is of little surprise that Zimbabwe has been unable to transform itself into a democratic nation.

Opposition – PF-ZAPU

Patriotic Front – Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (PF-ZAPU) was one of the other major players in the liberation movement. Upon independence they were ready to take on a crucial role in the development of Zimbabwe. In negotiations with ZANU the country’s cabinet would have four PF-ZAPU representatives. This made them a part of the national unity government but relinquished little power to them, as ZANU still had the majority with eighteen representatives.

By 1987 ZANU had been trying to eradicate PF-ZAPU but to no avail, so they rapidly switched tactics from violence to political machinations and invited PF-ZAPU to the negotiations table. At meeting held in December of 1987 PF-ZAPU was absorbed into ZANU and the party now known as ZANU-PF was born. The merger occurred between the two under a Unity Accord. The Unity Accord in essence created a one-party state (discussed later in this chapter) as the PF-ZAPU was the last bastion of opposition to Mugabe and his party at that time.
Opposition – ZUM

As the ZANU-PF grew bigger and stronger corruption abounded and disillusionment by the public and even those in the party began to take its toll on the political structure of Zimbabwe. By the end of the 1980s a number of key ZANU-PF leaders had defected from the party, including Edgar Tekere. Tekere in turn created his own party the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). ZUM received a vast amount of support from the population, especially those in urban areas. They also found followers in young people and those in the middle class.

In 1990 ZUM became a viable political party and a threat to the one-party state constructed by ZANU-PF. ZUM ran in the 1990 elections on the platform of the promise for multi-party democracy. While only garnering two seats in parliament and ultimately loosing the Presidential election, ZUM was the first successful opposition party to arise in post-independent Zimbabwe, as opposed to PF-ZAPU which was a legacy group from the liberation days. This changing of the tides shattered ZANU-PF’s perception that it was invincible. ZUM became a beacon of hope against an authoritarian one-party system, but its light soon grew dim. While the success of ZUM was short lived it did however lay the framework for opposition in the country, and as seen in Chapter 1 the necessity for opposition is a critical element of democracy.

Opposition - MDC

With the demise of ZUM a new door was opened for the opposition movement. The major opposition party that arose in light of the vacuum created by the end of ZUM and also currently still in existence is the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).
The labor arm of the ruling party known as the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) was set up in 1981. ZCTU injected the ruling party wishes into labor issues and vice versa. Mugabe noted that the ZCTU was able “to discuss political issues and refer their recommendations through the proper channels.”\footnote{Harold-Barry, The Past is the Future, 169.} ZANU-PF was able to keep ZCTU in check by allowing them to work their issues through the political system, as opposed to usurping it. This tactic allowed Mugabe to closely monitor the actions of the labor unions, and keep them at bay. He was hoping to deter ZCTU from exercising their potential political strength.

However over the years ZCTU began to align more with the workers than the politicians and they began to slowly drift away from ZANU-PF. In September of 1999 what Mugabe had attempted to keep at bay became a reality when ZCTU broke off from ZANU-PF and formed their own political party, the MDC.

The MDC overall was established on the union base of the ZCTU, as well as one of their sub-organizations the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). Unions and other key political organizations felt the need to form a new political party since it appeared that the current party was no longer looking out for their best interest. The MDC was able to rally the support of the urban employed and unemployed, as well as the middle and capitalist classes. It also reached out to the rural population, garnering support from “public-service workers like teachers, nurses, and agricultural extension officers.”\footnote{Ibid., 176.}
The MDC was “born out of civil society’s struggle [against] the party-state;” it was not comprised of factioned members of the ZANU-PF or any of the former political parties, it was truly a new party. At its inception the MDC “was more like an underground movement than a political party” but since their inception they have become a stronger, more cohesive and unified body, and therefore a political party in all aspects of the word.

The MDC was unique in its approach to opposing the government. Rather than demeaning the ZANU-PF and cutting at its policies the MDC offered itself as an alternative government entity. They remained respectful of Mugabe and his role as President but offered that they could do a better and more efficient job of running the country.

In 1993 Alfred Stepan, a scholar on democratic transitions, noted that an opposition movement needed to meet five key criteria in order to move an authoritarian regime into a democratic one. These five criteria are: “(1) resisting integration into the regime, (2) guarding zones of autonomy against the regime, (3) disputing the regime’s legitimacy, (4) raising the cost of authoritarian rule, and (5) creating a democratic alternative.” To this day and even under the 2009 power-sharing agreement between the two parties the MDC has never conceded to being absorbed by the ZANU-PF like PF-

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14 Ibid., 178.


ZAPU has done. MDC has kept a stronghold over civic organizations and has strived to maintain autonomy in those sectors. In putting itself out there as an alternative to the ZANU-PF the MDC has attempted to highlight the inadequacies of the current government, therefore meeting the third and fifth criteria. In meeting number four the MDC has continually tried to cut at the financial base of the power of the ZANU-PF. Being a union based organization it has used the power of strikes and stay aways to hurt the ZANU-PF through economic means.

With the MDC working towards meeting Stepans 5 criteria, Mugabe and the ZANU-PF once again reacted in their usual defensive manner and exacted violence against the MDC and its supporters in an attempt to cut at its base. “The strategic objective [of their campaign against the MDC] was in all cases to destroy the human, organizational, and financial infrastructure” supporting the organization. ZANU-PF’s attempts to rid the country of the MDC have been futile. For the first time in twenty years Zimbabwe had a viable opposition party. The MDC appears to be here to stay, and Zimbabwe was for all intensive purposes is now a two party state.

Constitution

The constitution is the backbone of any democracy, as was illustrated in Chapter 1. It sets up the limitations and provisions of the government and the rights awarded to citizens. For Zimbabwe the constitution has been a hotly contented and highly debated topic.

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17 Harold-Barry, The Past is the Future, 177.
In 1997 the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) was formed by the opposition. The NCA was composed of a number of civil society groups, including professional associations, churches, student groups, and human rights organizations. The NCA wanted the constitution to be reformed to give the people a bigger voice and diminish that of the presidents. It felt that the “1979 Lancaster House Constitution was defective and had outlived its usefulness.”¹⁸ The NCA’s purpose stated, “We strongly believe that the current socio-economic problems we face as a nation are a result of a constitutional crisis arising out of the shortcomings of our present constitution.”¹⁹

Initially the government chose to ignore the demands of the NCA, citing that they were just another illegal entity trying to infiltrate and bring down the government. But by 1999 the government felt the pressure mounting on the issue of constitutional reform and set up a constitutional commission in April of that year. The commission was to examine the current state of the constitution and then recommend improvements and changes. The panel consisted of nearly 400 people, most of which were all high ranking ZANU-PF politicians, including all the members of parliament. Representation for the opposition was limited, and as such the NCA refused to participate, citing the unobjective nature of the commission.

In 2000 the ZANU-PF commission published its draft of the new constitution and put it up to a vote via a nationwide referendum. Prior to the referendum the commission held roughly 5000 public meetings to inform the people of the commission's findings.

¹⁸ Ibid., 173.

¹⁹ Ibid., 173-174.
rally support for its passing. Once again ZANU-PF was trying to manipulate the political outcome in their favor. The revisions proposed only strengthened the powers of the ruling party and allowed for further abuses by the government. The role of the President was extensively expanded, to include immunity for his actions and the ability to invoke emergency powers when necessary for public and national security. It also revoked a substantial amount of individual rights, especially those of women. The draft was adamantly opposed by the NCA and MDC.

The referendum vote was held on February 12th and 13th of 2000. The constitution was rejected, 55 to 45 percent with only 20 percent of the electorate even turning out to vote. The ZANU-PF was left stunned with the outcome, but was forced to accept it. This was the MDCs first big success, and it quickly solidified them as an opposition party in Zimbabwe. For Zimbabwe this “marked a [pivotal] turning point in the politics and governance of the country.”

Elections

Zimbabwe has held almost routine elections since independence, as warranted by the Lancaster House Agreement. In Zimbabwe elections are held for both parliament and for president. Yet with a one-party government elections seem almost futile, as pointed out in Chapter 1. However with the introduction of the MDC in 1999 the contention over elections has increased substantially as the MDC gained power and momentum throughout the nation.

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20 Ibid., 175.
After only 9 months of existence the MDC was able to take 57 seats in parliament, leaving only 62 to the ZANU-PF in the 2000 elections. This was mainly attributed to the MDCs urban draw. “The outcome of the election in social terms pointed to the pivotal role of civil society in contributing to the shifts in Zimbabwean politics.”21 For the first time in 20 years of existence Zimbabwe had a substantial and successful opposition party. The success of the MDC ushered in a new political era. MDC had changed the political landscape of Zimbabwe.

With elections comes electorate. For the ZANU-PF the best way to ensure a favorable outcome was to disenfranchise voters from voting. Disenfranchisement by ZANU-PF occurred in a number of ways. ZANU-PF set up strict voting rules involving the ability to register to vote. They also revoked the citizenship of a number of groups in Zimbabwe including migrant workers, whites, and urban domestic workers. Citizens who resided outside of Zimbabwe were denied the right to vote by absentee ballot. This cut out a substantial base of MDC supporters, seeing as how ZANU-PF has intimidated them and threatened their lives forcing them to flee the country. On election day some polling stations were closed while at others people were impeded by road blocks from even showing up to vote. Polling stations and their hours were increased for areas where ZANU-PF had a strong constituency and decreased in ones where the MDC was viewed favorably. On election day “logistical, administrative, and other impediments” restricted willing and capable voters from doing so, especially MDC supporters.

21 Ibid., 181.
Substantial changes must be made in regards to the conducting of elections in Zimbabwe. Most international bodies are demanding that election observers be let into the country earlier and be able to stay for an extended period of time in order to properly ascertain the validity of an election. In conjunction with increased oversight, there needs to be an independent body who runs the elections as opposed to the party in power. This would allow for impartiality and a trust by the people as to the transparency of the election process and its results. Most importantly there must be an end to state sanctioned violence, especially around election season, if this was to cease more people would be willing to participate and there would be a higher turnout rate. As Huntington noted elections are simply a minimal requirement for democracy but if executed properly can lead a country in the right direction. For Zimbabwe, a nation which conducts routine elections, this would seem to be the first and easiest step they could take towards democracy.

Party System

Mugabe has essentially created a one party state with his political party the ZANU-PF. Zimbabwe has in essence been used by the ruling party to fulfill its own self-serving means. According to Mugabe himself “the supreme body in Zimbabwe is the central committee of ZANU-PF” when the truth of the matter is that in any democracy it is the citizens who should come first, not the state. In a one party system any opposition is swiftly squelched. A one party state is bent on domination and its survival depends on

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22 Ibid., 149.
subordination and acquiescence by the population, sadly this usually manifests itself in the form of violence. A one-party state always feels threatened and that its security is at risk and therefore if any threat surfaces it is quickly dealt with out of fear. Violence against the opposition and its supporters have been continuously perpetrated by ZANU-PF. Jonathan Moyo wrote in 1992 that “democracy cannot exist in an environment where violence and fear dominate the political process.”

For Zimbabwe the party and the state have ended up becoming one entity, as opposed to two separate ones. This allows for the will of the party to become the will of the state, when in reality it should be the party serving the state.

Security Forces

Ronald Weitzer conducted a study in 1990 on the security apparatus of Zimbabwe. His results showed that a total reformation of the apparatus would modify the one-party state thus creating the preconditions necessary to form a democracy. The problem has been that Mugabe has given the security sector “control over many political institutions.” By controlling the security apparatus of the state Mugabe is able to maintain his power of the nation.

Central Intelligence Organization

The Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) are the secret police force of the ZANU-PF. They are the enforcers of Mugabes wishes and whims. They monitor and

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keep track of those who could pose a potential threat. They have been know to infiltrate the MDC and become key informers to the ZANU-PF on the MDCs strategy. The CIO even takes routine trips into South Africa to monitor the status of exiles and opposition supporters outside the borders of Zimbabwe. They are highly feared within the country due to the violence and killing they are often attributed with executing.

Police

The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) are the general police apparatus of the ZANU-PF. Due to the creation of the one-party state when the party perpetrates violence the ZRP simply let it happen. They often disregarded court orders to intervene during violent outbreaks citing that the issues of those perpetrating the violence are political ones and therefore not in their purview to deal with. The ZRP are often given direct orders by the ZANU-PF to not intervene. The police are supposed to be the arm of society that enforces the rule of law, not disregard it.

Political Decisions by the Security Apparatus

In a democracy it is the President’s cabinet that makes key authority decisions in regards to politics. However in Zimbabwe this role has actually been placed in the hands of “the heads of the intelligence agency, military, and police” with the creation of the National Security Council and the Joint Operations Command. Mugabe has put a great deal of trust and support behind his key military and security leaders, many of whom were big players in the liberation movement and therefore have a deep loyalty to Mugabe.

Ibid.
and the ZANU-PF. As such it is these two groups who make a vast amount of political and economic decisions and policy for the country. They often make decisions outside their purview to include food production and distribution.

The security forces have no place in the realm of politics and have exacted an exorbitant amount of destruction over the political and economic sectors. The security apparatus needs to be removed from their current role and placed back into the traditional role of maintaining peace and order throughout the country, if there is any hope of establishing a democracy in Zimbabwe.

*State Sanctioned Violence*

The instruments of politics in Zimbabwe are not what one would typically think of, it is not laws, amendments, or regulations, rather it has become intimidation, torture, and murder. Due to the circumstances of the birth of the ZANU-PF and its militaristic history and background violence has become a tool of politics and of today’s state. Violence for the ZANU-PF is means to a political end and ensures their continued tenure as ruler of the nation. The party-state has engaged on numerous occasions in “campaigns of violence, intimidation, harassment, rape, assaults and even murder” in order to meet its political agenda.26 Often times the violence perpetrated by the ZANU-PF is targeted at the opposition, and escalates heavily during periods before elections. Violent crackdowns against MDC members and supporters are always meticulous, methodical, and calculated. With such violence abounding and being sanctioned by the government it is of little

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26 Harold-Barry, *The Past is the Future*, 178.
shock that democracy has failed to take hold in the country. As Chapter 1 showed, a democracy is supposed to be a society where people can exercise their rights and freedoms without the fear of retribution and retaliation. Zimbabwe has failed to meet that objective.

_Judiciary_

Jon Abbink notes that for most African nations the legal system “is a core value which defines the amount of public trust that people have in their government.”27 For Zimbabweans specifically the judicial and legal system has been the one stronghold of democracy that people could put their hope, trust, and faith in. “The judiciary in Zimbabwe was quite independent of the executive and was able to open up and safeguard space for civil society in spite of the [ever] strengthening executive.”28

Courts were often able to get convictions for those who perpetrated violence in the country, especially by the police, most notably the CIO. Yet with Mugabe’s presidential powers he would often pardon those convicted. The courts attempted to maintain the rights to assemble and demonstrate and often threw out cases that the state brought up against those who held protests and rallies against them.

The courts remained the only avenue to check and balance the power of the executive branch, at least up until the June 2000 elections. After the 2000 elections, Mugabe realized that the courts were impeding his power and set out to change the


composition of the Supreme Court. He replaced the judges with individuals of his choosing. This also included the removal of key white judges. As a result the ZANU-PF is able to legally prosecute dissenters and has even gone so far at to put members of the MDC on trial for war crimes and imprison them without proper cause or warrant.

An impartial body, separate from that of the executive, is a prerequisite of democracy. Therefore it is imperative that if Zimbabwe desires democracy they must remove the oversight of the ZANU-PF and restore checks and balances through the establishment of an impartial legislative body.

Land Reform

As we will see in the next two chapters, as well as this one, land reform is a prominent and recurring issue for Zimbabwe. The ZANU-PF has made land reform the catch all topic for any issues that arise regarding the state. If they want to blame the economy they use land reform as the platform issue (Chapter 4). If they want to highlight social disparities they bring up the land issue (Chapter 3). When the heat is on them politically they once again attempt to use the land issue to their advantage.

Throughout the 1990s the government had to some extent attempted to keep land squatters at bay when it came to land seizures. Yet in 1998 the ZANU-PF began to see the benefits in sanctioning the land grabbers in an attempt “to achieve a cluster of political objectives [which included] appeas[ing] the land hungry electorate, decimat[ing] the opposition and regain[ing] the party’s rural support base.”29 Brian Raftopoulos notes

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29 Harold-Barry, *The Past is the Future*, 178.
that “in political terms, the [land] occupations became a frontal assault on opposition politics, effectively violating the personnel and structures of the MDC in its growing rural campaign.”

For ZANU-PF the land issue is another way with which to rally rural support, blame the international community, and to mask the violence it perpetrated. Violence committed for the sake of the elections and against opposition were touted in the state run media as violence due to land reform, which in turn allowed the government to further abuse its powers. President Mugabe was given full presidential powers by Parliament to deal with the land reform issue. Society was having the wool pulled over its eyes, but it was too late, rampant lawlessness throughout the country in regards to land was sanctioned by the ZANU-PF.

**Conclusion – The Way Ahead**

As this chapter has illustrated one thing is for certain that if Zimbabwe wants to become a democracy, the one party state of ZANU-PF which has definitive control and authority over a variety of sectors and institutions must be eliminated. This in turn will lead to other aspects of political freedom and change. Thanks to the MDC this is slowly becoming a reality. As of the writing of this paper the 2008 Global Political Agreement (GPA) between ZANU-PF and the MDC which created a government of national unity (GNU) in 2009 is still in effect and being worked through. The GPA has outlined a number of the political needs required for Zimbabwe to become a democracy, including a

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significant number of the ones touched on in this chapter, including reform of the security sector, election revamping, and government transparency. As such the future looks bright for democracy in Zimbabwe.
CHAPTER 3

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF ZIMBABWE’S SOCIETY

The People as a nation cannot necessarily be homogeneous in respect of their cultural or racial backgrounds. This diversity should become more a source of our cultural wealth than a case of divisive notions of groupists superiority philosophy.

Election Manifesto of the Patriotic Front

Often times democracies are nation-states. Chapter 2 covered the state side of things where as this chapter will cover the nation portion. Nations are usually comprised of a multitude of communities with different beliefs, values and ideas. In theory the state is suppose to become the unifying factor for all communities regardless of any differences amongst them. Sadly however this is often not the case and the multiethnic composition of a state can become its undoing.

Samuel Huntington believes that cultural determinism will help lead a country toward the path of democracy. This means that the political system of the nation should be determined by the culture of that nation. Marina Ottaway notes that “ethnicity is more central than ever to the political process.” The ethno-cultural and socio-economic variables of the country will help to mold and shape it into a democracy. By viewing politics in such a way culture and politics ultimately become synonymous. “The political realm is regarded as the only realm for real social existence [and as a result] there is no

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1 ZANU-PF 1980 Election Manifesto of the Patriotic Front.

life outside the political.”3 Some even note that “the concept of the state…undermines social solidarity.”4

Ethnicity

Ethnicity, as noted to some extent in Chapter 2, is a critical element to understanding government operations. Culture can feed the “concept of society and the state.”5 “Zimbabwe is divided into several different communities that vary tremendously in the strength of their ethnic identification.”6

In Zimbabwe the dominant community is Shona. The ZANU-PF and to an extent the MDC both recognize and support Shona as the national culture. This in turn relegates other ethnic groups, namely the Ndebele, to second class citizens.

“The ethnic split between the Shona and Ndebele is aggravated by the fact that the division coincides with regional and administrative boundaries.”7 The Ndebele mainly reside in Matabeleland and advocate for a separate state. With this ethnic divide it is to the benefit of some policy makers to stress ethnic and cultural allegiances in order to be elected. Provisions must be made within the majority government to account for the interests of the minority and allow them to partake in the democratic process.

3 David Harold-Barry ed, Zimbabwe The Past is the Future: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004), 83 - 84.
4 Ibid., 78.
5 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 170.
Legacy of Colonialism

Many of the social problems currently facing Zimbabwe are the result of European imperialism. “Under colonial rule…the vast majority of the black people of Zimbabwe were socially marginalized.” Europeans viewed themselves as a nation, while Africans were seen as tribes, and therefore less of a person. European rule created rifts between whites and blacks that were upheld by the law, similar to the well known apartheid practices in South Africa. These discrepancies were especially seen in the professions and trade. Whites dominated the agricultural, financial, and industrial sectors. Blacks who attempted to enter into these sectors were restricted from doing so due to white mandated stipulations and laws.

Under colonialism whites held all the power while blacks were disenfranchised and as a result the Zimbabwe on the cusp of independence was a shattered and broken one. It was hoped that the state could provide a unifying factor for all Zimbabweans despite any differences, and that instead of these differences factioning people it could bring them together. It was hoped that the state could create a civil society, one where all citizens were viewed equally under the law. The state would turn a blind eye to things like race, class, or gender and provide for all regardless of these attributes. The state would provide for the greater common good. The newly formed government would be for all the people and not just represent one sector or interest group. If the state could

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8 Staffan Darnolf and Liisa Lasskso, Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2003), 16.

9 Joseph, Democracy in Africa, 300.
provide this type of political structure then who ruled the government would not matter because basic rights and provisions would always be afford to the population regardless of who was in power. What needed to occur was a reconciliation of both culture and politics and the creation of a complementary system where “national cultural practices are compatible with democratic structures.” At the time of independence Zimbabwe had the “potential to establish democracy as a system of governance and as a cultural practice.” No longer would cultural and social discrimination be a practiced by the government.

Yet this form of reconciliation has failed to occur. As opposed to a government who’s primary concern was for its citizens what Zimbabwe got was a self-serving one that put its interests above all others. This only further proves the need to eliminate the one-party state and allow for the country to move towards a democratic system where all citizens voices are heard despite their social, cultural, or ethnic identification.

*Civic Virtue*

Civic virtue is one of the pillars of democracy discussed in Chapter 1. Civic virtue “is a vital ingredient of social capital and it is one of the most vital social inputs toward making democracy work.” Mutual trust and civic engagement help to foster and coalesce civic virtue. Zimbabwe is sorely lacking in this department. Mistrust amongst

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10 Harold-Barry, *The Past is the Future*, 86.

11 Ibid., 84.

political leaders as well as between political leaders and the people have created and exacerbated tensions and conflict.

Civil Society

Larry Diamond, a preeminent and respected scholar in the realm of democracy, places civil society in high regard when it comes to the creation of democracy in a nation. He notes “as people come to place a higher value on political freedom and civil liberties – in and for themselves – they also become more inclined to speak out, demonstrate, and organize for democratization.”\(^{13}\) The desire to create a civil society free from the impediments of a despotic ruler prompts individuals into action. Civil society allows individuals to band together in the interest of themselves and lobby their government for recognition of their desires and wants. “Civil society is…[an] effective means of controlling repeated abuses of state power, holding rulers accountable…and establishing the foundations for durable democratic government, [as such they are a] segment of society that interacts with the state, influences the state, and yet is distinct from the state.”\(^{14}\)

Civil society during the liberation movement was key in “amalgamating the various cleavages and ethnic groups in their demand for independence.”\(^{15}\) Yet since independence this ideal of ethnic integrity and therefore civil society has gone to the way


side, and now the states only interest is in retaining power and privilege for those in ZANU-PF. Without a means for the people to voice their thoughts, desires, and interests outside of the electorate it is difficult for democracy to take root.

Unions

In Zimbabwe the one sector of civil society which has remained strong is unions. Unions have the means to advocate for civil liberties. Unions exercise this power through strikes. In 1997 unions began to strike due to repeated abuses by the government, most of these public sector strikes were conducted by teachers and health workers. In that year alone over 200 strikes were held. It was through this solidarity and “disenchantment with the lack of political space for civil society participation” that a number of the unions joined together in the forming of the MDC as outlined in Chapter 2.

Middle Class

A developed middle class has the potential to weaken authoritarian regimes. The build up and strength of the middle class can assist in the economic and political liberalization of a country. Yet if the middle class is suppressed by the government the ability of a country to become democratic is severely restricted. According to Scott Taylor an analysis of the middle-classes involvement can help to explain in part “the persistence of neopatrimonial rule and the formation of illiberal but nominally democratic regimes in Zimbabwe.”16 It is thought by a number of scholars, including Taylor, that the middle class holds the proper credentials to transform a government polity. These

credentials include “a belief in the rule of law, respect for property rights, a demand for participation and choice, and an interest in limiting political power and tenure.”¹⁷

Although it must be noted that often times the middle class vies for democracy only because in the long run it will benefit them both financially and socially to do so.

Taylor identifies three critical impediments placed on the middle class by the state, “(1) co-optation by blacks active in the private sector, (2) the alliance between the state and white settler interests, and (3) active suppression of the black middle class development.”¹⁸ Number two in particular illustrates how the state, economy, and social life intersect. The state ensures that the economy benefits them and in order to do so suppresses the success of the black entrepreneur. If the state can maintain relations with the white community who hold most of the economic equity they can ensure their own survival but at the expense of the black populous.

Of the three limiting factors the third is the most important in restricting the growth of the middle class. The government can only ensure its survival if it is able to maintain a monopoly on the power structures of the state, if they permitted the middle class to grow its power could consolidate and therefore threaten the authority of the government. Yet by tightening the reigns and discarding those who oppose them the ZANU-PF only further fuels the pool of individuals vying for their demise. The MDC and the opposition parties through the decades are proof that the governments current

¹⁷Ibid., 241.

¹⁸Ibid., 244.
stance of dealing with dissenters will eventually backfire on them as those outside of the state apparatus become disillusioned and come together to fight the regime.

Media

A key demographic of civil society is the media. The media “provides information on public policy issues and provides [society with] a platform for discussion.”\(^\text{19}\) However in Zimbabwe this has failed to come to fruition. The way the media is conducted “in Zimbabwe reveals the contradictions between the authoritarian and democratic impulses in the political development of the country.”\(^\text{20}\) On the one hand the media is democratic in the sense that it even exits and operates in a country like Zimbabwe. In theory the media is supposed to be an impartial observer. The media is intended to “empower [its] audience by making them aware of their civil and political rights and by explaining how and why these rights should be exercised.”\(^\text{21}\) The media is the mechanism through which free speech and discussion can be had on a number of issues, in particular politics. Yet in Zimbabwe these democratic tendencies are impeded by the ZANU-PF's strict control over the content disseminated by news outlets, both in print and on television. The media in essence has become another political apparatus and puppet of the government.


\(^{20}\) Darnolf and Lasskso, *Twenty Years of Independence*, 196.

\(^{21}\) Abbink and Hesseling, *Election Observation*, 62.
For instance during election periods ZANU-PF bars the opposition from radio and television, resulting in nearly 90 percent of the media coverage being solely on ZANU-PF, and the other 10 percent on bashing the opposition. ZANU-PF also frequently bans foreign media from the country because they are less able to control the content which is released. Even today under the GNU the MDC gets little to no media coverage as ZANU-PF forces the media to remove any content highlighting their achievements.

In Zimbabwe the media is unable to live up to its impartial and democratic heritage due to the governments control over it. ZANU-PF has in essence turned the media into its own self-serving propaganda machine. If the Zimbabwean media wishes “to embark on a process of democratization, they will have to come into their own” and shed the shackles of the government.22

Women

Many women’s issue to date in Zimbabwe stem from a patriarchal model of society, and one of individual ownership. Zimbabwe prior to independence practiced traditional gender roles where women were subservient to men. Women were seen as “reproducers, caretakers, cultivators and mainstays of the family” while men were the token breadwinner.23 Their society also practiced male only inheritance as well as bride price.

22 Ibid., 64.

23 Darnolf and Lasskso, Twenty Years of Independence, 161.
“One of the most exciting aspects of the new political process in Zimbabwe has been the emergence of a vibrant women’s movement and the struggles for the rights of women.”

At the onset of independence the new government “promised power and esteem to women.”

Women were under the impression that new opportunities would be open to them and that they would have a freedom over their lives that they once did not have. Initially the government was proactive, eliminating sex based pay and promotion processes in the work place with the passing of the Industrial Relations Act and the Labor Relations Act. The passing of the Matrimonial Causes Act gave women the right to property in light of a divorce. The Legal Age of Majority Act allowed women to enter into social contracts including marriage of their own free will without the consent of the family. Yet the clear promise and actions that they party had made soon became one of contradictions and half-truths. On the one hand the ZANU-PF promised women a place in society as productive workers equal to males while on the other hand touting women as the core household providers. They also did little to remove any incentives or privileges for men, which as a result continued to keep women down. While making laws and policies to assist women they did little to ensure they were implemented. Once again the government seemed to be paying lip service to the advancement of women because it was not politically and economically prudent.

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25 Darnolf and Lasskso, Twenty Years of Independence, 159.
“The challenge of how to defend the rights of women while retaining the positive aspects of the African ideation system remains one of the major tasks of political transformation in Africa.”

A balance and compromise need to be made in regards to women’s roles, one where the state and women can benefit. In a democratic state this could be achieved.

*Indigenization and the White Relationship*

One of they key platform issues for Mugabe and the ZANU-PF has been the promise of indigenization and black empowerment. Mugabe promised redistribution of land and therefore wealth into the hands of blacks, and out of those of the white. When things were going badly for the government it would use the whites as its scapegoat, while at other times using white economic wealth and power to its advantage. ZANU-PF walks a fine line between maintaining relationships with whites for financial reasons and appeasing blacks desire for social and economic growth.

In 1990 the government sanctioned the Indigenous Business Development Centre (IBDC). The IBDC was an organization that strove to increase the size of the economy and have that growth be attributable to the black, without necessarily deterring the white sector of business. The goal of the IBDC was to bolster the economy through the growth and participation of indigenous business people, with simultaneous growth by the white sector. Again we see an example of where the government plays off the social dynamic for both political and economic gains.

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26 Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe*, 82.
Healthcare in almost any country highlights the inequalities in a society. Historically under colonialism there is always a gapping disparity between white and black medical care, in Zimbabwe this was blatantly apparent. Whites had access to the best medical care, comparable to that in Western countries, where as blacks has little to no access to healthcare, especially if they lived in rural areas.

With the gaining of independence in 1980 the government committed itself to increasing health care for its citizens, especially those in rural areas. This was to be accomplished through the standing up of rural health centres. “Symbolically, the centres are...important because they are one of the most significant...indications” of change since independence.\(^\text{27}\) Areas which were previously lacking in health care centers under the British regime saw substantial increases in the set up of them under ZANU-PF. Although it must be noted that the set up of the health care centers were mainly placed in the hands of local officials rather than cabinet members of the ZANU-PF. Healthcare was fairly decentralized in Zimbabwe, and this is attributed for its success. Herbst observes that the reason for its success is that this form of providing healthcare “essentially was an entirely new creation” and not a carry over from colonialism.\(^\text{28}\)


\(^{28}\) Ibid.
Education

Much like healthcare education was severely segregated and therefore extremely lacking for blacks. During colonialism it is estimated that the cost to educate a white child was twenty times that of a black child.\(^{29}\) Whites felt that blacks only needed a basic education for their role in society was to be laborers and this did not require any level of superior education. However, during the last few decades of Ian Smith’s rule a small contingent of blacks began to gain some social, political and economic power through education opportunities. In 1957 the University College of South Rhodesia was founded and blacks were granted admission. Previous to this blacks had to seek secondary education outside their borders and unlike whites they had little financial means to do so. Those blacks who were able to attend university outside their nation’s borders often did so in South Africa.

By the time of independence the education system was severely broken and lacking throughout the nation. The newly formed government made it one of their first priorities to rectify the issue. The government, as well as international donors, were well aware that “education was a key instrument for achieving development.”\(^{30}\) Therefore the government enacted education policies targeted towards the “elimination of racial discrimination, the expansion of educational opportunities, and curricular changes to increase the relevancy of content.”\(^{31}\) The Education Act was passed which created

\(^{29}\) Darnolf and Lasskso, *Twenty Years of Independence*, 141.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 140.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 142.
Universal Primary Education (UAE) in that the act stated that all children were eligible to attend primary school and also made it both free and compulsory. This however had a rippling effect for secondary education as well. There was a huge influx of enrollment in both primary and secondary school, and this rapid expansion of education has been severely criticized. While it did increase literacy rates nation wide and particularly in urban areas the expansion of the education sector was highly mismanaged and unable to sustain long term increases in education. Thankfully due to private investments and support at the community level schools were able to function, even without proper accommodations or materials. Within the first 10 years while not perfect the education system did seem to be striving and was definitely expanding. By 1992 nearly 80 percent of the population was literate.

With the introduction of Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (EASPs) – to be discussed in Chapter 4 - the education system soon faltered. The government felt that investments needed to be made in the productive areas of the economy in order to account for the costs incurred by running the education program. As such the government reenacted tuition and fees to supplement the poor performing economy and an increased rate of unemployment. With payments now needed to addend school enrollment rates dropped as families were forced to make a decision between the necessities of life or sending their children to school. Many had fallen on hard economic times and as a result had to pull their children from school in order to work and make

32 Ibid., 148.
ends meet financially for the family. The introduction of fees and therefore the decline in attendance is entirely counterintuitive to economic growth.

To date, despite crucial initial advancements in education, “the major problems of equity, access, and quality in schooling remain on the agenda to be solved.”\textsuperscript{33} In addition the content taught in schools needs to be reformed in so much that the next generation can create a better society. As it stands now the curriculum of educational institutions only equip children to fit into the status quo, as opposed to change it. It is often professed that children are the future. Therefore if Zimbabwe wishes to catapult itself into a new society it needs to raise its children to do so.

\textit{Zimbabwe Social Forum}

With the state unable to provide a space for those from various groups to come together, voice their opinions and air their social grievances the citizens of Zimbabwe took it upon themselves to form such an organization. In 2003 the Zimbabwe Social Forum (ZSF) was born. The ZSF grew out of the Africa and World Social Forum movement. The ZSF was chartered to provided an outlet for various social organizations and movements to discuss their experiences and ideas in order to improve life in Zimbabwe. Their slogan is “Another Zimbabwe is Possible.” The ZSF is a grassroots movement intended to reform the country based on a bottom up model. The ZSF opposes neo-liberalism, corruption, injustice and poor governance. The ZSF tackles a number of social issues including Gender, Youth, Labor, Debt and Trade, HIV& AIDS, Human

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 151.
Rights, Constitutionalism and Governance, Land and Environment, Food Security and Social Services Delivery. ZSF believes that “participatory democracy is the best method for conflict resolution and management within societies and between states.” Their charter states that the ZSF will strive for “an independent African integration based on the rights of women, children, men, minority rights, democracy and the principles of a sustainable development on one hand and democratic institutions at the service of interests of the continent, social justice, gender and sex equality and peoples sovereignty on the other.”

**Conclusion**

“Numerous questions remain as to how democracy can take [into] account the existence of ethnic loyalties” and properly balance them, but for Zimbabwe these shortfalls and questions would be minute in comparison to the way things are currently run. The truth of the matter is that the Zimbabwean government must decide how to properly accommodate ethnic, religious, and regional differences, and based on the provisions of democracy as laid out in Chapter 1 it is in their best interest to implement democratic practices. Democracy would at least stabilize ethnic tensions and social services. Political institutions if properly run can protect and uphold the rights of citizens sans social, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds. This is what Zimbabwe needs to strive for. The political sphere must end its self-serving ways, with the elimination of the one-party

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34 Zimbabwe Social Forum Charter.
35 Zimbabwe Social Forum Charter.
state, and live up to its potential of protecting the rights of all citizens regardless of race, class, or gender.
Many preeminent political scientists, such as Claude Ake, Samuel Decalo, and E. Ike Udogu, believe that there is a symbiotic relationship between democracy and economic development. The two foster and promote each other in a cyclical manner. Therefore economic development and success is a necessity for the flourishing of democracy. The execution of a strong and successful economic plan will become the base for democratization in Zimbabwe.

_**Economic Reform – The Early Years**_

After independence one of the new government’s first actions to rectify the economic situation and in particular the issues in the workforce was the passing of workers legislation which included the Minimum Wage Act of 1980 and the Employment Act of 1980. The government also undertook a study known as the Riddell Commission to look at income disparities. The Riddell Commission Report noted that inequalities could not continue as they currently existed and that plans for the growth of the economy needed to include equity. As a result of these finding the government set minimum wage targets with the goal of full implementation by the end of 1984. Yet this policy was unsustainable and abandoned in favor or a wage restraint policy. The state set minimum wage increases on a sliding scale and created wage ceilings.
Economic Sectors

Zimbabwe like most other independent African countries had two very different economic sectors, one which was highly developed and formalized by whites and an underdeveloped and marginalized one run by blacks.

The majority economic sector was run by whites. White’s dominant industries were agriculture, mining, and manufacturing, which were mostly privately owned, and by 1980 accounted for over 55 percent of the countries gross domestic product (GDP).\(^1\) Manufacturing alone accounted for 25 percent of the GDP.\(^2\) Manufacturing was the most diversified sector. Whites also had access to trading partners within Africa and in developed countries like Britain, which permitted them to grow independent of the informal sector. Exports in agriculture accounted for 42 percent of exporting earnings, while manufacturing covered 32 and mining 27 percent.\(^3\) As a result of this situation three percent of Zimbabwe’s population controlled two-thirds of the gross national income.\(^4\)

While whites were thriving blacks were an underserved part of the economy. They comprised the majority of the labor force but were regulated to the informal sector, and therefore most were under or unemployed. The informal sector had low-productivity

\(^1\) Staffan Darnolf and Liisa Lasskso, Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2003), 35.

\(^2\) Ibid, 36.

\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Ibid., 37.
and therefore low income returns. Black income by 1987 was only one-tenth of what it was for whites. Even though blacks comprised almost 98 percent of the population they only accounted for 60 percent of wages and salaries.\textsuperscript{5}

The Growth with Equity Policy and the Transitional National Development Plan (TNDP) hoped to eradicate these drastic differences in the running of the economy and close the gap between whites and blacks. It was hoped that these new policies would help the nation to pursue democracy, as a sound fiscal base is a key stepping stone of the democratic process, as was noted in Chapter 1.

\textit{Growth and Development Plans}

Growth with Equity was a policy document published in February 1981 by the Economic Planning and Development Office which listed roughly ten general areas that would be their major focus. These areas included rapid economic growth, economic restructuring, balanced development, equitable redistribution, rural development, development of economic infrastructure, and fiscal and monetary reform.\textsuperscript{6}

TNDP was developed in 1982 in order to make the Growth with Equity goals achievable. TNDP hoped to use the mistakes of other African countries during their transition to independence as guidelines on what to do or not do when it came to economic policies and encouraging development. The document, written by Mugabe himself, stated “the plan in essence puts our nation at the threshold of our second

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.

revolution – the socio-economic revolution designed to give greater meaning to our independence.”7 The plan espoused capitalist ideals. The premise behind the plan was to reform current economic institutions and infrastructure, as they could not be fully abandoned. It was therefore opted to rework and revamp the system rather than scrap it in its entirety.

TNDP would be implemented over a three year time frame. During this time the goal was to raise GDP an overall 8 percent, employment 3 percent, investment and savings 4 percent, and imports and exports 26 percent.8 However the plan failed to reach many of these goals due to external factors such as an extended period of drought and an overall worldwide economic downturn and recession, as well as internal ones including liberalization, overvalued exchange rates, and relaxed import controls.9 Instead of GDP increasing 8 percent it fell 8 percent.10

With the failure of TNDP and its expiration in 1985 the government developed a new plan called the First Five Year National Development Plan in April of 1986. Unlike the TNDP the goal was to raise the GDP 5.1 percent. The reality of the situation was that it grew only 4 percent over the five year time frame. The employment rate ran around 2.7

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7 Darnolf and Lasskso, Twenty Years of Independence, 43.
8 Ibid., 44.
9 Ibid., 45.
10 Ibid.
percent but this was not enough to keep up with the 3 percent worker influx.\textsuperscript{11} The budget deficit also ran high at around 9.8 percent of the GDP.

Zimbabwe was simply unable to keep up financially and by 1990 the governments attempts to rectify the economic situation in the country had all but floundered. The economy was being managed on a put out the fire type basis rather than finding a long term comprehensive solution. As Colin Stoneman so aptly put it Zimbabwe’s “post independence plans were more matters of elucidating the pleasant ends desired than setting out the means for getting to them.”\textsuperscript{12} Rather than implementing radical change the government simply maintained the status quo through different means than were implemented under colonialism.

\textit{Land Reform}

The largest economic blunder to date in Zimbabwe has been that of land reform. Many of Zimbabwe’s current problems stem from this issue and the way that it has been handled since the idea was solidified in the Lancaster House Agreements. The land reform policy adopted and agreed upon by ZANU-PF in the Lancaster House Agreement was one of a willing-buyer, willing-seller program. The idea was that white farmers land would be bought with adequate compensation. The land in turn would be used for resettlement of those in the majority who had been disadvantaged by white minority rule. However the newly formed government had little capital with which to buy the white

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Harold-Barry, \textit{The Past is the Future}, 114.
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property at a fair and equitable rate. Yet they cannot be entirely blamed for the situation as the Western world also failed to deliver on their part of the deal. Britain in particular had promised to fund the farm payments but only disbursed roughly 44 million pounds, barely a fraction of the billions needed.

Many Zimbabweans felt entitled to the land and since the government was not acquiring it for them they in turn took it for themselves by squatting. A majority of these squatters were war veterans to whom Mugabe had promised compensation and assistance but failed to deliver on. By March of 2000 over 500 white farms were being squatted on by the war veterans. Mugabe permitted the squatters to remain, and after harsh negotiations with the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association also awarded them their promised compensation of 50,000 Zimbabwean dollars. This compensation amounted to nearly 150 million pounds, and was not originally budgeted for. As a result the economy took a sharp down turn as the government began to print more money in order to close the deficit.

As more and more squatters enveloped the countryside Mugabe used the promise of redistribution of the land as a key platform issue for reelection. White land holders were seen as the last bastion of colonialism who needed to be eradicated. The ZANU-PF used the land issue as a pivotal part of its election propaganda, especially after losing the constitutional referendum in February 2000.

Along with land reform came a substantial change in the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector had been the largest producing economic sector for the country, but with redistribution those who had worked the land were displaced and those who had
little to know knowledge of farming were given the land without properly assistance and training. As a result the economy plummeted and food shortages occurred. The once strong and self-sufficient economic power house had now become a shell of its former self. People were plunged into poverty and the government was forced to turn to food aid to meet food shortages throughout the nation.

_Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes_

In 1991 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank economic structural adjustment programmes (ESAP) were put into effect in Zimbabwe. It was hoped that such programmes would veer the country away from a socialist mentality and into a democratic one driven by market forces. ESAPs had an overall political goal and agenda via the use of economic policies and sanctions. Those policies included the “devaluation of national currency, elimination of price controls, liberalization of trade, and a reduction in government spending.”  

EASP was a market-driven reform programme.

The EASPs are comprised of three stages: stabilization, structural adjustment, and growth. Stabilization is meant to halt government spending and to work within the established budget limitations. Structural adjustment redistributes land, labor, and capital for maximum efficiency and productivity. Growth consists of a strategy to maximize capital and its returns.

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ESAP was backed, promoted, and run by key Zimbabwean political leaders including Bernard Chidzero, the finance minister, Kumbiri Kangi, minister of industry and commerce, and Tichaendep Masiya, minister of state for finance, economic planning, and development. These minister’s goals were that by “1995 there would be a 25 percent cut in the civil service, along with the demise of all labor restrictions, price controls, exchange controls, interest rate controls, investment regulations, and import restrictions, as well as many government subsidies.”14 EASP promised to deliver radical changes such as an annual growth rate of 5 percent, the lowering of the debt service ratio to below 20 percent, and the lowering of inflation to 10 percent.15 Investment and savings would be raised to 25 percent of the GDP. Exports in mining would grow by one-third, manufacturing exports would double, and agricultural exports would also increase steadily.16 Overall the export goal was to have it grow by 9 percent annually.17

Sadly like most ESAP throughout Africa the deregulation of Zimbabwe’s economy did little to help out average citizens. EASP failed to meet many if not all of its promises. GDP only grew 1 percent not 5 percent. Employment rates decreased along with wages. Investors saw little promise in Zimbabwe due to liberalization of the economy, although imports did increase as a result of speculation. Exports however


15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 31 – 32.

17 Harold-Barry, The Past is the Future, 123.
dropped due to the cutting of export incentives. High interest rates also kept financial investors out of the country. Inflation almost tripled to 27.6 percent and as a result bankruptcies soared due to competition in domestic markets. In conjunction with inflation, interest rates on consumer credit rose. Tariffs on goods increased. As a direct result of all these factors living standards decreased for much of the population, including civil servants, domestic workers, construction workers, teachers, and farm workers.\textsuperscript{18}

This in turn created a cycle of economic downturn because local citizens could not afford to purchase manufactured goods and therefore numerous small to medium manufacturing business went under.

The government also failed in the first stage of the programme, stabilization. The government failed to real in its spending and to only spend based on the approved budget. As such they ended up doing a vast amount of borrowing which only put the country into more debt. Without proper budgeting social services such as health and education greatly suffered.

With the collapse of EASP and the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange in 1997 Zimbabwe was left in worse shape than it was in 1980 or even before under colonial rule. “The political costs and social instability generated by [the] ineffectual international economic integration” as seen through EASP has reverberated throughout the country in the post-EASP years.

\textsuperscript{18} Bond and Manyanya, \textit{Zimbabwe’s Plunge}, 35.
Following the demise of EASP the country spiraled into full economic collapse. The first major post-EASP blunder by the government was in 1997 when President Mugabe paid off the disgruntled war veterans previously mentioned. War veterans had been key allies and puppets of the administration and Mugabe could not afford to loose their allegiance. He promised them a Z$50,000 pension payout plus Z$2,000 per month. As a direct result the Zimbabwean dollar devalued almost 75 percent. Within 18 months of this initial devaluing inflation would rise to almost 50 percent, affecting food staples such as maize, as well as gas. Income and sales taxes were also increased to cover this newly created war veteran’s debt.

EASPs had failed to be the economic cure-all that the international community had hoped. ZANU-PF has plunged the country into economic ruin by putting itself first and using the state coffers as their own personal bank.

Post-EASP Programmes

Finally in April of 1998 the government issued new economic policy known as the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST). ZIMPREST urged fiscal discipline for the government, which included a budget deficit reduction to under 5 percent of the GDP, an annual GDP growth rate of 6 percent, 9 percent annual export growth rate, and a lowering of the 20 percent inflation rate.\(^{19}\)

Yet unlike the programmes before it ZIMPREST called for political change as opposed to just economic. ZIMPREST demanded “improvements in the quality of

\(^{19}\) Harold-Barry, *The Past is the Future*, 129.
democratic institutions, the pursuit of good governance, and the elimination of corruption.”20 This was the first time where it was recognized that economic implications feed into political ones and vice versa. Each sector cannot be handled as separate entities rather a realization must occur as to their interdependencies so that proper and practical solutions can be found.

ZIMPREST was once again not handled properly by the government and was mainly ignored. With pressure from the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the development of the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF), which consisted of the labor, business, and government sectors, the government developed a new programme, the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP). The MERP was somewhat of a continuation of the ideals of ZIMPREST, the ESAP, and the Millennium budget which had been issued in October of 1999. MERP was intended to draw on the success and failures of past programmes and to use those as the baseline for the new programme. MERP specifically called out the lack of implementation. This reiterates the idea brought up by Stoneman that the failure of the programmes was not that they did not have good ideas or goals but that there was no action taken to carry them out; the old programmes were simply lip service to economic reform.

MERPs goal was to “mobilize all stakeholders – government, business, labor, and civil society – to implement a set of measures designed to restore macroeconomic

20 Ibid.
stability."

MERP would have two key elements. One would be that structural adjustment policy would be enacted, while on the other hand broad macro-economic sanctions would also be invoked. To date MERP still technically exists but without the support of the President has yielded little to no results.

By 2003 the government began the National Economic Revival Programme (NERP). The NERP however only pushed the agenda of President Mugabe. Unlike MERP which viewed internal factors as the issue, NERP deemed Zimbabwe’s shortfalls on external factors. NERP placed the blame for Zimbabwe’s social and economic problems on those in the Western world, and the way they were opposing the government, most notably in their handling of the land issue. NERP says that the pull out of foreign support and development is what plunged the nation into economic and social turmoil, as the government was unable “to provide…fuel, electricity, food, drugs, spares, capital, and equipment” to its citizens.

Debt

When Zimbabwe became a free nation in 1980 the past white governments debts were not repudiated but were rather passed on to the government of Robert Mugabe. This debt included $5.3 million in multilateral debt, $97.9 million in bilateral debt, and $593.9 million in private debt. Mugabe felt that creating an atmosphere of debt repayment would put him on better ground with international financial institutions such as the IMF.

21 Ibid., 138.

22 Ibid., 143.

23 Bond and Manyanya, Zimbabwe’s Plunge, 17.
and World Bank. In 1986 Ibbo Mandaza admitted that a vast majority of Zimbabwe’s political decisions were driven by these financial relationships.\textsuperscript{24} Yet over the years Zimbabwe only abused those relationships and plunged itself further into debt, both external and domestic.

Zimbabwe’s highest external debt was in 1997 when it owed almost 5 billion U.S. dollars. By 2000 it had reduced that number to 3.5 billion, but by 2003 it had once again risen to 4 billion. Yet this overall reduction since the late 90s was only due to the “fall-out with the IMF and [the] subsequent withdrawal of development partners.”\textsuperscript{25} In an roughly ten year time frame beginning in 1991 the country’s total external debt to GDP ratio averaged about 62.9 percent, while its debt service ratio averaged roughly 25 percent.\textsuperscript{26}

Zimbabwe’s external debt rose due to poor financial decisions on the part of the government, including the printing of money and treasury bills. Domestic debt has drastically risen over the years to where by the close of 2003 it was nearly 610 billion Zimbabwean dollars, a far cry from the 1995 debt of 25 billion.

To date Zimbabwe has roughly 5.7 billion dollars of total accrued debt. The current administration is reviewing various options. Yet it seems to consistently turn towards seeking external assistance, which as this chapter has illustrated can be extremely detrimental especially if stipulations are tied to the repayment assistance.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 24.\textsuperscript{25} Harold-Barry, \textit{The Past is the Future}, 133.\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
Civil Society’s Economic Role

Civil society and the unions have recognized that there is a severe disconnect between economic policy and politics. They have signed a number of declarations, to include the Kadoma Declaration and the Declaration of Intent. These documents recognized that they needed to deal with the political risk factors affecting the economy. These political factors were composed of things such as “restoration of the rule of law and good governance, the depoliticisation of public institutions, and the restoration of relations with development partners.”27 The TNF which was the signatory on these documents realized that “the precondition for sustained stabilization and recovery lay in addressing issues of governance and pursuit of mutually agreed economic policies.”28

As the above example illustrates there are those in Zimbabwe who recognize the complexities of fixing the economy and how it intersects with a number of issues especially that of politics. The problem is not that of a dearth of great ideas and being able to tap those with them, rather the problem is in getting the government to listen to those with the ideas and lay their own political agenda aside. It is the authors opinion that one day the voice of reason and logic and of seeing the bigger interconnected picture will rise above that of the authoritarian regime.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered both internally and externally imposed economic projects which were intended to help Zimbabwe flourish and grow financially as it did

27 Ibid., 142.
28 Ibid.
during the first few years of independence. Despite the measures taken Zimbabwe has failed to achieve any of the goals originally set for it.

This failure can be directly attributed to poor governance on the part of the ZANU-PF. As economist Godfrey Kanyenze so aptly put it “the economic plunge [of Zimbabwe] is closely linked to the deteriorating political environment” in the country.\(^{29}\) Therefore it can be concluded that the economy cannot be corrected by viewing it as a stand alone issue but it must be assessed in the context of the political situation in which is resides. Jeffery Herbst observed that in order for a country to reform and change its economic system it also had to change its political one at well.\(^{30}\) Keith Campbell reiterates this when he points out “Zimbabwe’s economy won’t get fixed until politics gets fixed.”\(^{31}\)

Kanyenze also wrote back in 2004 that “a settlement between the two main parties, ZANU-PF and MDC, is the only way of creating a political environment that promotes stability, recovery, and growth.”\(^{32}\) As of 2009 a power sharing agreement between the two parties has occurred. It is hoped that as a result of the GNU political and economic policy and institutional changes will be made and the economy will no longer be impeded by the self-serving ZANU-PF. As of early 2009 the Zimbabwean dollar had

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 132.


\(^{32}\) Ibid, 145.
been pulled as the country currency and replaced by the dollar. As a result of the change in monetary form there has been an end to hyperinflation, unrealistic exchange rates, and artificial interest rates. The Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, which was shutdown in November of 2008, reopened in February 2009. It is projected that the GDP of the country will rise 3 percent. As the GNU is still fairly immature it can only be hoped that the small gains already made will continue to escalate and result in substantial and desperately needed reform, both politically and economically.
CHAPTER 5
CREATING ZIMBABWE’S FORM OF DEMOCRACY

Thus far political independence in Zimbabwe has failed to bear the fruits of democracy. However I believe that there is still hope that Zimbabwe can reform and correct its ways and ultimately create an enduring democracy. “The general attitude has been that Zimbabweans must solve their own problems” and while this is true they need to recognize the tools that they have at their fingertips. They need to take a good look at the country that they were, the country that they are, and most importantly the country that they want to be. It is a matter of assessing the situation at hand, creating a plan, and then executing it. They must take an elaborate and comprehensive look at themselves and their country in order to best assess how to proceed and move forward. This paper has illustrated the realms in which they need to focus on and learn from in order to create the best form of government for Zimbabwe. They have the tool box of democracy filled with various options and they only need to choose the ones that best suit them.

Political Reform

To summarize from Chapter 2 we learned that Mugabe and the ZANU-PF have an “obvious disregard for the public interest, an increasing use of the offices of state for personal gain [particularly for wealth and land], and an apparent growth in the informal

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networks to maintain the regime.”³ They manipulated key political institutions, namely the security sector and judicial branch, to work in their favor.

If Zimbabwe is to move towards democracy it first and foremost must reform the leadership of the country. The most necessary action from which all things stem from is the need to move away from an authoritarian mentality and the one-party state to one of serving the people and the people alone. The country must be based on a constitutional foundation, one which respects the rights of individuals and groups and accounts for the rule of law while laying out the powers, structures, and process of the government. Political corruption needs to be eradicated to allow for an increase in transparency and therefore trust in the government. This new constitution must be monitored, upheld, and amended by a strong and independent legislative branch. The judicial system, as well as the media, need to become impartial once again. The judicial branch was once the stronghold of democracy in Zimbabwe and has the potential to be so again. In conjunction with the change in those two sectors, the security sectors “recent deterioration…must be honestly acknowledged and quickly addressed.”⁴ “Professional police and military services will be vital to building a stable Zimbabwe” therefore they must be returned to their traditional roles.⁵ There needs to be an overall demilitarization of politics.

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⁵ Ibid, 32.
Elections in Zimbabwe have been fraught with violence, intimidation, and rigging and they have become simply ceremonial and a formality rather than a solid democratic process. Therefore it is critical that elections be reformed. There needs to be extended election observation by outside organizations to ensure that they are in fact free and fair. An independent electoral commission must be established along with auditing capabilities of both the voter registration process and the election outcome. With such provisions elections can then become what Huntington asserts them to be, the minimal requirement for democracy. Meeting this minimal requirement and making the aforementioned political changes will lead Zimbabwe down the path towards a democracy suited to their nation.

Social and Cultural Reform

From Chapter 3 we learned that tolerance, acceptance, and equality are pivotal for creating the base of democracy. As such all citizens should be afforded the same rights and opportunities, including education, healthcare, housing, and employment, regardless of where they stand in society.

In 1996 Per Nordlund noted that the major constraint to the building of democracy in Zimbabwe was the interaction between civil society and the government.  

Aligning with his findings Sandra Maclean notes that “the main threat to the Mugabe regime is from democratically responsible opponents in civil society.”

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7 Maclean, “Mugabe at War,” 519.
that potentially holds a majority of the cards in the game for democracy, for they are the ones that can “continue to agitate for economic reforms, relief from scarcity and hyperinflation, and the right to voice their views.”

The ZSF has been a crucial outlet for people’s voices from a number of walks of life. Such an institution has the ability to mitigate ethnic tensions and provide for a single outlet of social dissent. If the government would like to dilute the possibility of ethnic conflict it should allow, and perhaps even substantially support, the ZSF.

Yet civil societies voice can only go so far. Significant changes must be made in the realm of social services as provided by the government, for when the basic needs of a society are not meet it is hard to rally the populous to action when concerns such as where their next meal will come from, how to find clean water or if their will die if they get HIV/AIDS take precedent.

Minority and majority interests must be equitably balanced. This means both for ethnic groups as well as gender groups. The government must stand up against any injustices perpetrated based on someone’s race, religion, culture, or gender. This can only take place if in the political realm changes are made to laws and they are upheld by both the security forces as well as the judicial branch.

Economic Reform

From Chapter 4 we learned that the economy needs to be restructured. To date there has been gross and negligent mismanagement of the economy. The government

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needs to “pursue sustainable economic policies.” Since politics and the economy are inextricably tied it is crucial that any economic recovery attempts must be linked to the improvement of the government. Stable economic reform that can take into account long-term sustainability as opposed to just a quick and easy fix will be central to establishing democracy within the country. Debt repayment and perhaps even forgiveness on the part of lenders, namely the West, certainly needs to be an issue on the table. The moderation of the labor sector, which would include stable wages and the creation of new jobs are critical to pulling the nation out of poverty. Unemployment needs to be decreased, through public works job as well as the improvement of the agricultural sector, so that money can be put in the pockets of citizens to help drive economic recovery.

Land Reform

A recurring issue throughout the chapters has been that of land reform. Michelle Gavin purports that “an independent Zimbabwean entity to perform a complete land audit, establish a [system to register, track, and monitor land]…deeds and titles, and [the] development of] a credible arbitration process for dispute resolution” could help in fixing the crisis created by the land reform policies of Mugabe and the ZANU-PF. Land seizures must cease and proper protocol for acquiring land must be enacted, most importantly the Gazetted Land Act of 2006 which sanctions uncompensated seizures

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9 Ibid., 11.
10 Ibid., 19.
11 Ibid., 31.
must be repealed. With such reform there could be an end to violence and the elimination of social issues tied to the land, as well as the re-establishment of a productive agricultural sector which in turn could bolster the economy.

*African Democracy Building*

In 2002 the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) were established and have become the lead proponents of democracy on the continent. Both these entities believe that democratization and economic cooperation between African nations is the best solution for overall African security. The principal goal of these two bodies is democracy because they believe that it is the key solution to Africa’s “chronic problems of violence, political instability, and underdevelopment.”

Such cooperative groups allows for a forum of discussion of shared problems and issues and ultimately the creation of proper and relevant solutions.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) can also play a pivotal role in assisting Zimbabwe in its attempt to democratize. They have denounced the country’s execution of elections and have shed light on the disparities and violence perpetrated during election season. They have also asked that South Africa moderate, foster, and continue talks between the ZANU-PF and the MDC. The SADC also has the potential to create and execute a much needed stabilization package which could bring vitally needed economic reform to the country. Such a package would need to include the “tighten[ing of] budget controls, eliminating the central banks quasi-fiscal activities, and

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working toward liberalization of the exchange rate.” In light of such a package recovery and reconstruction could be possible.

Zimbabwe cannot go at establishing a democracy on its own and needs at least the support and backing of those on its neighborhood if it is to make a concerted effort. The AU, NEPAD, and SADC have the “potential to be a truly positive force in the region” and in Zimbabwe.

*International Role*

While Zimbabwe must take on a majority of their burden because as we have seen change must come from within and cannot and should not be imposed from the outside the international community does have a stake in the dog fight and should at a minimum lend its support and wisdom to Zimbabwe. The international community has much to offer, but must also respect the line where their jurisdiction ends and Zimbabwe’s begins. Most Western nations have gone through a similar transition, whether it be from an autocratic leader or a communist one, and can provide insight and advice that might otherwise be learned only through trial and error.

The international community must also take a new stance towards Zimbabwe. While we may have “more pressing concerns…elsewhere” it is no excuse to neglect Zimbabwe, plus we should want to assist them so that they do not become a bigger

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14 Ibid., 36.
problem.\textsuperscript{15} Thus far it does not seem that our current stance of sanctions and harsh words has done much to change the situation at hand, and it hoped that under the new administration and through Congress decisive action can be taken to help Zimbabwe on its path to democracy.

\textit{Current Solution and the Path Forward}

I believe that what will bridge the gap of politics, culture, and the economy is the power sharing agreement as signed by ZANU-PF and the MDC in September of 2008. The power-sharing agreement has the potential to “guide Zimbabwe toward a more level playing field for rule-governed, peaceful political competition.”\textsuperscript{16} It is a key stepping stone to getting Zimbabwe to a healthy state of democratic governance.

The government of national unity (GNU) was assembled in February of 2009. I believe that the GNU is the critical springboard to achieving democracy in Zimbabwe. I believe that it is the best way to easily and smoothly transition to democracy. This paper has outlined the shortcomings and failures of trying to implement democracy instantly. Rather I believe that it is of great importance to ease into democracy so that problems can be faced head on and time and thought put into long term solutions. “Sustainable democracy needs the consolidation of institutional, social, and legal frameworks” and this takes time and thought.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} Johnson, Case for Intervention, 233.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 16.

The future for Zimbabwe as a democratic nation is impossible to predict but at this point in time all signs point towards the feasibility of creating a stable and sustainable democracy in the nation.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


