



JOURNAL OF AFRICAN ELECTIONS

Vol 4 No 2 Oct 2005



JOURNAL OF AFRICAN ELECTIONS

*Special Issue on Zimbabwe's 2005
General Election*



Volume 4 Number 2 October 2005

ISSN 1609-4700



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Published by EISA
14 Park Rd, Richmond
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Auckland Park
2006
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ISSN: 1609-4700

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Copy editor: Pat Tucker
Printed by: Global Print, Johannesburg

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The Editor, Journal of African Elections
EISA: P O Box 740
Auckland Park 2006, South Africa

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SOUTH AFRICA AND ZIMBABWE:

Democracy in the Littoral Zone

By
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We are like travelers navigating an unknown terrain with the help of old maps, drawn at a different time and in response to different needs. While the terrain we are traveling on, the world society of states, has changed, our normative map has not.

Selya Benhabib

ABSTRACT

Looking beyond routine explanations of the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe, this paper examines mainstream understandings of Southern African politics and the language that produces them. It uses historical sociology to offer an alternative explanation of the development of the region and highlights the overlapping sources of authority that predated the state system. Drawing on the insightful poetry of Douglas Livingstone (and his own peregrinations in the region), the argument suggests that instead of an ontology based on state boundaries the region should be considered a 'littoral zone' in which authority and control move back and forth between different social bundles. Imaginative interpretations, rather than the 'weasel words' cult democracy, could help secure rights in Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION

Why are debates about the prospects for change in Zimbabwe threadbare? Insignificant, uninspiring and terribly introspective, they turn and return to a mantra: insist on 'accountability', 'governance' and 'transparency' in the country; and insist, too, that South Africa, as it did before the Lancaster House Agreement 25 years ago, deliver Zimbabwe to the folds of modernity.

When this option wilts, as it often does, the policy door swings towards 'liberal internationalism'¹: this is the same option that propelled the United States (and its infamous 'Coalition of the Willing') to invade Iraq in order to free the country and liberate its people from Saddam Hussein's tyranny. So, and not occasionally, either, policy pundits (and others besides) suggests that the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) – or George W Bush – should invade Zimbabwe, remove Robert Mugabe and his cohort, and set the country's people free.

Although these options – democracy by formula and pressure, and armed invasion – make dramatic Op Ed pieces, they make little intellectual or political sense. One reason for this, and this explains the purpose of this paper, is that the two positions are distilled through the language and logic of interacting variables (Lapid 2001, p 3). As a result, it seems as if history and sociology – let alone the real business of politics, humanity – have no place in the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe. A little reflection, let alone a glance at a map, suggests that the two countries – a term used here only for illustrative purposes – have been intricately linked for more than a century.

The depressing outcome is that beyond the framing of state and nation – and the influence on both these of race – there is no imagination in the minds of those who are vocal on the topic. This explains why policy prescriptions seldom stray beyond the standard operating procedures that are at the core of contemporary diplomacy and which, as the dismal experience in Iraq shows, can be so dangerous.

Although largely unacknowledged, these prescriptions highlight an archaic understanding of the idea of policy – *poliziwissenschaft*: the science of regulating and maintaining social order (Bennett, Grossberg & Morris 2005, pp 258-260). In its modern form, policy is worked and reworked within a series of protocols at the core of which is an array of key-words – the 'transparency', the 'accountability', the 'governance' – that we have already encountered. As this happens, understanding and imagination are stripped away from policy. The result? Policy is conceived within a series of technical outcomes, which retard rather than enhance the normative values which underpin democracy.

Explaining how this happens is easy. Notwithstanding (or because of) the success in overcoming apartheid, analysis and policy proposals aim at returning '... politics (in South Africa and the region) to the exercise of control and authority following the events of the hectic 1980s' (Vale 2005, p 10). So, policy-making in contemporary South Africa fosters the development of 'an administered society', to use a term from the critical theorist, Theodore Adorno.

Because of this, the unruly social world between South Africa and Zimbabwe (and within that country) is being willed to conform – to be administered. This is

1 This idea originated with Woodrow Wilson, America's 28th President, who emphasised US leadership through alliances and international organisations aimed at spreading democracy. Its most recent form has included the possibility of interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries to achieve this end. (From Judis 2005).

not a value-free process however. The mantra we have already encountered – ‘accountability’, ‘governance’ and ‘transparency’ – has been forged within the declaration of the ‘end of ideology’ first enunciated by the American sociologist, Daniel Bell (1961), and later reworked by the American-Japanese political theorist, Francis Fukuyama (1989, pp15-25).

The resulting policy diktat is rooted in neo-liberal ideology and, like all ideologies, is prescriptive: at its core is the idea that only free markets and ritualised politics can satisfy human instincts because history has ended. Zimbabwe’s fate is that of other ‘failed state[s]’; neo-patrimonial and corrupt. Zimbabwe’s destiny is Africa’s.

This pre-established vision of contemporary international relationships (and the formulae to counter them) is at the heart of the continued impasse in the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe.

How do we break this cycle of thought?

HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY

This question, and many others, can be answered by striking out in a different direction from that walked by the policy community. A promising approach begins with the recognition of the mutually constitutive (Lapid 2001, p 3) relationship between Zimbabwe and South Africa: appreciating this will position the relationship between the two countries in an entirely new relational and conceptual space which lies beyond the laws of interacting variables.

In any self-conscious reading, South Africa and Zimbabwe are continuously interacting social bundles – to use the anthropologists’ term – not rigid, programmed physical entities. Understanding this form of the social is best located within the techniques of historical sociology, a perspective that lies apparently entirely outside the ken of those who pronounce on the relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Let a few free-hand paragraphs, tapped from historical sociology, help to describe the social practice of mutually constituted forms in Southern Africa.

Without the foundation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the formation of Southern Rhodesia – as the place called Zimbabwe was once known – would not have been possible. Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere, all other states in Southern African were modelled in (and on) South Africa (Vale 2003).

How Southern Rhodesia came to occupy a social form separated from South Africa is embedded in sociology. Very briefly, in the late 1880s and into the 1890s the region comprised a number of social bundles which co-existed alongside each other. One of these was the British Empire, whose interest in Southern Africa north of the Cape Colony was awakened after the discovery first of diamonds and then of gold in the hinterland.

A parallel social form was sovereign organisation: this found periodic expression through the republican reflections of dissident people of European

extraction who spoke a patois which was loosely derivative of Dutch – a language choice that, importantly, set them apart from English-speakers. The idea of national independence – along the lines of the United States of America – was a source of great inspiration and successive efforts to find a mechanism to express this goal. The result was the formation of the so-called ‘Boer Republics’, of which, for our immediate purposes, the Transvaal Republic was the most prominent.

In addition to these two sovereign-bound forms, a number of other social bundles were to be found. The first resulted from the redrawing by missionaries of cognitive maps. These have best been described by the anthropologists, Jean and John Comaroff (1991). A fourth form was less social, more economic: this was the co-option of territory within the imperial project and its translation into paper script, which was priced on the London Stock Exchange. The latter was invariably mediated – at great personal profit, of course – by great servants of Empire, like Cecil John Rhodes. These paragraphs suggest that far from neatly unfolding, the borders of the region moved backwards and forwards, driven by different impulses: at times, these were political; at times, economics was in the ascendancy; at times, even, social relations in Southern Africa were moved by spiritual impulses. The demarcation between what are all too readily called states, this account suggests, was not stable; indeed, the opposite is true, social interactions were fluid and mainly very, very violent.

THE POET SPEAKS

If historical sociology opens understandings beyond routine, state-bound interpretations, the lived experience opens new vistas, offering new understandings, and new appreciations of Southern Africa. To illustrate this point, I draw from scattered aspects of the life and work of the late Douglas Livingstone (1932-1996)², the acclaimed Southern African poet.

A brief explanatory paragraph will be necessary for the regular readers of this journal. We read poetry for many reasons – and as with all art, poetry has a dynamic that engages the reader beyond the intentions of the artist.³ As I write these words, I am conscious that Douglas Livingstone despised politics. If, however, the definition of politics is broadened to embrace issues of race, gender, class, and, pointedly, the environment, then, plainly, Douglas Livingstone rejoiced as much in politics as he did in the idea of Southern Africa.

Douglas Livingstone’s life and work embraced, both autobiographically and intellectually, a wide and fluid experience. Using both of these as a point of entry, enables us to appreciate that the building of Southern African involved a continual

2 The information on Douglas Livingstone is drawn from Hacksley & Maclellan 2004. Some of the ideas in this paper come from Vale 2004.

3 My Rhodes colleague, Corinne Knowles, helped me understand this issue.

repositioning of social relations: an ongoing negotiation, if you like, between social bundles.

Livingstone's early years in Malaya (where he was born), Australia (where he lived briefly as a child), and South Africa's Natal province (where he was schooled), confirm that he was socialised into a particular understanding of how the world '[hangs] together in the international sense' (Ruggie, quoted by Lapid in Mathias, Jacobsen & Lapid 2001, p 1). However random, even, perhaps, dysfunctional, this pattern seems, Livingstone's nomadic childhood made sense in the 1930s and 1940s even though the British Empire, into which he was born, was living on a political overdraft. We should not be surprised that Livingstone's life and his work mirror the same understanding of how the 'world hangs together'. The unfolding of Livingstone's post-school career, which was marked by perambulations and peregrinations in Southern Africa, completed an experience of the international that is familiar to many, this author included, who are drawn from the same late-imperial cohort. That Livingstone travelled from Natal to a professional position in what was then Southern Rhodesia is not surprising; that this sojourn was followed by posts in Lusaka and, later, Broken Hill, both of these in a place we now call Zambia, not untoward.

Because today it is believed that Southern African states make the region, and that mediation between these 'interacting variables' is only possible within diplomatic ritual, we have no memory of a time when the frontiers between the 'states' of Southern Africa were entirely porous. That they were porous, however, did not escape ambitious politicians: so, for example, in a speech in April 1940, South Africa's then Prime Minister, Jan C Smuts, made an appeal for the country's pan-African destiny, returning to a theme that he had first spoken of 45 years earlier (Smuts 1942).

The currency that Livingstone would have had in his pocket when he set off from Durban for Salisbury (now Harare) in 1951 was the Pound Sterling – then the only acceptable tender between Cape Town and Nairobi – Angola and Mozambique, excluded by their different colonial status, of course. And it is sobering to recall that Southern Rhodesia, where Livingstone took his initial diploma in medical technology, the first step towards a PhD in Biology Science (obtained in 1989), was then a state a little over thirty years old!

The taming of social relations through the mediation of official certification (and the issuing of separate currency) was integral to the project of reordering (read: bringing into line) social relations in Southern Africa. But more ambitious forms of modernity were required to tame nature. And, in Southern Africa, no engineering project was more ambitious than the building of the Kariba Dam, where Livingstone worked periodically as a diver in 1957. In his first collection of verse, *The Skull in the Mud*, a poem of the same name, that describes a sub-maritime encounter, is to be found. Here follow a few stanzas:

Braced by aqualung belts, and hot
help-handed by two small black boys,

the dam-site twisting, stamped with noise...
he sank suddenly weightless down..

He nudged the bottom, tripped the light,
saw not two hands' breadths from his nose
a yellow skull, dull, tenebrose
jawless in muds of liquid night ...

Vomited up from swarthy rocks
lining the river's ancient bed,
it perched, sardonic, gently dead,
tossed up by new construction shocks.

The pair exchanged a filmy stare...

Politely he backed, broke the tie
The skull's wink flicked swift as a knife:
A small minnow intent on life
Shot twinkling from one hollow eye.

Hacksley & MacLennan 2004, pp 5-6

Like the 'progress' offered by redirecting great colonial rivers, modernity's promise was to harden the national borders between Southern Africa's states.

In contrast, Livingstone understood that 'the international world hung together' differently; there were no borders, only endlessly shifting social forms. They were – as he may well have expressed it – *a littoral zone* – 'that mysterious border that shifts restlessly between land and sea' (see Brown 2002, pp 94-116; Morphet 1997, pp 205-211).

This zone was arbitrary, capricious, vacillating, notwithstanding the ambitious empire- and state-building projects pursued by successive colonial governments and ambitious European settlers.

Livingstone certainly recognised the irony of all this. In the poem *Letters from Southern Rhodesia*, first published in 1956, he captures the lure and lore of state-making in that eponymous country with this cunning double-header:

cecil's been painted green again while tall
calabashes virtuously scrape the sky
of sunlight and giant silver birds of night

plenty of room for the new settlers if
they do remember to bring their own tents

Hacksley & MacLennan, p 321

It should be remembered that this was a time when white Southern Africans – Afrikaners included⁴ – were deeply linked into the sub-continent – especially northwards towards two places then called Rhodesia, and separated only by the geographical descriptors, Northern and Southern.

However, and this is certainly more important for the present situation, their black regional counterparts were also possessed – is prepossessed too strong a word? – by a pan-Southern Africanism. In the early-1990s an impressive list of studies was to show that the region was constituted by migrant labour patterns that had, at that point, endured for almost a century (see Maloka 1997, pp 213-224). Let one iconic name stand for millions of the region's people who helped to make South Africa and the region one and indivisible: Clements Kadalie, born in the then Nyasaland in 1896, who, in 1919, formed the first black-led union – the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), with its headquarters in Cape Town.

Another poet, Ingrid de Kok, captured these 'colonial circuits of care and demand' in a poem, 'William Kamanga', which lovingly describes a life fashioned by a Southern African experience from below. It includes this stanza:

And on Sunday afternoon, when visitors
Who knew the dogs by name
Sat outside in suits and ties,
Talking softly about Banda
And the cost of transport home.

De Kok 2002, pp 50-51

It is important to note, as we move between Livingstone's late-colonial world and Kamanga's post-colonial world, that the former opens himself to the possibility that, while 'At Home' in Southern Africa, *his* own belonging is temporary.

The sky is blue, the row of crops stand neat,
the river's down, old herons hunt the sludge,
the land will last, the people come and go.

Hacksley & MacLennan 2004, p 3

The independence movement of the early 1960s, with its call for self-determination and nation-building, confirmed the sanctity of national borders – freezing them, if you like. As it did so, the theory and practice of movement and social freedom changed Southern Africa's social form away from the porous borders which had made Livingstone's wanderings across the region possible.

4 Much work remains to be done in relation to the issue of Afrikaners in the sub-continent. This will have to focus on the shibboleth that there was an outward spillage from South Africa of so-called 'Trekksers'. For the latest insertion of this idea into the canon see Muller 2005, p 167.

This modernist movement was sealed in 1961 by Hendrik Verwoerd's South African Republic, with its increasing preoccupation with borders and security (see Stultz 1969, pp 3-20). This launched, on the other side of the border, another political mantra – one that would run for close on 40 years – 'end colonialism, end minority-rule, end apartheid'.

A NEW ONTOLOGY

After this the region's 'littoral zone' was increasingly lost in an analytical sense, too. The rise of positivist social science sought to set aside 'primitive understandings' of social relations in Southern Africa. New interpretations argued that these could only be understood within five assumptions around power: international politics is about states; states seek (military) power because nothing else can guarantee their security; relations between states are guided by national interests; it is possible – no, imperative – to distinguish between the political and the economic; and because the world is driven by calculations of power, states must prepare for war.⁵

It was only a short move from these ideas to the understanding that Southern African states should ideally operate within a regional state 'system'. This notion was introduced into the study of politics in the late 1930s (McLean & McMillan 2003) and perfected, by drawing analogies from biology, in the late 1950s: its functionalist thread suggested that political systems, like biological systems, could be self-regulating and homeostatic (see Dogan 1998, p 107). Important, too, was the identification of a 'system' – ideally, its characteristics included distinguishing its boundaries, recognising its purpose, and defining the level of abstraction to which the system is to be treated (Bullock & Trombley 1999, p 855).

The idea migrated into the political discourse of Southern Africa in the late 1960s with the work of the American political scientist, Larry Bowman (1968, pp 231-261). Four years later, the idea was imprinted in the regional canon by the success of a book (Potholm & Dale 1972) which first described the region within the discursive framing of the 'science' of Politics. As the idea settled, both the region's history and sociology were ignored: what mattered was the need to force the region into 'state containers' – to use Peter Taylor's term (1994, pp 151-162). These were fashioned in the language of interacting variables – a language that could be of use to analysts and practitioners alike.

This artificial form for the region – state-based, state-centred, state-dominant – reinforced the kind of politics that Douglas Livingstone despised. It is not surprising, then, that Livingstone's satire was sharp, spiky, and even sassy. Read this, from a series of poems under the collective title: *Where's The Political Commitment To Your Work, Mr Livingstone?*:

5 These ideas have been distilled from Nossal 1998, p 15.

If you work in a snake-park
Wear long gloves and goggles
And sensible boots, thick in the heel;
Stay out of the pits after dark.
Tramping the veld demands caution,
But there's less of a chance of acquiring
A concentration of venom
From trap-wires of rusting steel.

Hacksley & MacLennan 2004, p 530

My purpose in introducing Livingstone and his work is not to romanticise the hope and, indeed, virtue, that post-World War II Southern Africa held out for whites of a particular generation, including Livingstone's and my own. Assessments of this period will be the work of a cohort born in the 1980s. In important ways, their work has already begun: the deepening interest by scholars (both of history and politics) in Southern Rhodesia may, perhaps, intensify the salience of the impact of the decisions of late-colonialism on individual lives (see Wylie 2005; Vale 2005). Let us be clear about this particular development: There is no re-creating the Home Counties in Southern Africa, as white Rhodesians tried to do: there is also no point in trying to recover the colonial project in the region by using Livingstone as point of entry.

However, another far more promising development, tapped from Livingstone's work, is important for the region's future.

Recent debates have moved away from the significance of borders and boundaries towards the exploration of new social bundles for a Southern Africa which faces multiple new challenges. This search tries to understand new terrains of regional intercourse, like cross-border trading, or music, or poetry and other art forms – or, to put it more succinctly, the practical, spiritual and cultural exchanges of trade, music and art.

This new (and not-so-new) searching lies beyond colonialism, beyond nationalism, beyond apartheid: it aims to construct (or remake) a borderless community in Southern Africa. This is a return to Livingstone's 'Littoral Zone' while, at the same time finding a way 'to heal the earth, this wonderful planet that we live on' – to use Livingstone's compelling words (Chapman 1985, p 112).

Like all ideas, this new thinking on Southern Africa begins with critical questions. Why is it that water, which gives life to Southern Africa's people, divides the region? Why are symbols of the region's modernisation – industries, urban sprawls, and developed mine-heads – located far from supplies of water? Why were elaborate transfer schemes – like the Kariba Dam – built? Why has water been turned into a price mechanism?

These and other questions protest the intimate relationship between international capital, local industry, and state-building by pointing out that the region's current managerial and technical form favours the rich and the powerful!

Much the most exciting and interesting of these questions have come from the Canadian scholar of the region, resident of Botswana and himself a prize-winning poet, Larry Swatuk (See, for example, Swatuk 2002, pp 507-30; Swatuk 2003, pp 897-906; Swatuk 2004, pp 872-880); most of it, unfortunately, appeared after Douglas Livingstone's untimely death in 1996.

We cannot, of course, know what Livingstone would have made of this unexpected turn in the region's unfolding story. But a rudimentary (and admittedly thin) interpretation of Livingstone's work suggests that ecological politics was close to his heart. Listen to his plea for the planet in the recently published poem called 'A Death of Green'.

Part of it all hands unclean
 As the rest, I wondered if the matches,
 Newssheets, planks and plastics,
 pitprops, sleepers, telephone-
 uprights for country party-lines
 were worth half a hillside
 of twenty-five summers
 nodding peacefully in the sun.

Hacksley & MacLennan, p 445

The South African writer Jack Cope once said, 'Poets are not buried with their bodies, but remain to awake the living' (cited in De Bruin 2004, pp 26-30). This idea might assist us as we strike out in a new direction that reconstructs the region by placing ecology, not states, at the centre of our analytical focus. This, however, is not the central concern of this paper and attention must now return to the complexity of the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe.

CITIZENSHIP

It has become commonplace to suggest that sovereign independence – in Africa and elsewhere, too – has not delivered what it once promised. The question which must be answered is Lenin's: 'What is to be done?'.

As argued in the opening lines of this paper, the coercion and invasion have not proved to be options sufficient to assist Zimbabwe's embattled people. Therefore, rather than the rote and routine responses of the policy community, the standard-operating-procedures that are at the core of contemporary politics, attention must turn to the power of imagination – an imagination that begins with theory and ends in practice.

Livingstone's metaphor offers the space to explore new forms of politics. These will not be state-based; they will not rest on the paradox of sovereignty; they will not draw from the canon of states; they will not reply in the invented tradition of Westphalia. Rather, they will seek to fashion cosmopolitan identities which are

located either above or below the existing states and the 'system' they pursue. These politics will be versions of the pan-Southern Africanist life that was lived by both Douglas Livingstone and by William Kamanga, who, like the region's growing number of refugees, have a different understanding of how, internationally, the world hangs together.

These 'in-between' groupings – for want of a better term – challenge political imagination because they require us to search for ways to measure the social world beyond state-based maps. They require us to imagine and describe the region as it was before the rational ordering offered by nationality and territory.

In a provocative recent piece Sylvia Benhabib (2005, pp 673-677) reminds us that some writers have grappled with a political dilemma parallel to the one Southern Africa now faces. The philosopher John Rawls's idea of the 'law of people', for example, and the idea of a 'cosmopolitan citizenship centred on a new law of nations' suggested by Jürgen Habermas (Benhabib 2005, p 674). These and other theorists recognise that the state faces immense challenges in an age in which ideas like globalisation have taken hold and in which the migration of people across borders grows exponentially.

So, ideas on belonging and identity which are rooted in the geometry of sovereignty are no longer sufficient. This raises this question: 'What kind of shared citizenship is ... possible in a world made up of separate nation-states? (Bybee 2005, p 503).'

Even though, ironically, the wars to end colonialism, minority rule and apartheid have ended 'state containers' in Southern Africa cannot hold their people. As the hoary issues of Zimbabwe (and Swaziland and others besides) haunt the region's politics, the policy conversation can only turn to reinforcing the very states that have failed to hold Southern Africa's social bundles together.

Where, then, are the ideas about transnational citizenship for the region? Where is the thinking that will guarantee the rights of the people's people wherever and whenever they are threatened? Where is the inspiration that calls for Southern Africa as a littoral zone? Where is the vision that looks beyond states and constructs a region of people?

WEASEL WORDS

Those reading a journal devoted to the promotion of credible elections in Southern Africa might wonder why this paper is entirely registered outside of the standardised grammar that has celebrated the cult of democracy that has flourished since the end of the Cold War. My purpose has been to highlight a paradox tapped from Heidegger: language, far from being the servant of man, is all too often his master.

The political mantra 'governance', 'transparency' and 'accountability' does not help to explain the world; indeed, this is not its purpose. The purpose of these words is to exercise control over the social world by speaking to the high ideals of

democracy. They therefore aim at manipulation and control rather than at fostering the goals of emancipation within which the idea of democracy – and liberation in the region – was originally conceived.

They are 'weasel words', to use a term once used by Theodore Roosevelt⁶, and the technically-based social practices they encourage are derivative of the parochialism and consumption which has marked the project of modernity in the region and elsewhere.

They do not assist us to understand Zimbabwe, and will not assist in resolving the complex relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe. This is because Zimbabwe is a polity mired in the language and ritual of African nationalism; indeed, the country is a political artefact of early decolonisation. These politics will not be dissolved through the coded language and cargo cult of applied democracy (Vale 2005, p 14).

This says something about the nature of intellectual work. Applied academic disciplines are notoriously unselfconscious and one-dimensional, which makes them easily beholden to special interests. Not surprisingly, then, policy, which frames action rather than describes it, is a notoriously philistine experience.

The gap between bringing Zimbabwe to order and the fate of that country's people has widened, not narrowed, in the face of increasingly shrill policy proposals. This is because the cognitive maps that are used by self-styled policy experts to understand the dynamics of the region have no place for the littoral zones. To rely on these authorities and their charts to carve a way forward is, tragically, to wish for more of the same.

⁶ The exact quote is both interesting and important:

One of our defects as a nation is a tendency to use what have been called 'weasel words'. When a weasel sucks eggs the meat is sucked out of the egg. If you use a 'weasel word' after another there is nothing left of the other.

Speech at St Louis, 31 May 1916

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MOODS OF BITTERNESS

How Political Polarisation has Influenced Zimbabwean Elections

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ABSTRACT

Since 2000 elections in Zimbabwe have been characterised by bitter struggles, mainly between the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In the 2000 parliamentary elections and the 2002 presidential elections these struggles became so violent that lives were lost on both sides, with the protagonists blaming each other for instigating the violence. Real and imagined violence became the language with which even the international community, especially the media, articulated the Zimbabwean crisis at the expense of other equally problematic issues such as the land question, the constitutional debate, economic and personal sanctions, drought and hunger, and poor political decisions by major players on both sides of the political divide. This paper argues that the violent character of the Zimbabwean crisis is a result of a general mood of bitterness that had been building up for decades prior to the current crisis. That mood is traceable to the brutality of the liberation struggle and the bitterness continued in the early 1980s with the Matebeleland crisis, whose violent suppression raised bitter ethnic questions. The mood continued to thicken with the militarisation of Zimbabwean politics when the war veterans entered the political fray especially after the February 2000 constitutional reform referendum. Although Zimbabwe has had a multi-party system since 1980, the real contribution of past political parties, civil society and the international community in Zimbabwe's democratic experiment has been lost in the rhetoric of violence of the last five years. The general mood of bitterness has made it impossible even for well-meaning religious groups and concerned governments of neighbouring countries to negotiate a compromise political solution. Sections of the international media, human rights organisations and some Western diplomats, rather than helping to tone down the bitterness have increased tensions by employing the rhetoric of violence, even in the elections of March 2005, long after the conflicting parties had expressly and demonstrably abandoned violence.

THE ZIMBABWEAN CRISIS

Since the year 2000 Zimbabwean society has faced enormous problems of a political, economic and social nature, which collectively constitute what has been called the Zimbabwean crisis. The major issues include governance, economic meltdown, a disputed land reform process, drought and hunger, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, an exodus of professionals, and the determination of some superpowers that there be a regime change.

There are those who work tirelessly to try to resolve some of Zimbabwe's problems, but there are also those who work hard to accentuate them in order to gain political mileage. There is no general consensus as to what exactly constitutes the Zimbabwean crisis, how it started and how to resolve it. Stakeholders emphasise the explanation that furthers their own interests at any particular time. Most of those involved pull in different directions; there is no common purpose even in the international community, and no common national agenda internally. It seems that the main reason for this lack of common purpose is the acute polarisation of Zimbabwean politics which perpetuates moods of bitterness among Zimbabweans and, by extension, lack of agreement within the international community on how to handle the crisis.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE DURING THE STRUGGLE

A major source of bitterness among Zimbabweans is the history of violence associated with political processes. Political violence in Zimbabwe is historically rooted in the brutality of the struggle for liberation (Martin and Johnson 1981). After independence in 1980 no social or legal process was established to help people deal with the trauma suffered during the struggle, so the bitterness and mutual suspicion were perpetuated. There was no process to deal with the perpetrators and the victims of the petrol bombs that maimed hundreds of people in the townships in the 1960s and 1970s. No one dealt with the massacre of peasants in the rural areas by surrogate armies such as Pfumo Revanhu at the end of the 1970s. No one was called to account for the thousands of people who lost limbs to landmines laid by both the guerrillas and the Rhodesian Security Forces, some of which are still killing people today (Rupiya 1998).

In the optimism (Mlambo 2003, pp 57-95) brought by the new democratic dispensation nobody was brought to account for the deaths of thousands of school children who perished on their way to join liberation movements in neighbouring countries, many of them killed by security forces as they attempted to cross the border. No one was questioned about the massacres of refugees by the Smith regime at refugee camps in Mozambique and Zambia (Iloff 2004). Both Zimbabweans and the international community were in too much of a hurry to declare the success of democracy over minority white rule, and did not stop to deal effectively with the past, and that ugly past continued to affect the new Zimbabwe. There was no war

crimes tribunal, no prosecutions for human rights violations, no truth and reconciliation process and no adequate compensation for victims on either side of the struggle.

*The Matebeleland crisis and other political problems
in the 1980s and 1990s*

After independence, the most disturbing acts of political violence were witnessed during the Matebeleland crisis from 1981 to 1987 (Legal Resource Foundation and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace 1997). The conflict had ethnic roots in the sense that the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), to which the dissident elements claimed allegiance, was a party based in Matebeleland and the Midlands and dominated by Ndebele-speaking Zimbabweans. So, when government forces, who were mostly Shona-speaking, cracked down on the dissidents, they were perceived to have used excessive force. Dissident activity included the kidnapping and murder of tourists, the burning down of churches and the murder of priests, and general terrorism. And yet, the government's resolve to stop these dissident activities was internationally interpreted as an attempt to silence political opposition and to exterminate the Ndebele-speaking people. That interpretation alone had its own destabilising effects, which increased the bitterness of the Ndebele section of the population and fuelled political polarisation between the Shona and Ndebele. The situation was temporarily ameliorated by a 1987 Unity Accord between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and (PF) ZAPU, which, although it stopped the physical violence, did not remove the mutual ethnic suspicions. These suspicions still exist today and some individuals, groups and organisations are working hard to reopen those painful political wounds.

The deliberate misinterpretation of the Matabeleland crisis persists today. One observation is that it is fanned by outsiders, mainly British and some Nordic researchers. It is fed by these researchers to the international press, including the South African press. And yet, nobody has approached the people of Matebeleland to find out from them how they would like to deal with that traumatic period in their history. The people of Matebeleland are bitter, but they have not said that they will seek revenge for what happened to them during the 1980s. They want dialogue, they want someone to say sorry, they want to forgive and to move forward with their lives, but all they get is a constant reopening of their painful wounds by people who pretend to be their friends. Even the late Joshua Nkomo, who suffered so much persecution during the Matebeleland crisis, never mentioned revenge for the wrongs perpetrated on his person. He continued to preach peace, unity and reconciliation (Nkomo 1984).

On the other hand, although President Robert Mugabe and other officials have apologised to the people of Matebeleland, that is not enough. There is a need to provide a means for the victims to express themselves and to make sure there will be no repetition of such traumatic experiences. The one-sided reports of the Catholic

Commission for Justice and Peace did not put the matter to rest either, they merely fuelled people's anger (Legal Resource Foundation and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace 1997). One pro-Ndebele report reads as follows:

The way forward lies in the acknowledgement of the fact that a wrong was done. A sincere apology must be advanced to build a trust in the people of Matebeleland that such a breach of the people's human rights will never be repeated. Such an acknowledgement and assurance would definitely restore cordial civil-military relations in Matebeleland region.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2002, p 33

Also, in the 1980s the late veteran politician, the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, and his ZANU (Ndonga) party were associated with dissident groups operating in Chipinge South. Sithole founded the ruling party, ZANU, when he broke away from ZAPU in 1963. Yet, when he led another breakaway, from ZANU, in 1978, he was denounced as a traitor and in the 1990s his party was accused of plotting to assassinate President Mugabe. Sithole died in 2000 whilst awaiting sentence, and, even though every Zimbabwean recognises that he started the armed phase of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, his remains were not buried at Hero's Acre, the country's ultimate symbol of honour for those who played a major role in the struggle.

In other parts of the country, political violence has been experienced during almost all election campaign periods. This violence has involved youths, mainly from ZANU (PF), clashing with other youths from opposition political parties. In some of these clashes there has been loss of life, injuries and destruction of property. In the 1990 election campaign, there were gun battles in the city of Gweru, where an opposition candidate, Patrick Kombayi, was gunned down by state security agents.

However, the most violent election period was the run up to the June 2000 parliamentary elections. The violence was linked to the land question and to the draft constitution, which was rejected in the referendum of February 2000. During the election campaign more than 30 people are reported to have died, many were injured and millions of dollars' worth of property was destroyed (Mafundikwa 2000).

The Military Factor

At one time, there was fear about what the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) might do if there was widespread political violence caused either by opposition sponsored mass action or by war veteran sponsored civil war.¹ The assumption in opposition

1 The late Masipula Sithole, a professor of Political Science at the University of Zimbabwe, analysed the military option in a series of newspaper articles in Zimbabwe. For a synthesis of his views, see Special Report No 109, the United States Institute of Peace, August 2003. See also Bond 2002.

circles has been that the ZDF are a professional force and will support any new president who comes to power. On the other hand, because the current joint Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (CDF), General Constantine Chiwenga; the Commander of the Army, General Philip Sibanda; the Air Force Commander, Air Marshal Perence Shiri; the Commander of Prison Services, Brigadier Zimonte; and the Police Commissioner, Augustine Chihuri, are themselves liberation war veterans, the War Veterans Association have reason to believe that the security forces will be on their side in case of an uprising. This is more so in light of the declarations by the retired joint Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, General Vitalis Zvinavashe, who is also a liberation war veteran, that the defence forces will not salute anyone who seeks to compromise Zimbabwe's independence (Quintana 2002), and that the post of president of the country is a strait-jacket into which aspiring politicians have to fit.

However, in Africa, defence forces are known to harbour political ambitions of their own. There have been military coups and counter coups in many African countries, many of them triggered by situations where civilians had failed to resolve the country's problems or where political parties had become so polarised that there was no hope of a civilian negotiated political settlement. In Zimbabwe there is no need to put the defence forces to the test in the hope that they will side with one political party or another. The security forces might not side with any party and might decide to create a military government. Of course there will be protests and sanctions proposed by the international community and civil society. But some military regimes are known to have withstood such international and local pressures. Also, if such a military regime were to strike a deal with any superpower, as the Pakistani military government under General Musharaf did with the United States of America, it would put Zimbabwe's democratic experiment in cold storage. Therefore, when some people deliberately provoke the armed forces, as do some sections of the media, people have to think of the possible unwanted consequences of involving the military in politics.

Reports of alleged plots to remove President Robert Mugabe date back to 2001 (Talbot and Slaughter 2001). It appears that the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) bought into the idea during the 2002 presidential elections when its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, called on Mugabe to go peacefully or be removed by force. This advocacy of violence culminated in the unsuccessful June 2003 mass uprising, which the MDC dubbed 'the final push' on Mugabe (Irinnews 5 June 2003). These efforts coincided with warnings from a shadowy military group based in the United Kingdom of a 'democratic revolution' (Zimbabwe Freedom Movement 13 November 2003). However, even as the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, was being persecuted by the British media for shaking Mugabe's hand in public (*ThisDay* 29 September 2004), the British government, at least in public, repeatedly rejected calls for military intervention in Zimbabwe (Phiri 2004).

Taking into account recent developments in the region and on the continent, it would seem that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) are not likely to support the violent overthrow even of a controversial leader such as Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe. While democratic forces the world over, including in Africa, are calling for an end to dictatorships, the same forces are also calling for an end to the violent overthrow of governments (Walker 2004). A military coup in Zimbabwe is likely to be extremely devastating for the SADC region.

POLITICAL PARTIES

As evidenced by the number of political parties that have taken part in elections since 1980, Zimbabwe is both *de jure* and *de facto* not a one-party state. It is, however, dominated by a monolithic ruling party, ZANU-PF. This party is first and foremost a liberation movement. Secondly, it is a coalition between the original ZANU-PF, led by Robert Mugabe and PF-ZAPU, led by the late Joshua Nkomo. This coalition was achieved in 1987 after a Unity Accord that ended the Matebeleland uprising described above. The Unity Accord has been hailed as the unifying force between the Shonas and the Ndebele people. However, that unity has also been criticised for disbanding PF-ZAPU, which, activists say, was swallowed up by Mugabe's ZANU-PF. As a result, there have been a number of attempts to resuscitate the old PF-ZAPU and to continue to sustain a Matebeleland based political party with the name ZAPU (Siziba 1999).

ZANU-PF half-heartedly attempted (and failed) to create a one-party state in Zimbabwe in the 1980s. It tried to practise socialism in the country, and failed at that as well. It lost the support of the urban voters in the 2000 parliamentary elections and the 2002 presidential elections, but still enjoys the support of the rural voters (News 24.com 1 April 2005). In recent by-elections, and in the March 2005 general elections, some urban constituencies began to support ZANU-PF again. But the party has been accused of using violence and intimidation tactics. Nevertheless, it continues to enjoy the support of the War Veterans Association and the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, even though these have also been accused of intimidating the population.

The MDC is the most successful opposition in Zimbabwean politics thus far (Maroleng 2004). In the 2000 parliamentary elections, the MDC won 57 seats compared with ZANU-PF's 62, putting it on what supporters called 'an almost 50/50' footing with ZANU-PF. There are not too many opposition parties in Africa, or in other parts of the world for that matter, that can claim such an achievement. The MDC, which evolved from the workers' movement led by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), is supposed to be a labour-based party with most of its supporters urban based. However, the party aligned itself with white farmers, who paid for its election campaign in June 2000. It also received funding from the British Government and from international organisations. Because of this the MDC has

been perceived as a Western puppet, a 'sell-out' party. The party did not help its image when it campaigned for economic and other sanctions against Zimbabwe, which the United States and the European Union acted upon (Mullaly 2002). These sanctions, especially on petroleum products, have hurt all Zimbabweans very badly, and the image that the MDC thrives on the suffering of Zimbabweans is difficult to erase.

The MDC has also called for and, indeed, staged violent uprisings, which they term 'mass action' and which were ruthlessly crushed by security forces. The most volatile of these violent encounters was in June 2003. It failed, but the image of a party bent on usurping power through undemocratic and violent means remains. Morgan Tsvangirai himself has said openly that Mugabe must go peacefully or he will be removed violently.

Of the smaller parties, the most prominent was the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) of the 1990s.² The party was led by Edgar Tekere, the former Secretary General of ZANU-PF who broke ranks with Mugabe when he observed that 'democracy in Zimbabwe was in the intensive care unit'.

ZUM seriously challenged Mugabe in the presidential election of 1990, but the party did not follow up the momentum and did not seriously campaign in subsequent elections. Tekere himself has been ill for some time and has not participated in elections since 2000. At the time of writing he was reported to have rejoined ZANU-PF and be hoping to be elected to the re-introduced Senate.

The other significant small party is the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats (ZUD), a party led by Margaret Dongo, a former ZANU-PF Member of Parliament and a former freedom fighter. In the 1990s she championed the cause of former freedom fighters who had been neglected by ZANU-PF, but when she formed ZUD she did not include other war veterans in her party's ranks. As a result, the most prominent war veterans campaigned against her. She also refused to join the MDC coalition when it was formed. Other small parties and independent players emerge at election time but these have never really challenged the major political players (*The Insider* June 1992; July 2003).

One problem has been the international community's assumption that the MDC will most certainly replace ZANU-PF on the Zimbabwean political scene and therefore there is very little support for other parties. However, after three successive losses in elections, in 2000, 2002 and 2005, it does not appear that the MDC will assume power any time soon. Some are already talking of the possibility of a 'third force' joining the political fray (Molokele 2005; Kwinjeh 2005). There remains, however, the possibility of a split either in ZANU-PF or in the MDC or in both, and that may drastically change the political landscape of Zimbabwe.

2 For an in-depth analysis of opposition politics in Zimbabwe, see Laakso 2003.

THE NCA AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL DEBATE

Zimbabwean civil society is dominated by Lovemore Madhuku, who claims that his National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) is a coalition of all civil society groups in the country (NCA website). Madhuku has received so much money from donors that he has been able to fund the activities of a number of civil organisations. The NCA itself continues to call for a new constitution before there is any political change in Zimbabwe. However, this fixation on the constitution has tended to block any other political options so that, instead of being an asset, Lovemore Madhuku's influence on Zimbabwean civil society groups is sometimes seen as an obstacle to political dialogue.

That there is need for a 'home-grown' Zimbabwean constitution is no longer an issue for debate. The fact was generally accepted in the run-up to the February 2000 Constitutional Referendum (Sachikonye 2004; BBC News 28 September 2001). Unfortunately, the issue of the new constitution was overtaken by political developments. Instead of using the opportunity, the effort and the momentum for constitutional reform, both ZANU-PF and the MDC decided to use it to gain political mileage. And here it must be admitted that both parties succeeded in gaining political strength on the basis of the negative results of the 2000 constitutional referendum. The MDC won a record number of opposition seats in Parliament in the June 2000 elections (57 MDC, 61 ZANU-PF) as a result of the momentum created by the campaign for a 'no' vote. On the other hand, ZANU-PF regained popularity in the rural constituencies by including a land clause in the proposed constitution and managed to hold on to power. But all that political mileage was gained at the expense of the constitutional reform process that all had agreed was necessary.

If the NCA had not campaigned for a 'no' vote in the constitutional referendum Mugabe would not have been eligible for re-election in the presidential elections of 2002 because the proposed constitution limited the president to two terms. It is difficult to convince people that Madhuku, a constitutional lawyer by training, did not realise that. Some have said that Madhuku wants to keep the constitutional debate alive so that he will continue to receive funding from donors. There is, therefore, a need to renew the political will for constitutional reform and this cannot be done by trying to force *through* an opposition sponsored document, as the NCA has been trying to do. It may be more fruitful to negotiate a new constitution in good faith than to 'demand' that government accept the NCA version of the constitution. One option is to go the South African way – achieve a political settlement first, then deal with the constitution.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

A number of religious groups have involved themselves in the Zimbabwean political scene. However the religious community has thus far failed to reconcile the conflicting parties. One problem is historical. During the liberation war some church

leaders ended up on the side of the minority and racist Smith regime. Such was the fate of the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and Bishop Abel Muzorewa. The resentment caused by this situation is such that when religious groups such as the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace speak about atrocities in Matebeleland, some people label them yesterday's sell-outs. And yet, there are some well-meaning religious leaders, such as the trio of Patrick Mutume, Trevor Manhanga and Sebastian Bakare, who have tried to bring the MDC and the Zimbabwean Government to dialogue. So far they have not been given the respect that their efforts deserve.

The religious atmosphere has been polluted more by people like Archbishop Pius Ncube, who speak of the government with such contempt that they leave no room for a church sponsored reconciliation process. Instead, Ncube has called for a violent uprising (*Ecumenical News International* March 2005), and has even prayed to God for Mugabe's death. In August 2005 the Anglican Church put its Harare Bishop, Nolbert Kunonga, on trial to answer political charges based on allegations by political activists aligned to the MDC. Fortunately the church appointed Malawian judge James Kalaile, who refused to hear the case (Zvayi 29 August 2005; BBC News 26 August 2005). There is clearly a need for the church in Zimbabwe to regain the moral high ground by advocating dialogue rather than joining one side of the political fray.

The church has made another mistake by calling for sanctions against Zimbabwe, a call led by Roman Catholic bishops (Zim Online 14 August 2004). Sanctions have reduced the availability of food, medicines and petroleum products, starving the Zimbabwean masses in the process. In Africa, hunger seldom triggers democratic uprisings, instead it often drives Africans back to the land (Lee and Colvard 2003) where they can practise survival of the fittest tactics. No wonder a recent international political survey (AfroBarometer 18 August 2004) found that 60 per cent of Zimbabweans had lost interest in political change between 1999 and 2004; they were too busy trying to survive under sanctions.

The Roman Catholic bishops certainly got the sanctions issue wrong and this disqualifies them from playing the role of peace broker. In addition, the majority of Zimbabwean Christians are not Catholics; most of them follow the emerging Pentecostal churches such as the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Johanne Masowe, Guta ra Jehovha, Zion City Church, and the United Church of Christ (UCC). There are also many Methodist and Anglican Church followers, and none of them has called for sanctions (Media 24 Africa Service 23 January 2004).

THE MEDIA AS WEAPONS OF MASS DECEPTION

The media are not simply observing and recording events as they unfold in Zimbabwe, they are at the centre of the Zimbabwean crisis (Media Monitoring Project 2000). The state-controlled media have done all it can to rubbish the

opposition, the international community and all dissenting voices. On the other hand, the private media and sections of the international media, including those in South Africa, have laboured to present Mugabe as the devil incarnate. The situation is so bad that it is possible accurately to forecast the response of the main news providers to any significant event in Zimbabwe. Add to that the alleged harassment and torture of journalists by state security agents in Zimbabwe and the fabrication of stories by the private and international media, and it is clear that the media have become the psychological warfare department of the Zimbabwean crisis.

The media in Zimbabwe are polarised and divided along the same political fault lines that separate Zimbabwean society. Every media organisation in the country is either pro-Mugabe or anti-Mugabe, there is no neutral ground, despite the many pretensions by some that they are independent, and this includes regional and international media organisations, especially the South African media. Every activity in Zimbabwe is interpreted by the 'independent' media as a Mugabe activity, as if the 12 million ordinary men, women, children and the aged have no individual existence of their own.

To most Zimbabweans, however, what has been going on in the country in the past five years is not simply the manipulation of a people by an aged dictator, the Zimbabwean crisis depicts the bitter mood of a nation, a mood fuelled by acute political polarisation. All media organisations have a duty to report both sides of the political divide as accurately and as objectively as possible without becoming weapons of mass deception. And yet, in Zimbabwe, the government controlled media report only the good things about ZANU-PF, and only the ugly side of the MDC. On the other hand, the independent media present a Zimbabwe in which everything, including rivers, mountains, trees, and animals, live and die for Robert Mugabe. So much so that even the Zimbabwean side of the Victoria Falls is now being excluded from South African media presentations of regional attractions, yet it is as beautiful as it was when David Livingstone 'discovered' it 150 years ago.

There are many such beautiful places and people in Zimbabwe, which have nothing to do with Robert Mugabe, but, in the eyes of the 'independent' media they no longer exist. Even Zimbabwean art has been reduced to pro- or anti-Mugabe art. When veteran musician Thomas Mapfumo produced his politically charged song, 'Mamvemve', which sent him into exile, and Last Chiangwa (Tambaoga) responded with the equally politically charged 'Blair Toilet', the media pressurised another music guru, Oliver Mtukudzi, to declare that his song 'Kuchembera' was anti-Mugabe, even though the musician explained that the song was about any and all the aged people in Zimbabwe (Eyre 12 July 2005).

Zimbabweans, and the world at large, are not being told the true Zimbabwean story by either the local or the so-called independent international media. The true Zimbabwean story lies somewhere between the torture of Mark Chavhunduka and Ray Choto (Brinkley 2002) and Basildon Peta's fictitious murder victims (Peta 2002); between the international agencies' predictions of pending famine and mass starvation and the Zimbabwe government's forecast of future bumper harvests;

between the 'horrors' of Operation Murambatsvina and the hopes of Operation Garikai (Tibaijuka 2005); between Mugabe begging for a loan on his knees (Degenerationx.net 24 July 2005) and the International Monetary Fund nudging the South African government to offer him an unsolicited loan (Independent online 26 August 2005).

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The Zimbabwean crisis has affected and been influenced by a number of regional and international countries and organisations, to such an extent that it has ceased to be a domestic issue and become an international and multilateral one. For example, one of the reasons advanced by the MDC for not accepting the results of the 2000 parliamentary elections and the 2002 presidential elections was that the international community did not pronounce them free and fair. Recently, Zimbabwean sport, especially cricket, has been under pressure (*Cricinfo* 21 August 2005) mainly because of the campaign to have Zimbabwe banned from playing Test cricket, a campaign championed by Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The cricket crisis has been aggravated by allegations of racism, leading to 15 white players holding the Zimbabwe Cricket Union to ransom for a whole year. Even when the International Cricket Council ruled that Zimbabwe would maintain its Test cricket status, the international media and regular cricket advertisers ignored the triangular series played in Zimbabwe in August 2005 between New Zealand, India and Zimbabwe (*Pak Tribune* 29 August 2005).

The thorny issue of Zimbabwe's withdrawal from the Commonwealth (*The Age* 14 December 2003; BBC News 8 December 2003) is already an international issue which threatened to split the Commonwealth on racial lines. The major cause of the Zimbabwean crisis, land reform, already involves the British government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Commonwealth and the African Union (AU). The economic situation has been aggravated by economic sanctions imposed by the European Union (EU), the USA, the rest of the donor community, the IMF and the World Bank. Therefore, some member of the international community, instead of merely being observers, are actual players who have even initiated moves that have impacted on the Zimbabwean situation, in most cases negatively.

For example, some Nordic countries, Denmark, for instance, have closed their embassies in Zimbabwe and have stopped economic cooperation and aid even to non-governmental organisations. Even international gay organisations took an anti-Mugabe stance, with Peter Tatchell, a British national, on the front line (BBC News 6 March 2001; *Exodus* October 1999; BBC News 16 November 1999).

The British government has been at the centre of the Zimbabwean land question for more than 100 years, yet the former British ambassador to Zimbabwe (Sir Brian Donnelly) was the most outspoken member of the diplomatic community, especially on the subject of Zimbabwe's land reform. His statements greatly shaped British,

EU, Australian and American policy on Zimbabwe. He was obviously not a neutral player, yet his voice was influential not only to the British audience, but to most of the Western world. It is also not clear at a time when Tony Blair and his Commission for Africa and the G8 are campaigning for debt cancellation for poor African countries, why the IMF is demanding that Zimbabwe pays its debt of close to US\$300-million, knowing very well that such payment, like the Shakespearian Shylock's demand for a 'pound of flesh', would most certainly bleed Zimbabwe's economy to death?

WRONGLY FOCUSED INITIATIVES

Thus far conflict transformation in Zimbabwe has focused on talks between ZANU-PF and the MDC but apart from the informal 'talks about talks' this inter-party dialogue has not yielded any fruits (Bruce and Katzenellenbogen 25 May 2004). It is frequently suggested that the talks should be between Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai and that there has been no meaningful dialogue because the two refuse to find any common ground on which to initiate such talks. In fact, if the Zimbabwean political impasse is to be broken, there is a need to broaden the dialogue beyond Mugabe and Tsvangirai; beyond ZANU-PF and the MDC; and to hold a national dialogue that includes all other stakeholders.

A recent international survey of political opinion in Zimbabwe concluded that too much focus on Mugabe has done more harm than good to the forces of change (Chikwanha et al 2004). The Zimbabwean crisis emanates from the bitter mood of Zimbabwean society, and to resolve it there is need for a national dialogue, not just talks between Mugabe and Tsvangirai or between ZANU-PF and the MDC. There is also a need to widen the discourse beyond mere regime change to include issues such as economic recovery, post-conflict reconstruction, south-south cooperation and regional security, issues which the forces of change have been ignoring with reference to Zimbabwe, and which Mugabe has capitalised on.

It does not help Zimbabwe for the forces of change to appear to be led by Western countries such as Britain and the United States at a time when Western-sponsored mercenaries are haunting the continent (Sengupta 2004; Dovkants 2004) and when Mugabe is receiving standing ovations at almost every African gathering. There is clearly a need for the forces of change to engage the African psyche and to understand why African beacons of hope such as president Thabo Mbeki insist on quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe (Peta and Quintal 2004) and why a reputable British magazine voted Mugabe 'the third greatest African of all time' after Nelson Mandela and Kwame Nkrumah (*New African* August/September 2004).

THE 2000 PARLIAMENTARY AND 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS³

The biggest problem with the general elections of June 2000 and the presidential election of 2002 was political violence. Most of that violence was a spill over from

the violent land occupations that started after the rejection of a proposed new constitution in February 2000. The war veterans were on the warpath, and so were the government sponsored youth brigades, the so-called Border Gezi or Green Bombers. But even these did not have a monopoly on violence – white farmers were violently resisting land invasions. For example, in Odzi, near Mutare, a white farmer drove over a black settler, killing him, in full view of other black settlers. He was arrested and sent to prison. The MDC from its youth wing to its members of Parliament right up to its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai himself, was also on the warpath. One MDC member of Parliament, Learnmore Jongwe, was so violent that he stabbed his own wife 28 times with a kitchen knife during that period. The wife died on her way to hospital and Jongwe committed suicide while awaiting trial. Later, another MDC member of Parliament, Roy Bennet, violently assaulted two Cabinet ministers during a bitter debate in Parliament and was imprisoned for one year.

Between 2000 and 2003, the MDC as a party thought they could remove ZANU-PF from power by force. After losing the parliamentary elections in June 2000, Morgan Tsvangirai made a public speech to the effect that if Mugabe did not step down peacefully, the MDC would remove him violently. This call was strengthened by European and American references to a Milosevich-style mass action to remove Mugabe. Indeed, the MDC mobilised several attempted civil disobedience mass protests in major cities throughout the country, but they were all brutally thwarted by the Zimbabwean security forces. The most publicised of these MDC mass action initiatives was held in June 2003 and was dubbed, 'the final push'. In the meantime, it was alleged that Tsvangirai was negotiating with a Canadian based former Israeli secret agent to assassinate Robert Mugabe. The plot fell apart when the agent, Ari Ben Menashe, became a double agent and worked with ZANU-PF to smear Tsvangirai. Tsvangirai was charged with treason and acquitted. This history of violent politics was the reason why some observers declared that the parliamentary elections of June 2000 and the presidential election of February 2002 were not free and fair.

During the run-up to the 2002 presidential election Zimbabwean politics was so polarised that whatever the result of that election it was unlikely to bring durable peace to the country. Some, including many ZANU-PF activists and some sections of the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association, threatened civil war if Tsvangirai won the presidential election. Some senior government officials also said they would rather go back to the bush to wage another guerrilla war if Morgan Tsvangirai 'sold Zimbabwe back to the British' and returned land to white farmers. These were not just noises to try to frighten the opposition, they were real threats.

A similar situation arose in Mozambique when RENAMO took up arms to fight the Mozambican Government, sparking two decades of civil war. That war

3 For an in-depth analysis of the 2002 presidential elections, see Amani Trust, Network of Independent Monitors and Physicians for Human Rights 15 March 2002.

achieved nothing and the two parties finally agreed to political dialogue and political compromise (Armon, Hendrickson and Vines 1998). Unfortunately, the Mozambican political compromise was achieved after the death of millions of Mozambicans and the total destruction of the country's infrastructure.

The 2005 Elections

The most positive aspect of Zimbabwe's March 2005 parliamentary elections compared to its two predecessors was the fact that there was no political violence at all. However, human rights pretenders in Zimbabwe, South Africa and some Western countries, led by Amnesty International, decided to ignore that fact and to fan the discourse of violence in the country (Amnesty International 2005). After the elections, instead of encouraging a positive way forward, the anti-Mugabe group shifted their focus to manufactured 'evidence' of vote rigging, trying to incite violent protest against the results, even when the leadership of the MDC declined to challenge the results (Timberg 2005). This call for a violent uprising led some MDC youths who were not in touch with reality to start violent protests in Harare the day after the announcement of the results. Fortunately they were quickly neutralised by the police (*The Herald* 4 April 2005).

Those who were in Zimbabwe on the day of the elections and who watched the counting of the votes and the public announcement of the results in the three days that followed described the elections as peaceful, credible and reflecting the will of the Zimbabwean people. This view was held by, among others, observers from 14 SADC countries, from the South African Parliament and from the African Union. On the issue of equal access to the public broadcaster, the Zimbabwean government opened up the airwaves for campaigns by all political parties and even dismissed the much hated Jonathan Moyo from the Ministry of Information and from ZANU-PF (Nyago 2005). Of course, there are those who agree against the SADC pronouncement of a free and fair poll and maintain that the SADC guidelines were not met. This is clearly a case of outsiders who mourn louder than the bereaved.

One contentious issue was that Zimbabwe's voters' roll contained the names of dead people, the so-called 'ghost voters'. The voters' roll was compiled in 2002, based on the national census of that year, and was subsequently digitalised and updated up to 28 February 2005 (FreeZim Support Group 27 February 2005). Obviously, people continued to die (as they do in great numbers in these days of HIV and AIDS) after that date and needed to be removed from the voters' roll. On the other hand, some people turned 18, the legal age of adulthood in Zimbabwe, and became eligible to vote during that period. So any registered voter who had died and whose death was not reported to the election authorities will continue to be on the voters' roll until the next census, and anybody who turned 18 during that period and who did not register to vote will not be on the roll until the next census. But, as South Africa's Minister of Labour, who was tackled on the issue by journalists, explained, dead people do not vote. In any case, it is not only people who would

have voted for ZANU-PF who died, some potential MDC voters also died during that period and could be described as 'ghost voters'.

Another hot issue was that of the exclusion of expatriate voters. It was alleged that the exclusion of expatriate voters meant that close to 3 million voters in the diaspora were disenfranchised. The explanation from Zimbabwe's Independent Electoral Commission was that the Zimbabwean system is constituency based, and it would be difficult to distribute millions of votes cast outside the country to their proper constituencies. Also, because of the travel restrictions imposed on some candidates by Western governments, it would have been impossible for candidates to campaign in the diaspora. Those who were able to return home to vote were encouraged to do so and a good number of Zimbabweans, especially from the SADC region, did so. The South African television channel SABC 3 followed some of these expatriates from Johannesburg to rural areas in Zimbabwe and confirmed that they were, indeed, free to vote in their constituencies (*Special Assignment* 19 April 2005).

However, a number of Zimbabweans in the diaspora could neither go home to vote nor would they have been able to vote even if the ballot had been brought to them. This is because many of them have applied for asylum and some already have refugee status and new identity documents. Some have forged documents and others have voluntarily changed their citizenship. In the United Kingdom, for example, many Zimbabweans are on the run from immigration authorities ever since the British government started deporting Zimbabwean asylum seekers whose applications had failed. Only the foolish would have exposed themselves to deportation by going to a Zimbabwean polling station anywhere in the UK. This was demonstrated by the fact that despite the noise about a mock expatriate vote in South Africa and the UK, the total number of those who cast the mock vote in both countries did not even reach 10 000. What happened to the 3 million potential voters who were constantly being mentioned by the media? And what is there to say that all Zimbabweans in the diaspora would have voted for the MDC?

Some international and regional groups, such as Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, and the Zimbabwe Solidarity and Consultative Forum, among others, which have been campaigning for the MDC (Froese 2005) have tried to evoke their misconceptions of human rights violations in Zimbabwe as a reason to discredit the March 2005 elections. Such groups, however, ignore the fact that the right to choose government representatives is a human right. Article 21 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads as follows:

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to the public service in his country.
- (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections

which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

The above is corroborated by the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, which, in Article 13, repeats the UN declaration and adds that free participation in the government of one's country shall take place 'in accordance with the provisions of the law' of that country. There is no human rights declaration anywhere in the world that says that the freeness and fairness of elections shall be determined by human rights activists or by the European Union or by the United States of America.

For the record, the following facts about Zimbabwe's March 2005 elections must be restated:

- Voting was by means of a secret ballot and was open to all adults who had attained the age of 18 years and above, and who had registered to vote by 28 February 2005.
- The elections were run by an Independent Electoral Commission and followed the SADC guidelines on democratic elections.
- Ballot boxes were transparent and at every polling station the boxes were inspected by polling agents appointed by the MDC, ZANU-PF and independent candidates where applicable.
- Voting took place on one day.
- Counting was done at each polling station in the presence of polling agents from all contesting parties.
- The results in each constituency were announced in public, in full view of the media and local and regional observers, and in the presence of candidates or representatives of all parties contesting each constituency.
- The MDC and ZANU-PF had polling agents at all polling stations and their names were advertised in all the national newspapers days before the election date. The polling agents inspected all boxes to make sure there were no papers stuffed in them before polling started.

But the bitterness of some human rights pretenders such as those in the South African chapter of Amnesty International is not really about whether the Zimbabwean elections were free and fair but about the fact that, according to them, the MDC should have won the elections. In fact, the MDC did win the majority of the urban constituencies, which is what all serious political analysts and opinion polls had predicted. So, if Morgan Tsvangirai had contested any constituency in Harare or Bulawayo he would have won and would be a member of Parliament. Just why he did not contest in the urban areas and lead his party in Parliament has baffled a number of analysts. It also appears that the fact that Tsvangirai had remained outside Parliament for the previous five years and will do so again for the next five adds to the bitterness of the MDC and its leader.

On the regional scene, the Zimbabwean elections generated more excitement in South Africa than in Zimbabwe itself. Yet internationally, the majority of commentators and opinion makers agreed long before the election date, that the ruling ZANU-PF would win (See, for example, Nolan 2005). The only debate was whether ZANU-PF would win freely and fairly or whether it would win by intimidation and violence. As observed earlier, there was no violence at all before or during the March 2005 elections. Although few political analysts entertained the opinion that the MDC would unseat ZANU-PF, when the results came out, giving ZANU-PF 78 seats against 41 for the MDC and one for independent candidate Jonathan Moyo, the usual suspects still cried foul.

Between the beginning of 2004 and the end of March 2005 there was a period of political non-violence in Zimbabwe. Both the MDC and ZANU-PF sent constant messages to their supporters that the leadership would not tolerate any form of violence. The government disbanded the feared youth brigades and the police adopted a zero tolerance approach to political violence. So that in the run up to the elections of 31 March 2005 it was common to see MDC supporters holding a political rally right next to a ZANU-PF political gathering, with no form of confrontation whatsoever and such images were constantly aired on national television. After the elections and when the results were announced, again national television showed MDC and ZANU-PF supporters celebrating together and sharing traditional beer mugs. Why then did human rights pretenders ignore such peaceful developments (see, for example, Zavis 2005).

To genuine peace lovers, the 2005 elections should have been declared a dream come true. Religious organisations which had mobilised numerous prayers for peace in Zimbabwe were jubilant. With the exception of the Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo, Pius Ncube, who prayed for Mugabe to die, most Zimbabwean church leaders commended the Zimbabwean population for a peaceful political process (*Christian Post* 2 March 2005). Even the traditionally anti-Mugabe Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) hailed the improved political climate (*The Herald* 2 April 2005). Tsvangirai himself expressed satisfaction at the reduced level of political violence. Yet the miracle was missed by the loudest international democracy and human rights watchers. Instead of campaigning for peace, Amnesty International and other suspect organisations fomented regional unrest by organising endless protests throughout South Africa, with the politically ambitious Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) (newzimbabwe.com 4 November 2004; Amnesty International South Africa 12 and 13 March 2005).

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Anan welcomed Zimbabwe's peaceful elections (UN News Service 4 April 2005) yet the American Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, labelled Zimbabwe an outpost of tyranny (19 January 2005) while the British press demonised Jack Straw and Prince Charles for shaking hands with Robert Mugabe (Milno 2005). But the same countries and many democracy and human rights activists hailed elections in Afghanistan and in Iraq that took place under military occupation with bombs exploding everywhere (literally) and dozens

of people being killed on the polling days. In Iraq, international democracy activists argued, correctly, that, even though the elections were not perfect, they were an important step towards the democratisation of Iraq. The same argument should have been applied to Zimbabwe.

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ZIMBABWE'S LAND POLITICS AND THE 2005 ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

One hundred and fifteen years ago the Pioneer Column hoisted the Union Jack in Salisbury and took possession of all unoccupied land in the name of Queen Victoria, an act of conquest which ushered in close to 100 years of colonial domination of the people of the land by the British. Accordingly, access to and ownership of land has been an intrinsic part of the political discourse in Zimbabwe. Prior to independence land was a key driver of political change. This paper examines the key milestones of Zimbabwe's land reform process over the years to demonstrate how, during the post-independence era and culminating in the 2005 parliamentary elections, land has continued to have significant value with respect to political dominance and capital.

LAND AND POLITICS – THE ORIGINS

The development of the country under colonial domination was determined by the overarching policy of apartheid implemented by the settler regime. Although popularly only associated with pre-independence South Africa, apartheid, albeit implemented in a less brutal fashion, was nonetheless relevant to Zimbabwe. Apartheid, by its very definition, meant separate development of the races in every conceivable sphere: education, health, settlement and agrarian development. Hence, a racially dissected agrarian sector emerged, accompanied by an unequal distribution of resources, wealth and services in favour of the white settler communities. The skewed distribution was achieved by means of war and conquest waged by the settlers on the indigenous people in the late 19th century. This made possible the forceful expropriation of land from the indigenous people in favour of the settlers. This appropriation of land by armed force was subsequently given legitimacy in 1919. All unalienated land was declared British Crown land. The logic was that the concept of individual ownership was foreign to the 'natives', who could not, therefore, assert title to unalienated land. Under the law, this meant that

the occupation and use of land by indigenous people was only permitted with the consent of the British Crown. Alienation was thus a settler privilege (Mbaya 2001).

Most of the best agricultural land was alienated to settlers, resulting in the local people being forced to settle on poorer land. This position was legalised in 1930 by legislation legitimising the allotment of the country's land along racial lines. In this way the land tenure situation as well as the land distribution pattern were designed to serve the economic and political interests of the white minority and to subjugate the indigenous masses. About 50,8 per cent of the available agricultural land was set aside for the few thousand whites and 30 per cent reserved for the black people, resulting in overcrowding in the latter areas. The combined effect of massive over-population and over-grazing had grave ecological consequences such as degradation and low soil fertility. The result was that poverty became endemic among black people. In addition, the rights people had in these areas, together with their ability to enforce these rights, that is, tenure, were weak. In contrast, in areas reserved for white farmers for commercial agriculture, population pressure was low and considerable resources and state support were channelled towards the identification and promotion of appropriate land uses. Poverty was therefore rare. Table 1 lists the consequences of unequal tenure systems.

As a consequence of the historic dispossession and marginalisation of the people, post-independence Zimbabwe was characterised by the imperative to empower its black majority as a way of redressing the immoral imbalances caused by the minority government. Fundamental to this redress was the transformation of the agrarian sector. However, these efforts turned out to be severely constrained by powerful local and international interests acting to protect existing (minority) property rights. The restriction was primarily in the form of the infamous Lancaster House independence settlement, which provided that:

- the Zimbabwe government's land reform programme would restrict itself to the willing-buyer-willing-seller principle when acquiring land and
- that the terms agreed at Lancaster House and incorporated into the Constitution would not be changed for ten years.

Politics and Land Reform in the 1980s

The political commitment of the newly elected government to addressing the imbalance in property ownership was evidenced by the fact that within a few months of independence in 1980 Zimbabwe initiated the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme. Land reform can generally be considered to have several key components. These include redistributive reform, tenure reform, restitution, and the reform of land administration systems and institutions. In the case of Zimbabwe the establishment of a settler colony was rooted in colonial occupation and the dispossession of the indigenous people by settlers. Accordingly, the

redistribution of land emerged as a fundamental pursuit of the independent state. Hence the redistribution component took centre stage.

The land redistribution programme comprised planning, land acquisition, resettlement of beneficiaries and post-settlement support. During the 1980s all these components appeared to receive fair attention from the government. The acquisition component did, however, emerge as the most problematic. As an outcome of the constitutional restrictions emanating from the Lancaster House settlement, the government was obliged to purchase land (considered to have been stolen from the indigenous people) for redistribution. This was a bone of contention which would ultimately transform the future of the land reform process and of the entire nation.

Table 1
Problems Emerging from Discriminatory Land Tenure Systems

Issues	Problems
Land Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inequitable and unjust access to land • Limited rights/access for majority • Costly and cumbersome transfers of land
Land Utilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminatory regulations against customary tenures • Speculative under-utilisation of freeholds • Unsustainable use in overcrowded areas • Coercive regulations in some tenures
Land Tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insecurity of some tenures • Discriminatory protection system • Over-centralised regulations
Land Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercive and centralised approach • Dispersed institutions • Lack of capacity and weak institutional support • Poor representation of majority • Weak transparency
Land Adjudication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biased towards market and state sectors • No restitution/victim compensation • Merged powers of local courts/authorities • Inaccessible courts/mediation

Source: Moyo 2001

While aiming to enhance the socio-economic well-being of low-income households, the land reform programme was explicitly political; intended to redress the unjust colonial seizures of black-owned lands (Kinsey 1998). While the urgency with which the new government proceeded to address the land issue was significant, there were noteworthy inconsistencies with long-term implications. Firstly, Zimbabwe's approach to land reform, implemented in the shadow of the much acclaimed Lancaster House Constitution, was largely externally influenced. Hence, whilst the state pursued a Marxist-Leninist ideology, the land reform programme was market-based in line with the Lancaster settlement as well as the World Bank reasoning that land reform was more likely to result in poverty reduction if it was implemented in accordance with the operation of existing land markets. This market-based 'willing-buyer-willing-seller' model has subsequently been acknowledged as being inappropriate for Zimbabwe as well as for South Africa and Namibia (see, for example, Mbaya 2001; Froese 2005).

A significant outcome of the market-orientated acquisition process was a very slow rate of acquisition. This was partly due to financial constraints faced by the government. Once again, comparable situations have been observed in South Africa and Namibia. The financial assistance from international partners was ultimately not as forthcoming as originally indicated.¹

A second inconsistency of political significance related to the beneficiaries of land reform. The original criteria for the selection of beneficiaries of the resettlement programme prioritised those who had been marginalised by the previous regime, including refugees, displaced persons and people without land or with inadequate land for subsistence. Subsequent revisions of the programme in 1985, 1997 and 2000 saw this emphasis shift, with selection criteria becoming increasingly partisan (Mbaya 2001).

POLITICS AND LAND IN THE 1990s

The government's resettlement efforts reached an all time high in the mid-1980s, albeit well below the levels originally envisaged. Thereafter, limited in part by insufficient resources to proceed with market-based acquisition of land, land reform gradually became increasingly peripheral to the political agenda of the government.

In 1990 Zimbabwe began a Bretton Woods-led five-year Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP as it was popularly known). While envisaging long-term gains, this variant of a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) had the effect of precipitating high human development costs. The government cut spending on education by 30 per cent, while real wages fell by a third. Poverty rose dramatically in both urban and rural areas. In the face of rising urban unemployment, agricultural sources of livelihood became increasingly important. This was reflected in the

¹ Moyo 2000 gives a detailed account of factors relating to the relationship between Zimbabwe and Britain in relation to the financing of land redistribution.

change in government's selection criteria for resettlement. Greater emphasis was now placed on farming experience and competence than on need and destitution.

Scholars have observed that since independence, but most significantly between 1998 and 2000, the country's official land resettlement programme was paralleled by informal and subliminal processes of land occupations or 'land self-provisions' by communities that had become increasingly disillusioned with the slow pace of redistribution by the government (see, for examples, Moyo 2000 and Marongwe 2002). However, a significant consideration often overlooked has been noted by Marongwe – that of restitution claims. Unlike South Africa, Zimbabwe did not have an articulated land restitution component to its land reform programme. Such a component would have aimed to identify those who were dispossessed of their indigenous land holdings under the settler regime and would have sought to restore these, or, at the very least, to compensate the claimants. Hence, some instances of land occupations by communities were expressions of the underlying expectation of redress in view of past dispossession (Marongwe 2002).

The incidents of land occupation catapulted to significant levels in 1997/8 when some former liberation fighters, 'war veterans', dissatisfied with the extent of recognition afforded them by the government, staged a political insurgency, demanding better treatment, including finance (pensions) and land allocations. The issue of land and its redistribution was thus firmly returned to the political limelight (Moyo 2004b).

The uprising by the war veterans was significant from several aspects. Not least of these was the fact that the government decision to accede to the war veterans' claims sent shock waves through the country and the world. The result was the introduction of a degree of uncertainty in the country and a resulting loss of confidence. This, in turn, resulted in a drop in the value of the Zimbabwe Dollar and, eventually, in a range of economic and social consequences. Politically, the significance of the event was the fact that it signalled new levels of dissent and a power shift within the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF). It also demonstrated the political currency of land and its availability for exploitation for political advantage. This would ultimately have significant implications for the country's land reform programme and for the future of the country as a whole.

In light of this the government launched the second phase of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme (LRRP2) in 1997. The intention of LRRP2 was to redistribute substantial parts of the commercial farm sector within five years (GoZ 1999-2000) even though this period was characterised by significant contestation by white commercial farmers through court appeals against government plans to acquire their farms. The administrative pronouncements about this second phase are frequently considered to represent a mere tweaking of the policy framework without any real redistributive impact on the ground. In the event, the LRRP2 failed to take off in earnest. The main reason was that financial support from donors for the programme's experimental Inception Phase failed to materialise.

The LRRP2 thus gave way to the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTP), largely because of the political imperative to redistribute land quickly. The FTP was launched in spite of the negative results of the 'accelerated' programme experiment of the 1990s. Even though there was an implementation programme in existence, the FTP was largely implemented through the widespread invasion of commercial farms by armed groups of 'landless' people. Hence, it did not exhibit the levels of planning which had characterised the programme of the 1980s. The inadequate planning affected demarcation, agricultural land use and production. In the same way, inadequate provision for post-settlement support, including starter packs, extension services and access to credit, emerged as weaknesses.

Another feature of Zimbabwe's land reform process has been the lack of attention paid to tenure reform in communal areas and tenure considerations, in the case of newly resettled farmers. There was far less emphasis on tenure reform considerations than on land redistribution in spite of the fact that Zimbabwe had articulated tenure reform components to its land and agrarian reform programmes. In fact, the extent of the political urgency associated with redistribution ultimately compromised the options for tenure reform. The debate about tenure reform remained precisely that ... debate, and largely academic. Interestingly some political economists in the Southern African region argued that local and international forces supportive of white farming interests were pushing the tenure reform debate with a view to detracting from the focus on redistributive reform and thus maintaining the status quo.

'LAND IS THE ECONOMY AND THE ECONOMY IS LAND' (2000-2002)

In 2000, the ruling Zanu-PF faced unprecedented political opposition. Early in the year the government conceded defeat to the National Constitutional Assembly, (NCA) in the constitutional referendum. The proposed constitution would have enabled government to expropriate commercial farmland without compensation (Box 1). The responsibility for compensating commercial farmers would ostensibly have been transferred to Britain as the colonial power. Much has been said about the government having been defeated by the NCA's 'No' vote. One view is that, curiously, the rejection of the proposed constitution played into the hands of Zanu-PF. Once the 'once-and-for-all solution' proposed in the draft constitution fell away, the land reform imperative successfully became the central message of the Zanu-PF election campaign in the parliamentary elections later that year. One must wonder what the nature and success of the Zanu campaign would have been had the 'Yes' vote prevailed. Still, the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) won nearly as many seats as Zanu-PF (57 to its 62) in the (contested) part of the election.

Of course the margin was of little consequence in view of the 30-seat advantage accorded the ruling party under the current Constitution, in terms of which the president may nominate 30 members of the 150-seat Parliament.

Box 1

The 1999 Draft Constitution Proposals on the Land Issue

Section 56

- (1) Everyone's right to own property and to use and enjoy their property must be protected, although this right may be subordinated in the public interest.
- (2) The State or an authority authorised by an Act of Parliament may acquire land compulsorily for public purposes or in the public interest
 - (a) in accordance with fair procedures set out in the Act of Parliament and
 - (b) subject to section fifty seven, so long as compensation is paid just and equitable in regard to its amount, timing and the manner of payment
- (3) A law that extinguishes or diminishes anyone's vested or contingent right to be paid a pension, gratuity or similar payment arising out of employment is to be regarded as a law that acquires or authorises the compulsory acquisition of that person's property.

Section 57; Agricultural land acquired for resettlement

- (1) In regard to the compulsory acquisition of agricultural land for the resettlement of people in accordance with a programme of land reform, the following must be regarded as of ultimate and overriding importance;
 - (a) under colonial domination the people of Zimbabwe were unjustifiably dispossessed of their land and other resources without compensation;
 - (b) the people consequently took arms in order to regain their land and political sovereignty, and this ultimately resulted in the Independence of Zimbabwe in 1980;
 - (c) the people of Zimbabwe must be enabled to reassert their rights and regain ownership of their land and accordingly-
 - (i) the former colonial power has an obligation to pay compensation for agricultural land compulsorily acquired for resettlement, through a fund established for this purpose;
 - (ii) if the former colonial power fails to pay compensation through such a fund, the Government of Zimbabwe has no obligation to pay compensation for agricultural land acquired for resettlement.
- (2) In view of the overriding considerations set out in subsection (1), where agricultural land is acquired compulsorily for resettlement of people in accordance with a programme for land reform, the following factors must be taken into account in the assessment of any compensation that may be payable-
 - (a) the history of the ownership, use and occupation of the land;
 - (b) the price paid for the land when it was last acquired;
 - (c) the cost or value of improvements on the land;
 - (d) the current use to which the land and any improvements on it are being put;
 - (e) any investment which the State or the acquiring authority may have made which improved or enhanced the value of the land and any improvements on it;
 - (f) the resources available to the acquiring authority in implementing the programme of land reform;
 - (g) any financial constraints that necessitate the payment of compensation in instalments over a period of time; and
 - (h) any other relevant factor that may be specified in an Act of Parliament.

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AFTER 2000

Opposition Parties

The end of the of the 1990s saw a Zimbabwe which was deep in political crisis, as evidenced by the stand-off between the key political actors Zanu-PF and its main opposition, the MDC, and the ensuing conflict – sometimes violent – between their respective supporters. The MDC had emerged from the trade union sector in 1999 at a time when the urban electorate was becoming increasingly disenfranchised because of the declining economic vibrancy in the country which was a result, in part, of the implementation of the SAP. In the absence of any other significant party around which opposition sentiments could rally the MDC quickly gained political prominence in the run-up to the 2000 parliamentary elections.

The Zanu-PF government's strategy for retaining its political control in the 21st century was rooted in a campaign against the former colonial power, Britain. By extension, this campaign wittingly involved the polarisation of the nation into blacks (who were expected to be, by definition, antagonistic to the former colonial power) and whites (who were seen as the subjects of and thus sympathetic to the colonial power). The polarisation extended further to within the black electorate; those who supported the FTP and despised the British (defined as loyal nationals) and those who disagreed with the FTP (and, by extension, were accused of being against the entire process of land reform and described as agents of the opposition party and of the British). Hence the black electorate was strategically (for the purposes of the ruling party) divided into two diametrically opposite camps, with no middle positions. This typology was used to give the ruling party a type of 'moral high ground' and to force black Zimbabweans to 'take a side' – either that of the government or that of the opposition (and, by extension, of the colonialist power).

After narrowly losing the previous parliamentary elections the MDC seemed to lose ground to Zanu-PF as quickly as it had originally gained it. The opposition appeared unable to match the political mastery of the ruling party and its seasoned politicians. Most crucially, the opposition MDC appeared to lack the political creativity required to outclass Zanu-PF. Central to this limitation was the inability of the MDC to respond convincingly to the land issue. The dominance of the ruling party and the polarising strategy it employed effectively marginalised the MDC, which was unable to articulate a clear position. The opposition was unequivocally critical of the government-supported FTP and was also on record as saying that white commercial farmers should be allowed to continue operating in their capacity as productive members of society. They also stated that an MDC-led government would not allow the position created by the FTP to continue. A process of 'rationalisation' was therefore proposed. However, the MDC found itself caught in Zanu-PF's trap when confronted with the sensitive question of whether the process of rationalisation would involve taking land out of black hands and returning it to

‘dispossessed’ white farmers. Unable to commit political suicide by answering the question definitively, the MDC had no choice but to maintain a somewhat ambiguous stance on this crucial matter – to the detriment of its credibility and prospects. The party did ultimately articulate its views on land reform (Box 2) – a case of too little too late?

Box 2

MDC Policy Position on Land Reform

The MDC is committed to land reform. The MDC government will bring Zimbabwe’s land crisis to closure through a democratic and participatory process that seeks to achieve equitable, transparent, just, lawful and economically efficient distribution and use of land, both for agricultural and for other purposes.

The MDC’s land-reform programme will be based on need and ability, and will aim to revitalise the economic and social empowerment of farmers and farming communities, and provide for sustained productivity and growth in rural production. Agricultural recovery will be founded on an unequivocal return to the rule of law and adherence to the fundamental human and legal rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The MDC’s laws and measures will recognise and respect individual rights to the protection of person and property as well as the authority of the state to acquire land in the interest of public policy and the public good. Any limits to property rights will be made clear in law and the rule of law will be consistently applied in implementing these limits. The MDC government will provide for reasonable compensation for losses of property, based on independently adjudicated claims.

Land Commission

The MDC will establish, by an Act of Parliament, an impartial, independent and well-resourced professional agency, known as the Land Commission. This will be vested with the powers and authority to fulfil its role of formulating, planning and co-ordinating an all-inclusive and well-planned resettlement programme, with a limited lifespan to complete this mission. The Land Commission Bill has been drafted and its terms will be subject to stakeholder scrutiny before being submitted to Parliament.

Independent Land Audit

The Commission’s first major task will be to establish the physical and legal status of all land-holdings by carrying out an independent land audit:

- The physical component of the land audit will include information such as the farm’s location, name, size, and legal status, as well as on-farm data, details of Model A1 and A2 occupation, the occupiers and where they came from.
- The legal component of the land audit will consist of an analysis of the constitutionality and legality of measures taken, as well as realities on the ground, to clarify the legal status of farmers, settlers, and of the land they own or occupy.

The analysis of relevant and reliable information will provide a basis for an effective land rationalisation exercise as a precursor to the proper planning and implementation of a sustainable resettlement programme. It will also inform any restitution and compensation to be paid for both the land and improvements within a reasonable time.

Rationalisation of Land Allocation and Development of the Land

The rationalisation of land allocation will reconcile the MDC's policy principles with on-the-ground realities of farm occupation by applying the principles of justice, accountability, need and ability. In carrying out this task, the Land Commission will – on a farm-by-farm basis, or by dealing with categories of farms – adjudicate on the fairest and most practical course of action. Those who already own land, or who can afford to buy land, or who have an alternative source of livelihood, will not be eligible for resettlement.

There is no possibility that the rationalisation will result in the pre-February 2000 status quo being restored on the land but, equally, the current status quo arising from the fast-track land grab will not be maintained. In other words, the MDC will neither return to the pre-2000 land-ownership patterns nor endorse or condone the inequitable and inappropriate land distribution arising from the fast-track process. Where people are found to have been settled legitimately, according to the Land Commission's criteria, or are subsequently legitimately settled, they will be fully supported, with the state ensuring that they have the inputs, working capital and other assistance needed to make their farming ventures succeed. Under the MDC government, agrarian reform will also embrace the communal areas, where the bulk of the rural population will continue to live.

SOURCE: MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE 2004

As the 2005 elections approached, the only meaningful political opposition to Zanu-PF came from the floundering MDC. A key element of Zanu's strategy for containing the MDC and thus retaining political dominance centred on treason charges brought against MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai. These involved keeping Tsvangirai preoccupied with his court battle, unable to travel outside the country (and thus isolated from the regional and international community and unable to mobilise support for the MDC). The MDC's prospects of success in the upcoming elections were further weakened by the party's reticence about whether or not it would boycott the elections on the basis of an uneven playing field and the country's non-compliance with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) election guidelines, adopted in August 2004.

The party ultimately only made the decision to participate on the eve of the elections. The threat to boycott gave the MDC a measure of leverage with regional and international actors who were either interested in seeing pressure being brought to bear on Zanu-PF or were anxious to see the election process resume and proceed with as little complication as possible. It is unlikely though that the leverage gained in this respect was sufficient to offset the opportunity lost in relation to preparedness for the elections.

Non-governmental organisations

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) form another group of stakeholders in the political landscape. While by no means homogeneous, NGOs had generally been conspicuous by their absence from the land reform sector (other than with respect to service provision activities). Land had traditionally been seen as a highly political sector and thus a no-go area. This was partly due to the traditional tendency of government to associate NGOs engaging in development policy advocacy activities with opposition politics (Moyo et al 2000). The deepening economic crisis in the late 1990s together with concerns about the existing constitution saw NGOs playing an instrumental role in the establishment of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), which went on to spearhead the campaign against the new constitution proposed by the government. The participation of NGOs in the NCA's campaign was a defining moment in government/NGO relations. From that point government perceived NGOs as representing the support base of the MDC and subsequently treated them with the contempt with which it related to the MDC.

While most NGOs were in favour of land reform and the equitable distribution of land their response to the FTP was generally rooted in objections to reported human rights abuses and the marginalisation of certain groups, including women and farm workers. In many cases, their position also recalled the inception phase of LRRP 2 and its promise of government and donor partnership with NGOs in a 'learning by doing' phase of the programme. The refusal of NGOs to endorse the FTP saw them labelled MDC supporters. As the rift between the Zimbabwe government and the NGOs grew, the position of NGOs, most of which were funded by international donor agencies, became increasingly precarious. Moyo (2004) postulates that the leadership vacuum in civil society's mobilisation for land gave the 'war veterans' growing autonomy.

The deepening political crisis in the country went hand in hand with the increasing politicisation of the NGO sector. NGOs, largely part of the urban electorate and increasingly critical of the government's management of the country's troubled economy, became increasingly vocal in their criticism. More significantly, they mobilised increasingly against perceived human rights abuses (including torture, assault and arbitrary detention) (Amnesty International 2004). They also bemoaned the enactment of repressive legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Broadcasting Services Act (see Appendix) which, they maintained, denied Zimbabweans the basic freedoms of assembly, speech and association (Sisulu 2005). Bad governance and non-democratic processes and practices were also cited, including interference with the independence of the judiciary

The limitation of the space for NGOs to engage in discussions and processes such as land reform that were deemed political was aggravated by the infamous and draconian NGO Bill intended to police the NGO sector by means of subjective registration criteria, provisions allowing for the shutting down and banning of

NGOs and stringent operating guidelines and limitations. The Bill, previously judged unconstitutional by the parliamentary legal committee, was passed by the largely Zanu-PF Parliament. However, as a result of the outcry from local NGOs and faith-based groups, the Bill was never signed by the President and was referred back to Parliament. Nonetheless the impact on the NGO sector was appreciable. Intimidation and the environment of uncertainty, combined with the closure of certain organisations and disruption of others by the refusal of work permits (under the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Act). The repressive environment had the effect of shrinking the political space for NGOs.

Marginalised groups – farm worker communities

A frequently noted failing of the FTP was the dispossession and marginalisation of Zimbabwe's farm worker communities. Traditionally among the lowest paid labourers, farm workers have a history of marginalisation which has long been reflected in the poor or non-existent delivery to this sector of services such as education, health and housing. Farm worker communities also have limited food and income security and limited rights to land occupation and use. The ill treatment and marginalisation is rooted in their perceived class, but also in the fact that a significant proportion of them are of foreign origin – of Malawian, Zambian or Mozambican descent. A significant proportion have no form of identification – either as a result of their family origin or by virtue of the inaccessibility of services. This means that they are not legally recognised and cannot vote – one reason why politicians do not recognise them as a constituency and do not feel obliged to address their needs (Amanor Wilks 2001). Within this framework farm-worker communities had been excluded from benefiting from all phases of the land reform programme since independence. However, their marginalisation reached unprecedented levels with the FTP (see Box 3). While estimates vary, fewer than 5 per cent of farm workers previously employed in the commercial farming sector were resettled under the FTP (FCTZ 2001; Moyo 2004).

In addition to the social marginalisation of farm workers there was a political dimension. Farm workers have traditionally been viewed as closely associated with the households of their farmer 'masters'. They were thus presumed to sympathise with white farmers. This, together with their large numbers and potential impact on electoral outcomes, made the farm-worker community a significant stakeholder group.

Historically, they had few political rights and it was not until 1998 that they won the right to vote in local council elections (Sachikonye 2003). Viewed as a reservoir of discontent following their marginalisation during the implementation of the FTP, farm workers were perceived as posing a threat to the ruling party. Denial of citizenship, first aimed at the white Zimbabwean community, has been extended to Zimbabweans of Malawian, Zambian, and Mozambican descent on the grounds that they were probably supporters of the opposition. It is noteworthy

that, as the 2005 elections approached, this disenfranchisement was further extended to Zimbabwean citizens living outside the country. The right of citizens temporarily living abroad to vote in national elections in their home countries is one that is recognised in most democracies. However, Zimbabwean citizens living abroad are denied this right. Although the government gave administrative reasons for the new regulations the real reasons underlying the move were thought to be linked to political survival and expediency (Sisulu 2005).

With a commercial farming sectors that was practically non-existent, an opposition whose legitimacy to speak on key issues, particularly land reform, was compromised, a polarised population prone to intimidation, an immobilised NGO sector and disenfranchised sections of the electorate (foreign-based citizens and Zimbabweans of foreign descent) – the stage was set for the 2005 elections.

Box 3

The Effect of Land Reform on the Livelihood of Farm Workers

The ways in which commercial farm workers are affected by the current land reform process and land occupations vary quite significantly. Based on the findings on a normally operational farm and on farms that have not been significantly affected by the land issue, farm workers were said to be reasonably food secure although their situation is still not satisfactory. They are still poor in absolute terms, and their access to services such as health and education, in particular, is far from satisfactory.

The worst-case scenario for commercial farm workers involves loss of employment and displacement. If this occurs, the effects on their livelihoods are multiple and extreme:

- loss of home;
- loss of permanent income and secondary casual /seasonal income from agricultural work;
- loss of access to land and inputs for own crop production (affects consumption and income from sale of crops);
- loss of access to fishing grounds;
- loss of access to gold-panning opportunities (on some farms);
- loss of access to subsidised foodstuffs at the farm store, and loss of credit facilities;
- loss of access to education and health services (alternatives to on-farm services may either not be available at all, or may be too far and/or too expensive to access).

The ability of a farm worker to replace lost income appears to depend mainly on whether (a) there are operational neighbouring farms where additional seasonal/casual work can be sought, and (b) whether there are (still) opportunities for gold-panning or fishing on the farm. In none of the cases examined was an example found of farm workers being able to compensate in any substantial way for lost earnings from agricultural work. Furthermore, there will inevitably be a limit to how much additional labour other commercial farms can absorb, and a limit to the capacity of services on those farms to cope with additional people. Gold-panning and fishing are both limited, and can have

negative environmental effects in terms of increased river siltation on the one hand, and over-fishing on the other.

Alternative income sources – land and inputs for cultivation – are limited, as is the availability of ‘free’ resources such as fish and wild foods. The only way to cope with lost income, therefore, is to cut down on expenditure and, because ‘normal’ income levels are already low, it does not take long before any further cutbacks impact on basic needs. In the three cases where a group of workers had lost income, they were all estimated to be consuming less than their minimum food needs and children were having to forego education

SOURCE: FWCT 2001

THE 2005 ELECTIONS – LAND TO THE RESCUE ONCE AGAIN?

As the country approached the 2005 elections, the socio-economic climate of the nation was characterised by decline. Zimbabwe’s economy, once the fastest growing in Africa, had been the fastest shrinking in the world for several years. For the fourth successive year the country was in the midst of a humanitarian crisis affecting an increasingly significant proportion of the nation. The main causes of the complex crisis included:

- poor agricultural performance and rising food insecurity;
- high HIV / AIDS prevalence (34 %) (Government of Zimbabwe 2004);
- persistently high, triple digit inflation;
- rising and unusually high unemployment (about 70%);
- consecutive years of irregular rainy seasons;
- shortage of foreign capital necessary to access basic commodities.

It was significant that economic hardship affected both the rural and the urban economies. While in previous elections the issue of land had presented the ruling party with an avenue for the proposed turn around of the economy (‘land is the economy and the economy is land’), this avenue was much less lucrative in the run-up to the 2005 elections. By the government’s own admission the ‘initial’ impact of the land reform programme was a determining factor in the country’s reduced agricultural production (Government of Zimbabwe 2004) in a country where the economy remains agriculturally based. In fact the report of the country’s government-led Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of December 2004, which contained this admission together with other disturbing indicators of the country’s economic and social status, was not released until well after the elections. Nonetheless, there were other sources of such analyses, such as the World Bank (see Box 4).

Box 4

Zimbabwe's Decline: Distributing Poverty

According to a recent World Bank study of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector the government's land reforms had redistributed 80 per cent of farmland and improved the racial distribution of agricultural property but had increased poverty.

The report said the land reform programme coincided with a deepening political and economic crisis that saw the GDP shrink by more than 20 per cent since 2000, while agriculture registered a cumulative decline of 26 per cent. The programme's impact on agriculture had the effect of displacing 30 per cent of farm workers, who are now destitute and living as squatters

SOURCE: REUTERS 2005

The report, dated 28 February and obtained by Reuters, said 70 per cent of Zimbabwe's 11.6-million people were living below the poverty line as per capita gross domestic product had plummeted by 30 per cent since 1999.

The factors underlying the contribution of the land reform programme to agricultural and hence economic decline were multi-faceted. Key among them were production constraints, some of which were, themselves, an outcome of the land reform process – for instance, shortage of inputs such as seeds. A key production constraint, according to commentators (see, for example, Masiwa 2004) and the Utete Commission, lay in the poor uptake of land allocated to new farmers. Closer examination of the statistics indicated that the problem lay in the uptake rates on land distributed under the A2 Scheme. This scheme, intended for those with adequate resources (financial and otherwise) for commercial production, was popularly seen as catering to the elite – frequently on a partisan basis. By comparison, the A1 scheme, intended for the landless, appeared to enjoy better uptake rates. This trend reinforced the view that class interests inconsistent with the original objectives of the land reform process had compromised the original intentions of the process.

Another element that compromised the FTP was corruption. The socio-political marginalisation of non-Zanu actors during the post-2000 era created a governance vacuum and severely affected their 'watchdog' function. In this environment corrupt practices became systemic. The land reform process was similarly affected. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the FTP was largely implemented in an environment characterised by ad hoc responses and the absence of binding policy and implementation and legal guidelines. Where these were present, there were no enforcement mechanisms.

The perceived widespread 'irregularities' in beneficiary selection and the distribution of land in favour of ruling party elites emerged and gradually escalated to the extent that they marred the land reform process – even among proponents of

Table 2
FTP Beneficiaries and Take-up Rates

	No of Beneficiaries			Take up rates (%)	
	A1	A2	Total	A1	A2
Midlands	16 169	229	16 398	90	48
Masvingo	22 670	773	23 443	95	79
Manicaland	11 019	463	11 482	92	42
Matebeleland South	8 923	271	9 194	100	100
Matebeleland North	9 901	191	10 092	100	94
Mashonaland East	16 702	1 646	18 348	93	45
Mashonaland West	27 052	2 003	29 055	97	50
Mashonaland Central	14 756	1 684	16 440	89	73
FTP Totals	127 192	7 260	134 452	97	66

SOURCE: MASIIWA 2004

the process (for instance, 'war veterans' and traditional chiefs). Faced with increasingly vocal criticism and declining support both within and outside the party for the land redistribution programme and in the face of the impending election, the government conceded to demands for a more equitable land reform process and established the Presidential Land Review Committee which was intended to identify and address irregularities in the policy and implementation of the land reform programme.

The Utete Commission, as it was known, named those guilty of receiving multiple allocations but was popularly thought to have been an act of appeasement in that it went through the motions without exposing the 'big fish'. So the question arises whether it was simply an elaborate public relations exercise intended to address growing internal dissention and to drum up some popular support midway towards what was widely anticipated to be a difficult election for the ruling party. If this was indeed the intention behind the Mugabe-appointed commission it was a dismal failure. The somewhat controversial report, extracts from which were leaked to the press in October 2003, was subsequently published, excluding sections on multiple ownership of land by people in high places (Palmer 2004). The report unexpectedly detailed some serious problems, including the fact that only half of the intended beneficiaries had been resettled. The commission thus left the ruling party with the need to identify a new strategy for arousing positive sentiment in the electorate.

The period leading up to the 2005 elections saw renewed land acquisitions, costly for the A2 market. In fact, in spite of government claims at the end of 2002 that the land reform programme had been finalised, the designation of farms for the purpose of redistribution continued through 2003 and 2004. By the end of 2004, fewer than 500 of the original 4 500 commercial farmers were still in possession of their farm holdings (Games 2005). All indications however, pointed to government having been overwhelmed by the challenge of equipping newly established small-scale farmers and thus making a success of the FTP. Reports of newly resettled farmers abandoning their recently acquired land or failing to take up their allocations became commonplace in the face of government's failure to deliver services and to supply the support these new farmers had been promised. As 2005 approached, together with its crucial parliamentary elections, the government appeared increasingly concerned with improving the track record of the FTP. Government ministers and even President Mugabe ultimately abandoned the pretence that the programme was successful, acknowledging publicly the poor uptake of land allocations and the poor levels of agricultural production.

The critical shortages of agricultural inputs (caused by disruptions of the agricultural and industrial sectors) resulted in the proliferation of rampant corruption, hoarding, and informal (black market) trade in these scarce inputs, such as seed and fertiliser, mushroomed and proliferated. These practices, together with low uptakes rates and the imperative to jump start production among the newly resettled farmers culminated in government issuing the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Acquisition of Farm Equipment or Material Regulations decree. The decree, announced in January 2004, essentially made it legal for government to confiscate farm equipment and material it deemed not to be used for agricultural purposes. In such cases the owners of the equipment or material were compelled to release them to the government or face prosecution.

These and other measures to boost commercial agricultural activity among the beneficiaries of the FTP met with limited success. The time to derive political capital from renewed land distribution had clearly passed. Perhaps the new target should be the political and business elites whose support required to be consolidated in view of the approaching elections. This was probably the motivation behind the renewed land allocations in the 2004/5 period.

There is another possible motivation for the wave of land expropriations in the period leading up to the 2005 elections. A frequently expressed view was that in the event of an increasingly likely Zanu-PF electoral victory, the ruling party would be compelled to accommodate the MDC in order to win the favour of international actors and hence relieve the economic crisis gripping the country. Given the divergent views of the MDC on the approach to land reform it is likely that those in positions of influence maximised these positions while they still had the opportunity to do so.

The FTP is widely recognised as having caused a (temporary) interruption of agricultural food production in the country through the disruption of commercial

seed, crop and stock feed production. Throughout 2004 and contrary to assessments and surveys, the government insisted there were no food shortages and thus no need for continued humanitarian outreaches and food distribution by local and international NGOs. In May of that year the government expelled a United Nations food assessment team on the basis of overly optimistic crop estimates (attributed to the land reform programme) that were later discredited. Hence, while the land reform programme was at the heart of the food insecurity which characterised the country as the 2005 elections approached, the countryside, where insecurity was worst, was cleared of all NGOs for political reasons. This would have resulted in limited observation and documentation of the extent of the insecurity and, in all likelihood, untold suffering.

The urban dynamic

The land occupations that characterised the FTP took place in commercial farming areas in predominantly rural areas across the country. In addition, there were occupations of urban and peri-urban areas as 'landless' urban people took the opportunity to exploit the chaotic situation created by farm occupations countrywide. The government, whose land policy recognised the importance of peri-urban settlement to the land reform process, responded by regularising these occupations, facilitating their completion (see Marongwe 2003). Those settlers who demanded land for residential (as opposed to agricultural) purposes formed housing cooperatives to give impetus to their demands. In this way, new dwellings were established, frequently without the necessary planning required to facilitate the proper and orderly provision of services. Because the settlements had, in most cases, been facilitated by government, they were allowed to become established. It was therefore entirely unanticipated when, as part of the Government's Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order) soon after the 2005 elections, the settlements, many of them erected by war veterans, were demolished. Various commentators have interpreted the fact that pro-Zanu quarters were affected by the operation as indicating that it was not politically motivated. An alternative perspective could be that all social re-arrangement that involves substantial changes in access to land is politically motivated. On this basis it is possible that allowing elements whose political favour had been secured or retained through participation in the spoils of the FTP (spoils which in the peri-urban context were frequently unsustainable with respect to planning considerations) to enjoy their 'entitlements' until just after the 2005 elections was deliberate and strategic.

Securing the female electorate

In spite of its much publicised failures and controversies the FTP has been acknowledged as having had some successes. Key among these has been the transfer of large amounts of land to the formerly landless. This success has been tainted by

the failure to ensure gender equity in the redistribution process. Gender inequality in Zimbabwe, as in other countries in the Southern Africa region, must be viewed within the context of race and class and the resulting multiplicity of challenges. The FTP was not designed to meet the prevailing challenges. Between 12 per cent and 24 per cent of the land distributed under the A1 model is said to have been received by women. Under the A2 model the figures were lower, in the region of 5 per cent to 21 per cent (Moyo 2004b). These poor figures reflect the gendered social forces and the resettlement process. They also reflect the continued existence of practices and norms and institutions that are gender conscious.

The poor performance of the land reform process in delivering to women secure access to land was thus a source of a concern to civil society and, in particular, to gender equality advocates. The 2003 Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Lands, Water Development, Rural Resources and Resettlement report on the assessment / audit of the country's ongoing land reform programme confirmed these concerns, indicating that only two of the eight administrative provinces (Mashonaland Central and Matabeleland South) had even attempted to give a breakdown of FTP beneficiaries by gender and special interest groups. In both provinces the allocations were shown to have been heavily skewed in favour of males. As indicated in Table 3 about 87 per cent of allocations were made to men despite the fact that women have always represented a significant proportion of the electorate and, in particular, of the Zanu popularity base. The persistent marginalisation of women was therefore not in the interest of the ruling party as the 2005 elections approached. This might well have been one of the motivating factors in the appointment on the eve of the elections of Joyce Mujuru as Zimbabwe's first female vice-president. The fact that the Zanu leadership proceeded with this move in spite of internal opposition from much of the party's 'old guard' indicates the value it attached to the female vote. With the female electorate appeased, a Zanu win became increasingly likely.

Table 3
Gender Desegregation of Beneficiaries

	Mashonaland Central		Matebeleland South	
	A1	A2	A1	A2
Men	86,6	91	86,9	81
Women	13,4	9	13,1	19

SOURCE: PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE 2003

THE RELEVANCE OF THE 2005 ELECTIONS

The 2005 elections had a special relevance. Firstly, they were held in the context of the 2000 and 2002 elections, which had been characterised by significant political

tension and violent pre- and post-electoral conflict. In the interim, the governance and democracy discourse, particularly as it related to the electoral process, had taken centre stage in the region and, in particular, among the SADC heads of state. The Zanu government had been able to dismiss criticism by international players (deemed to be pro-Opposition) of its past electoral conduct. A poorly conducted 2005 election was likely to attract similar criticism, but this time from SADC state leaders.

Another significant characteristic of the 2005 elections was that, although they were not presidential elections, the outcome was popularly expected to be significant with respect to the country's political landscape and future leadership. If Zanu-PF were to win a two-thirds majority the government would secure the right to change the Constitution in favour of itself and its policies. Further, the election outcome would have implications for the 2008 presidential election. An MDC defeat in 2005 would probably feed into the growing disillusionment and apathy evident among the party's supporters, weakening MDC's position in the 2008 election, while a Zanu-PF win would reinforce and invigorate the ruling party.

Thirdly, and related to the first point, the elections represented the first opportunity to test recently implemented electoral reforms. The reforms, announced in June 2004, were intended to change the country's processes to conform to the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections while at the same time addressing some of the criticisms made of previous elections. Among the reforms were:

- the establishment of a five-person Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC);
- the establishment of an ad hoc electoral court/tribunal within six months of elections;
- the reduction of polling days from two days to one;
- an increase in polling stations as well as the abolition of mobile polling stations;
- the use of visible indelible ink;
- the replacement of wooden ballot boxes with transparent boxes.

It was against this backdrop and that of the intensifying polarisation and political intolerance described above that the 2005 parliamentary elections were held. Reports indicate that the period immediately before and after election day was relatively less violent than that before the 2000 and 2002 elections. However, it has still been asserted that the pre-election period was not conducive to a fair electoral process. Sources of criticism were varied, but invariably pointed to restrictions on non-state media, the condition of the voters' roll, the continued existence of laws deemed restrictive for opposition parties, such as the infamous Public Order and Security Act under which the right to congregate was severely controlled. As with previous Zimbabwe elections, opinion was sharply divided over whether the exercise had been free and fair. Observers from the African Union (AU), SADC and the South

African government endorsed the elections. The MDC, some civil society groups in Zimbabwe and South Africa and major international players challenged the conduct of the elections, declaring them neither free nor fair.

There was considerable social comment about the likely response of the MDC following the elections. Given the fact that historically one of the party's most effective tools was that of social disobedience in the form of 'stay aways' in urban areas, particularly Harare, there was reason to believe that the MDC would try to mobilise public sentiment in this direction. The likelihood of this eventuality must have been a source of concern for the ruling party and its machinery. It is interesting that the capacity of the MDC to mobilise in this way may have been significantly compromised by social rearrangement resulting from the government's Operation Murambatsvina soon after the elections. Was this simply fortuitous for the ruling party?

REAPING THE BENEFITS – POST-ELECTORAL CHANGES

Zanu-PF won 78 of the 120 elected parliamentary seats, with the MDC taking 41 (compared with 57 in the previous parliamentary elections). One seat went to an independent candidate, the former Zanu-PF Minister of Information, Jonathan Moyo. Together with the 30 seats available to the ruling party this margin gave Zanu-PF the sought after two-thirds majority, positioning it to effect the anticipated constitutional changes.

Constitutional Amendment 17

The popular suspicion that Zanu intended to make changes to the Constitution was borne out by events soon after the elections. The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No17) introduced several amendments including the anticipated introduction of a Senate. The amendment also included Amendment 16B relating to agricultural land acquired for resettlement. Under this section, the Constitution was amended to absolve the government from paying compensation for land (other than for improvements). The section also nullified the right of those whose land is acquired for acquisition to challenge the acquisition in a court of law. The section did, however, magnanimously provide for such persons to challenge the amount of compensation (in line with existing laws). The fact that the law was retrospective meant that all cases already in the courts were effectively dismissed. Another trophy for the ruling party was the space to establish the Senate. The proposed second house of Parliament would consist of 65 members, of whom 50 would be elected, the rest of the seats going to traditional chiefs and presidential appointees. According to government, the introduction of the Senate would improve the quality of the legislative process and its outcomes.

A post-electoral rearrangement that was less expected was the relocation of control over the land reform process. All matters relating to land reform were placed

firmly and fully under the control of the National Land Board in the Lands Ministry. The Land Board was in turn placed under State Security Minister Didymus Mutasa's expanded portfolio, effectively marginalising the provincial governors who had previously been the authorities in this regard.

Given the proximity of the state security ministry to the President, as well as Minister Mutasa's perceived loyalty to President Mugabe, the move was seen as intended to bring land reform issues firmly under the control of the President. It is likely that this was a sign of frustration on the part of the presidency with the poor performance of the land reform programme as well as the corruption which, in fact, the President had, on several occasions, bemoaned. The modest achievements of the land reform programme had had an impact not only on the country's food security and economic status (Government of Zimbabwe 2004) but also on the credibility of government claims that the FTP would enhance the country's economy. By extension, this reflected negatively on the presidency, a factor which would have been sufficient motivation for shifting the locus of control to the presidency.

SOUTH AFRICA – MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

The progressive political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe has been a source of concern to the SADC region as a whole, a concern that has several origins. The first of these is the economic implications to other economies within the region. It has been estimated that the economic downturn in Zimbabwe cost the region in the region of US\$2,6-billion between 2000 and 2002, mostly as a result of cancelled exports and Zimbabwe's failure to pay for services as the country continues along its path of economic decline (International Crisis Group 2003). A second source of concern relates to the political positioning of Zimbabwe and the negative implications to the region of a failed Zimbabwean state. Zimbabwe, its liberation struggle and its highly principled rejection of ongoing colonial domination in any form has apparently been held in high regard by leaders of neighbouring countries. Its failure would signal a political defeat for pan-Africanism. There has also been a contradictory third concern – that around the perceived 'role model' scenario. Since February 2000, the debate over land reform in the SADC region has been dominated by whether or not South African and Namibian land reform processes would 'go the same way' as Zimbabwe with respect to land occupations.

In view of these concerns the task of persuading the Zanu government to pursue a different strategy with respect to a range of areas has popularly been perceived as falling to South Africa, and specifically to President Thabo Mbeki. Among the reasons proffered for this have been that South Africa is seen as having the most significant economy and President Mbeki is perceived as possibly the most influential leader in the region, hence, with the clout to bring pressure to bear on Zimbabwe. However, from a South African domestic perspective a key reason has been the inevitable destabilisation of its own economy resulting from an increasingly troubled neighbouring Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, the South African sanction of Zanu-PF

expected and called for repeatedly by a range of actors, both within and beyond the two countries, as the 2005 elections approached, did not materialise.

Commentators have proffered several reasons for this. Not least of these might have been the absence of explicit disapproval of, indeed, in some quarters, overt approval of Zimbabwe's FTP. In view of the common legacies of dispossession and economic and social disadvantage suffered by the two nations under minority settler regimes, this was not unexpected. These pro-FTP quarters would have included the social movements (particularly those of landless groups) and traditional leaders (see, for example, National House of Traditional Leaders 2005).

Apart from the issue of political solidarity, any attempt by South Africa to sanction Zimbabwe while retaining the political legitimacy required for its leadership role in a progressively politically integrated SADC region could be likened to walking the proverbial tight rope, particularly in view of the close ties among Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and Mozambique emanating from liberation war solidarity, the toughest kind of solidarity to interrupt. Hence it would appear that the South African administration adopted the widely criticised 'quiet diplomacy' approach while securing its own interests. These included increasingly stringent immigration requirements for Zimbabweans intending to visit or immigrate to South Africa. Another measure – a bilateral agreement between South Africa and Zimbabwe supposed to protect South African citizens' property from confiscation (Games 2005) – would have been key to safeguarding the interests of the South African electorate. However, as the crisis in Zimbabwe deepened, these 'firewalls' would gradually have become compromised and increasing numbers of Zimbabweans, both legal and otherwise, would have streamed into South Africa, contributing to that country's already worrying levels of unemployment. Similarly, as the land designations progressed, the agreement protecting the property of South African citizens in Zimbabwe would also have been breached.

President Mbeki recently alluded to another reason underlying the 'quiet diplomacy' approach towards the crisis in Zimbabwe when, at the recent South African Land Summit in Johannesburg, he referred to yet another source of solidarity and or indebtedness, explaining how Zimbabwe had 'waited for South Africa' and sacrificed the opportunity to resolve its land issues more speedily. He is reported as saying:

When the Lancaster House Agreement on land reform with Zimbabwe, which was market-based, expired in 1990, the then Deputy Secretary-General of the (British Colonial) Commonwealth, Emeka Onyeouku, asked Zimbabwe to delay taking another approach.

If, indeed, the South African government feels it is partially responsible for the chaotic nature of the land reform process in Zimbabwe, it is unlikely that it will resort to the widely anticipated strong-arm intervention – it is more likely to continue with variants of the very loud but ineffective 'quiet diplomacy'.

APPENDIX

THE PUBLIC ORDER AND SECURITY ACT (POSA)

POSA was enacted in January 2002. It introduces a range of criminal offences, including criticism of the president, whether his person or his office; the publication of a false statement that prejudices or is intended to prejudice the country's defence or economic interests, or which undermines or is intended to undermine public confidence in a law enforcement agency, and the holding of a public gathering without giving the police four days' written notice.

Key sections

Section 15 makes it an offence punishable by up to five years' imprisonment to publish or communicate false statements prejudicial to the state, including undermining public confidence in a law enforcement agency, the prison services or the defence forces of Zimbabwe.

Section 16 makes it an offence punishable by up to one year's imprisonment to undermine the authority of or insult the president, including making any false statements about or concerning the president that could endanger feelings of hostility or cause hatred, contempt or ridicule of the president.

Sections 23-31 on public gatherings give the police extensive powers to regulate and control any public gatherings, including banning or breaking up meetings if they are deemed to endanger public order.

Section 24 requires the organiser of a public gathering to give the regulating authority for the area in which the gathering is being held at least four clear days' notice of the holding of the gathering.

THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION
AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT (AIPPA)

AIPPA, introduced in 2002, creates a government-appointed Media and Information Commission (MIC) with wide-ranging regulatory powers over the media, including the accreditation of journalists, the registration of media houses, and the enforcement of professional and ethical standards in the media. The MIC's governing board is appointed by the Minister of Information.

The Act makes it mandatory for journalists and media houses to register with the MIC and prohibits non-Zimbabwean journalists or individuals without permanent residency from working as journalists, except for restricted periods and with the permission of the MIC. Journalists and media houses that operate without accreditation are liable to two years in prison. Journalists must renew their

accreditation annually, for which there is an application fee, while media houses must re-register every two years. The MIC may cancel registration for a wide range of reasons. On 7 January 2005, the government passed an amendment to AIPPA that provides for criminal penalties to journalists who operate without a licence.

THE MISCELLANEOUS OFFENCES ACT (MOA)

The MOA was enacted in 1964 under colonial rule. It provides for punishment for a broad range of offences including penalties for riotous or indecent conduct or threats in a public place. The police have frequently used the MOA to arrest opposition and civil society activists arbitrarily on spurious charges.

Section 7(a) of the MOA makes it an offence punishable by a fine or imprisonment of up to one year to be guilty of riotous or indecent conduct. S 7(b) makes it an offence punishable by a fine or imprisonment of up to one year to use any threatening, abusive or insulting words or to behave in a threatening, abusive or insulting manner with intent to provoke a breach of the peace or to occasion a breach of the peace. S 7(c) makes it an offence punishable by a fine or imprisonment of up to one year to employ any means whatsoever which are likely materially to interfere with the ordinary comfort, convenience, peace or quiet of the public or adversely to affect the safety of the public or to commit any act likely to lead to a breach of the peace or create a nuisance or obstruction.

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POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE 2005 ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

Parties play a crucial role in elections for they reflect the configuration of political power in the contestation for state control. Political parties constitute an important medium for citizens' participation in the political process during and between elections. How have parties fared in the context of the Zimbabwe political situation, in particular during the 2005 elections? Although the 2005 elections were as tightly contested as those of 2000 and 2002, there was a remarkable difference between them. The environment during the campaign of 2005 was peaceful, compared with the political violence and mayhem that accompanied the 2000 and 2002 elections. A new element built into the framework of the election campaign was the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, a framework with which SADC member states were enjoined to comply. Another significant factor was the Zimbabwe Government's strategy of restricting the number and variety of observer missions that would be allowed to witness the election. This paper will not attempt to assess the 2005 election process as a whole but will concentrate on the role of political parties in the contest. Significantly, a major difference from previous elections was the reduction in the number of parties that contested the elections.

INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the configuration of political power among parties in Zimbabwe, focusing on the 2005 National Assembly elections. We aim to establish how the balance of power among parties in the context of the dominant-party syndrome played itself out in the electoral contest itself, with special focus on the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) and the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). To this end and given that, since 2000, Zanu-PF and the MDC have been the major protagonists in Zimbabwe's political arena, we review the platforms and performance of these

two parties, notwithstanding the participation of Zanu-Ndonga and the Zimbabwe Youth Alliance (ZIYA) in the 2005 elections.

The discussion begins by highlighting the issue of the institutionalisation of parties before going on to provide brief sketches of the profiles and strategies of the main parties that contested the 2005 elections. Zimbabwe currently has a dominant-party system in which the ruling Zanu-PF continues to entrench and reproduce its political hegemony, even in the face of a fierce political challenge posed by the opposition MDC. The struggle for dominance is reflected in the range of campaign issues around which the election was fought, and the unresolved controversy over unequal access to resources for the campaigns. The paper also examines the primary election system as a key aspect of internal party democracy, and as a contributing factor to the phenomenon of independent candidates. The concluding section revisits the disputes that surrounded the announcement and the substance of the results themselves.

PARTY INSTITUTIONALISATION: SOME CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Historically, parties have played a pivotal role in the founding and consolidation of systems of governance. Parties seek to aggregate diverse demands into coherent programmes and elections are primarily fought around these programmes. In multi-party systems, parties facilitate a peaceful transfer of government power from one party to another, or from one coalition to another. Parties are created to articulate and defend specific social interests.

In relation to this, the nurturing of political trust within the political class, that is, between parties, is essential to the building of democracy, and remains a major challenge particularly to younger nation-states (Hall 1992). This trust must be consolidated and shared in a process that has been termed 'institutionalisation of loyal opposition'. Such an opposition shares the broad national interests of the existing state and ruling party as well as subscribing to the political system, including the electoral 'rules of the game'.

Institutionalisation relates to a process by which an organisation or practice becomes established and widely known (Mainwaring 1998). The institutionalisation of a party system ensures that actors have clear and stable expectations about the contours and rules of party competition and behaviour. In general, party systems in developing countries tend to be less institutionalised than those in long-established democracies, notwithstanding that parties in the latter also face new challenges, including the erosion of their membership base.

Institutionalised party systems enjoy considerable stability; patterns of party competition manifest regularity. A system in which parties regularly appear and disappear or become minor parties can be described as weakly institutionalised. Finally, in more institutionalised systems, party organisations matter; parties are not subordinated to the ambitions of a few leaders but possess an independent status and value of their own (Mainwaring 1998). In sum, while institutionalised

party systems are conducive to stable political systems, where such systems are weakly institutionalised, the political system may be prone to instability.

In Southern Africa, parties are key instruments in encouraging and mobilising participation in the political process. The level of membership varies greatly within and between countries but it remains an important barometer of political participation. In general, party membership reached a climax at independence or liberation but has gradually declined since then. As central players during elections, parties advertise competing platforms and seek to convince potential voters that they are the most appropriate to govern a country. Not surprisingly, most citizens in the region associate parties with 'elections' and it is at election time that new parties are explicitly formed to contest the elections. The formation of 'election-time' parties is a general trend in the region, reflecting an 'opportunistic' or 'entrepreneurial' approach. However, even well established parties have a tendency to be 'dormant' between elections, only springing into activity towards the start of the next electoral contest. Thus, a certain amount of 'electoralism' appears to pervade the strategic thinking and outlook of both ruling and opposition parties, old and new.

These broad considerations apply in Zimbabwe. Zanu-PF and the MDC have undergone substantial institutionalisation but other parties – among them the Zanu-Ndonga, the Democratic Party (DP) and the National Alliance for Good Governance (NAGG) – although they may have existed for some years have been weakly institutionalised, as reflected in their sparse membership. Founded in 1963, Zanu-PF has an historical record and a substantial membership base. The MDC, formed in 1999 on the back of a wave of widespread disillusionment with the governance record of Zanu-PF, quickly established a substantial membership base amongst the working and middle classes and the urban population.

PARTY PROFILES AND STRATEGIES

More than other parties, the MDC and Zanu-PF have a national reach and presence. They were the only parties capable of fielding contestants in all 120 directly contested seats. Drawing on branches spread throughout the country and on both district and provincial structures, the two parties have ambitious programmes. As the more seasoned of the two, Zanu-PF is the result of a merger of Zanu-PF and the Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF-Zapu) in 1987. It is a nationalist organisation that operated as a liberation movement in the 1960s and 1970s. A governing party since independence, it enunciated its objectives as preserving and defending 'the national sovereignty and independence of Zimbabwe' and establishing 'a socialist society firmly based on our historical, cultural and social experience' (Zanu-PF 1999). It pledged to continue to 'participate in the world-wide struggle for the complete eradication of imperialism, colonialism and all forms of racism'. Although Zanu-PF has had 25 years to implement its aims, objectives and overall agenda, it has fallen short of doing so. A prolonged economic and social crisis from 2000 is one indicator of the party's shortcomings.

In contrast, the MDC, which was formed only six years ago, has proved to be the strongest opposition party since independence; in a stunning challenge it won 57 of the directly contested seats in the 2000 election and might have done better had the electoral 'playing fields' been level (Saunders 2000; Commonwealth Observer Group 2000). Defining itself as a social democratic party, the MDC stated its aims, objectives and values as being to build 'an open democracy in which national government is accountable to the people through devolution of power and decision-making to the provinces, local institutions and structures' (MDC 1999). It added that it sought the mandate of the people 'to govern the country and work for a dynamic economy built on the principles of mixed economy with a strong social conscience'.

However, it should be stated that the past six years have witnessed a deep polarisation in Zimbabwean politics, including in inter-party politics. On the one hand there have been concerted efforts to 'de-legitimise' the MDC on a variety of grounds, including the allegation that it is 'a puppet' of the West, or, more specifically, of the Blair government. On the other hand, a plethora of legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) has been brought into existence to restrict opposition party activities in the post-2000 election period. With the close contest in that election, prospects had improved for breaking the 'dominant party' strait-jacket. However, what prevented this from happening was partly the maintenance of an anachronistic electoral system that gave a considerable advantage of an additional 30 seats to Zanu-PF. Had it not been for this, the MDC inroads would have paved the way for more robustly competitive two-party system (Sachikonye 2000; Masunungure 2004).

There were other players, although comparatively minor ones, in the 2005 election. They were Zanu-Ndonga, a small rump of the original Zanu, but relegated to the constituency of Chipinge in south-eastern Zimbabwe since independence. With the death of its autocratic aged leader, Ndabaningi Sithole, in 2000, the fortunes of the party faded considerably. The other contesting party, the Zimbabwe Youth Alliance (ZIYA), was formed only a few weeks before the election campaign began. ZIYA fielded four candidates and Zanu-Ndonga seven.

Finally, a significant number of candidates from both Zanu-PF and the MDC – most of whom had lost in party primary elections or had been blocked from standing in them – stood as independents. The electoral chances of independent candidates in Zimbabwe generally tend to be slim. The victory in Tsholotsho constituency in Matabeleland North of former Zanu-PF Cabinet Minister Jonathan Moyo, who had been expelled from the party, was the single exception.

PARTY PRIMARIES

The staging of primary elections by the main contesting parties was a key feature of the build-up to the campaign. Most of the primaries in Zanu-PF were organised in January 2005, and those in the MDC later in February. When primaries are

properly held, they represent a barometer of the state of intra-party democracy. Some of the primary elections conducted in Zanu-PF turned out to be acrimonious. This was the case in the provinces of Manicaland, Masvingo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South. In Manicaland, the primaries were so acrimonious that the senior party stalwarts, Didymus Mutasa and Kumbirai Kangai, had to be exempted from the primary elections because of the sharp differences between the factions they headed. In December 2004, a team from the Zanu-PF head office was dispatched to Masvingo to resolve tensions between the provincial party leadership and the war veteran members while war veterans in the two Matabeleland provinces accused the party leadership of corrupt practices.

There was also much tension and jostling over the Tsholotsho seat where Moyo rejected the party recommendation that the seat be contested by a woman candidate to meet Zanu-PF's 30 per cent threshold for women. In some provinces, there were allegations of vote-buying by candidates during primaries, and in others there were charges that candidates were being imposed from the top. At the beginning of January, as the tension over the primaries reached fever pitch, President Mugabe had to intervene to cool tempers.

The MDC had its share of problems and tensions during the primaries. Intra-party squabbles marked the jockeying for candidature in such diverse constituencies as Masvingo Central, St Mary's in Chitungwiza and Mbare West in Harare. In Masvingo Central, there were clashes between supporters of the outgoing MP, Silas Mangono, and those of the incoming Tongai Mathuthu. There were press reports that the bodyguards of MDC President, Morgan Tsvangirai, had to intervene to defuse clashes between the two groups of supporters. In Mbare West, the incumbent MP, Danmore Makuwaza, who lost in the primary election, accused his opponent, MDC deputy Secretary General Gift Chimanihire, of abusing his position as one of the 'top six' leaders in the party in contesting the seat. Chimanihire was accused of having engaged in 'vote buying' during the primary election that he eventually won.

In sum, the primary elections were fiercely contested in both Zanu-PF and the MDC. However, both parties demonstrated limited experience and skills in the conduct of these elections. Allegations of the imposition of candidates from the top and of 'vote buying' were levelled within both parties. In addition, Zanu-PF's 30 per cent threshold for female candidates was a new dimension, added to accord with the SADC objective of increasing the proportion of women legislators by 2005. Clearly, there remains a great deal of scope for improving the conduct and process of primary elections as an instrument of intra-party democracy.

PARTY CAMPAIGNS

The key campaign issues were the economic and political challenges facing Zimbabwe, and party manifestoes dealt with them at some length. For instance, Zanu-PF pledged to assert what it termed 'sovereignty over national resources', to

stabilise the exchange rate and to raise Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth to between 3 and 5 per cent per annum. The party promised to adopt programmes that would increase investment, manufacturing and mining output while implementing a 'look East' policy to diversify markets. Other campaign pledges made by Zanu-PF were that it would construct 1,25-million houses by 2008 and revamp the health sector, together with increasing funding for an HIV-AIDS programme. A Zanu-PF government would simultaneously refurbish the education infrastructure and expand university education. The land issue was prominent throughout the campaign, with Zanu-PF playing up its high-profile role in land redistribution while pledging to embark on comprehensive agricultural irrigation and mechanisation programme (Zanu-PF 2005). To that end, the government would provide finance and credit schemes to capitalise farmers' operations as well as long-term strategies to mitigate the effects of drought. Finally, the issue of leadership re-surfaced constantly during the campaign. Zanu-PF claimed that it offered voters its 'tried and tested leadership' for another five years in a direction that guaranteed that Zimbabwe would 'never be a colony again' (Zanu-PF 2005).

For its part, the MDC promised to build 'a new Zimbabwe' that would have 'freedom, prosperity, job opportunities, justice, safety and a living wage' (MDC 2005a). With respect to the economy, the party pledged to restore macro-economic stability, to reduce inflation to a single digit, to increase investment, especially in mining and manufacturing, while stabilising the foreign exchange market. Economic stability would be made possible partly by engaging the international community and negotiating loan rescheduling and debt relief. Furthermore, the party promised that, if elected to power, it would build 750 000 houses within five years. The MDC would allocate 15 per cent of the budget to the health sector while, like Zanu-PF, substantially increasing funding to combat HIV-AIDS. The party would introduce 'free primary education for all' and protect 'the rights of private schools'. Finally, an MDC government would ensure 'recovery of the agricultural sector' and achieve food security within 100 days of coming to power. Through its land policy, the MDC would promote security of tenure by granting title to land users as well as providing inputs, extension and financial support for farmers.

Interestingly, there were more similarities than differences between these two major parties on socio-economic issues. Neither has broken out of the strait-jacket of neo-liberal macro-economic policies. The irreversibility of land reform and the priority of macro-economic stabilisation appeared to have been taken for granted by both parties. What was lacking was a more critical assessment of the consequences of Zanu-PF's land reform beyond redistribution. The MDC appeared not to have capitalised as much as it might have on the shortfalls of land reform. Its delay of four months in deciding whether or not to participate in the election affected the amount of time it could devote to its campaign in rural areas where land reform continues to be a priority issue but one that has also contributed to disgruntlement amongst some sections of rural voters.

The ties the MDC continues to maintain with Western countries and donors made it vulnerable to Zanu-PF's nationalistic diatribes. The tag that it was a puppet of the Blair government was far fetched but it was a convenient 'smear tactic' that the MDC found irritating at each stage of the campaign. This 'demonisation' of the opposition was more a tactic of reverse 'demonisation' by Zanu-PF following criticism by the Western media than anything else. The same applied to the charge that the opposition was behind such sanctions as were currently being applied against Zimbabwe.

The Zanu-PF government was constantly attacked about restrictive laws that discriminated against the opposition and represented a breach of the SADC Principles and Guidelines. These laws, which included the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of 2002, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) also of 2002 and the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act of 2001, inhibited freedom of assembly, association and expression in the run-up to the election and affected the campaign environment negatively. They seriously disadvantaged the opposition, making the electoral field very uneven (ZLHR 2005). MDC rallies and meetings continued to be banned under POSA, while no Zanu-PF rally was prohibited.

It is interesting to observe that there was scanty coverage of the campaigns of the independents. This stemmed from the fact that their decisions to stand independently often precipitated their marginalisation from the mainstream parties to which they had belonged. Independents often laboured under the disadvantages of limited campaign resources and a lack of visibility in the media. Local and constituency issues and priorities were their main focus but it was only in Tsholotsho that an independent candidate won, and even he owed a significant portion of his victory to the prior investment of largely state-derived resources in the constituency.

Finally, a major deficiency in the campaign was the absence of public debates between the leaders of the contesting political parties. No convincing reasons were presented by the public media, particularly television and radio, for not arranging debates between the leaders of the two major parties to give listeners and viewers the opportunity to make up their minds about the issues and personalities at stake.

USE OF STATE/PUBLIC RESOURCES

The distribution of state/public resources between contesting parties was skewed. The only mechanisms ensuring equitable access to state/public resources are contained in the provisions of the Political Parties Finance Act. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Zanu-PF and the MDC have been the principal beneficiaries of the Act, which uses the number of votes received by a party in a previous election as a formula for allocating funds. Based on their performance in the 2000 elections, some Z\$6,5-billion was shared between the two parties, with Zanu-PF receiving Z\$3,38-billion and the MDC Z\$3,12-billion.

Unfortunately, the same formula was not replicated in the parties' access to the public media, campaign infrastructure, venues, transport and so on. Zanu-PF derived substantial advantages from incumbency. The party used state resources such as government transport while President Mugabe used Air Force helicopters and party officials used forms of transport such as District Development Fund (DDF – a government rural development fund) trucks to ferry ruling party supporters to campaign venues in Matabeleland South and Zupco buses and Department of Social Welfare trucks were allegedly used in the Chitungwiza campaign. In addition, there were instances in which it was unclear whether the agricultural inputs and maize meal distributed at rallies were the private property of the candidate or the party or came from public coffers.

It was commonplace for schools to be used as venues for Zanu-PF star rallies. A highlight of these rallies was the donation of computers to school heads for use by pupils. Although it was claimed that the computers were privately sourced with the assistance of the Reserve Bank governor, Gideon Gono, the timing of their allocation raised some questions. For example, it was estimated that schools in Mashonaland West received about 1 000 computers from President Mugabe. In other instances, Zanu-PF candidates were seen giving out maize or making it available for sale at a reduced price during the campaign. Such was the case in Gutu in Masvingo and Dangamvura in Manicaland. The use of public resources as a form of patronage to sway voters is clearly an advantage that is not open to opposition parties, especially in rural areas.

The biggest debate, though, related to access to the public media, particularly during campaigns. It is a debate that goes back many years (ESC 1995; Sachikonye 2001 and EU 2000). The bulk of the news media in Zimbabwe are state-owned. Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH) is currently the sole radio and television broadcaster, and state-controlled newspapers have a larger circulation than the few independently owned ones. As observed above, the public media have historically been partisan in their orientation and continue to be biased in favour of the ruling party. Although most (but not all) independent papers give considerable space to opposition views, they have relatively small circulations. There was no change in the patterns of this orientation and bias during the 2005 election campaign.

Although the SADC Principles and Guidelines stipulate that all parties should have equal access to the state media, neither the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) Act nor the Electoral Act contains provisions to ensure this. However, a new departure during the campaign was broadcasting regulations that facilitated access to the electronic media. A belated but welcome development in election broadcasting, the starting date of the broadcasts was 26 February 2005, a mere five weeks before the polling date. Parties were granted slots to present their manifestoes and programmes to the electorate on radio and television. Although parties were allowed to advertise on both media, it was prohibitively expensive to do so. For example, it cost Z\$226-million for a party to secure an hour of prime time advertising on television and Z\$84-million on radio. Financial constraints, especially on

opposition parties, subverted the theoretical entitlement to access to the electronic media. Finally, with respect to the print media, the ruling party profited from the unequivocal editorial support provided by the state-controlled dailies, the *Herald* and the *Chronicle*, and the Sunday papers, the *Sunday Mail* and the *Sunday News*. Some of the articles and profiles on opposition parties and leaders in the *Herald* and *Sunday Mail* were tantamount to brazen propaganda. With the closure in 2004 of the mass circulation *Daily News*, the MDC was at a great disadvantage.

CONTROVERSY OVER THE ELECTION RESULTS

Although the election campaign had largely been free from the political violence and intimidatory practices experienced in previous elections, the controversy over the outcome was similar to that which broke over the 2000 and 2002 results. The controversy was partly generated by lack of transparency at the counting and announcing of results. There were thus disputes between contesting parties over both process and outcome. Questions were raised about the location of some rural polling stations (ZESN 2005) some of which were located at the homesteads of chiefs who were reputed to be stalwart Zanu-PF supporters while others were next to police or army camps.

However, it was the opaque process of counting and the announcement of results that created doubts about the credibility of the election process. There were allegations that some election observers were 'unnecessarily detained' at polling stations after counting had been completed (ZESN 2005). In other instances, security personnel such as the police played an active role in the counting and transmission of results from the polling stations (US Embassy 2005). In terms of the Electoral Act, once counting had been completed at the polling station and the results conveyed to the constituency centre, the presiding officer of the polling station should display the results outside the station for the public to see. This was not done in some places and it was alleged that some chief election agents and candidates were prevented from communicating the results: 'many were locked in polling stations under police guard and denied permission to use cell phones' (MDC 2005b). There was also a specific allegation that opposition party officials and candidates were forced to leave command centres when tallies came in from polling stations. It was suggested that if the ZEC had provided observers with unfettered access to vote counting at polling stations they would have been in a position to verify the results and help resolve election-related disputes (ZESN 2005).

More serious were the discrepancies between the number of cast votes the ZEC announced on the night of 31 March and the morning of 1 April and the final results, announced later. Two examples of such discrepancies, which reportedly occurred in about 30 constituencies, concerned the votes in Goromonzi and Manyame constituencies. In Goromonzi, a constituency won by Zanu-PF, the number of votes announced by the ZEC at 2am on 1 April 2005 had suddenly gone up by 62 per cent from 15 611 to 25 360 by the time the final results were announced.

Another example pertains to Manyame constituency, also won by Zanu-PF. According to the ZEC, 14 812 voters had cast their ballots when the polls closed – a figure that had catapulted by 72 per cent to 23 760 when the final result was announced. Significantly, most of the discrepancies were in rural constituencies which were won by Zanu-PF candidates. It was charged that ‘where the MDC was widely predicted to regain seats, such as in Harare and Bulawayo, very few discrepancies were identified. This raises further suspicions that there was a calculated plan to ensure that the MDC won a “sufficient” number of seats to provide the electoral process with a veneer of legitimacy’ (MDC 2005b).

It is also politically significant that it was several days before the ZEC formally responded to the charges of vote discrepancies. Some six days after the charges were first made by opposition parties, NGOs and some observers, the ZEC chairperson told a press conference that the figures announced in the updates of 31 March were not necessarily an accurate reflection of the facts (Justice Chiweshe, quoted in the *Zimbabwe Independent* 8 April 2005). He contended that the figures had been intended to give an indication of the turnout trends in various provinces and constituencies. Whatever the truth of the matter, the clumsiness and opaqueness of the ZEC in handling this matter damaged the credibility of the results.

CONCLUSION

Although the 2005 election represented an improvement in terms of a peaceful atmosphere, the structural issues of unequal access to resources and authoritarian restrictive laws marred the democratic framework of the contest. The difficulty of attaining a high standard of transparency and credibility in the election process reflected concerns that ‘there is still inadequate and lip service commitment to multi-party democracy and politics among some of our leaders and politicians. They talk of democracy but use undemocratic means to gain or remain in power. Yet the success of multi-party democracy and politics depends to a large extent on government, political parties and other stakeholders committing themselves to upholding the values and practices that go with these concepts ...’ (SADC Parliamentary Forum 2001). The 2005 elections revealed the deficit in Zimbabwe’s democratisation process. Although there was a semblance of competition in the contest, structural impediments remained. The raft of laws restricting political activities and media freedom should be repealed.

The current structural framework has frustrated the appearance of a more competitive party system, especially since 2000. The implicit agenda of Zanu-PF appears to be to sustain and reproduce a ‘dominant-party’ system, particularly one underwritten by a two-thirds majority in Parliament. Thus there has been a conscious attempt to turn the political clock back to the period before 2000, a factor that has undermined the prospects of democratisation. The ‘dominant-party’ syndrome is commonly associated with phenomena such as the fusion of party and state, the denunciation of minorities who mobilise on issues vital to them, and

the de-legitimisation of the opposition (Southall 2003). The growth among power-holders of 'a culture of entitlement' to state resources, and even to resources not owned by the state, is an accompaniment to and consequence of this syndrome.

Although the specific disputed results will be brought before the Electoral Court and, indeed, other courts of law, a cloud has hung over the outcome of the 2005 elections. Instead of lifting the pall of uncertainty over the country, this has cast gloom, at least in the short and medium term. The need for deep political, constitutional and electoral reforms has never been more imperative.

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THE POLITICS OF THE 2005 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

The political and legal framework governing the 2005 parliamentary elections played a significant role in determining the freeness and fairness of the elections. The repressive legislation and partisan institutions put in place to govern the previous two elections were perpetuated, with new names, new personalities and invigorated allegiance to the ruling party. The continued use of repressive institutions and legislation appears to stem from the ruling party's insecurity and its desire to maintain its hegemonic position. The establishment of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing the Conduct of Democratic Elections was both a timely and welcome development for civil society organisations and human rights activists. The government of Zimbabwe responded by selectively applying critical tenets of the guidelines. Undoubtedly there was a relative reduction in state-organised violence but repressive legislation designed to favour the ruling party was not dismantled. New but partisan electoral bodies were appointed to manage the elections and there was rampant and excessive executive interference in the operations of the electoral bodies. As a result the manner in which the delimitation process was conducted compromised the electoral result. The media were biased throughout the campaign period, only improving a few days before the poll. The voters' roll was a shambles, with names duplicated or omitted and including the names of deceased or non-existent voters. The announcement of the results in the absence of political party representatives raised suspicions about their validity. Civil society organisations and opposition political parties dismissed as a fraud an election that must be characterised as flawed – it was free but not fair.

INTRODUCTION

Parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe take place every five years and the 2005 elections were the fifth since independence. The preceding two elections were

marked by structural and organised violence, with the ruling party, having assumed a hegemonic position, fighting against the popularisation of a newly formed opposition party with the capacity to threaten its primacy.

The ruling party's insecurity gave rise to repressive and monolithic state politics with intimidation, torture, intolerance, human rights violations and killings marking elections. This situation was backed up by repressive legislation and partisan institutions put in place to justify it. Dissenting voices from regional and international states as well as from national civil society organisations resulted in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) putting in place Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Democratic Elections (SADC guidelines). The Zimbabwean government had to decide whether to maintain power through the continued use of massive amounts of violence and risk political isolation or to embrace regional guidelines and gain support from regional brothers and sisters. A middle-of-the-road approach was adopted whereby the government did not dismantle the repressive legislation that had been put in place to govern previous elections but went on to set up electoral institutions according to the SADC guidelines.

Though it was prudent of the government to adhere to the guidelines, the existence of repressive legislation nullified many of the gains, creating suspicion and mistrust between government and civil society, which viewed the newly formed electoral institutions as biased, subjective and partisan. Suspicions were aggravated when legislation to establish the institutions revealed rampant executive interference in the functioning of the electoral bodies.

Analysis of the 2005 parliamentary elections without an analysis of the socio-economic and political landscape would be inadequate as the latter forms the basis for the former. This paper therefore expounds on the role of the economic, political, legal and institutional framework as the basis from which the 2005 elections can be assessed.

THE POLITICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ELECTIONS

At independence, Zimbabwe inherited the second most advanced economy in Africa. It was not only diversified, it was also highly integrated at the domestic level, with an equally high industrial output, large basic iron and steel capacity and sound agricultural surpluses. Health, education and other socio-economic indices were well above those of its Southern African neighbours (Good 2002, p 1).

Inappropriate policy priorities, bad economic management and the Zimbabwean government's flawed implementation of the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) resulted in economic decline, with shortages of basic commodities, unemployment reaching 70 per cent and triple-digit inflation. This resulted in general discontent and dissenting voices among civil society organisations, academics and labour bodies, among others, and in September 1999, a new opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change

(MDC), was formed, deflating the myth of the omnipotence of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Popular Front (ZANU-PF) party, which had enjoyed a political monopoly since independence.

In 2000, barely a year after the formulation of the MDC, the opposition scooped 49 per cent of seats in the parliamentary elections (Good 2002, p 24). For the first time since independence a party posed a serious threat to ZANU-PF's hegemony.

The ruling party's response to the near seizure of power was vicious and unrestrained violence against opposition supporters and civilians. ZANU-PF, which had been a militant and authoritarian liberation war movement, invoked these tendencies in reaction to the political threat posed by the MDC. Both the 2000 and 2002 elections were marked by structural and organised violence involving the army, the military and paragonovernmental wings, including ruling party supporters. In the 2002 presidential election, 36 people were killed and thousands injured; 7 000 people were displaced and intimidation, electoral manipulation and violence were recorded (Good 2002, p 24)

After the SADC guidelines were put in place it became apparent to the ruling party that it could not continue to use its previous strategies and it embarked on tabling new statutes and amending others in order to gain an advantage over the opposition.

The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) was a possible derivative of the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) introduced during the colonial era in order to suppress any form of civil unrest. POSA provides for the prosecution of journalists, media houses and individuals for making statements that are perceived to cause 'fear, alarm or despondency'. The Act, which also criminalises statements or acts that bring the president, the government or the Constitution into disrepute, is vague and has been used as a tool of repression. The first half of the election period saw the victimisation of MDC leaders and supporters but as international and regional bodies continued to emphasise SADC principles, the later part of the election period saw a dramatic reduction in violence.

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) 2005 was another piece of legislation put in place to oppress opposition political parties. The Act provides for the appointment of a Media and Information Commission (MIC) and criminalises journalists who practise with no accreditation. It also gives the Minister of Information and Publicity power to suspend journalists for one of a number of specified reasons. The rationale given by the state for promulgating the Act was to protect it from 'attacks' by enemies of the country. However, the Act resulted in the barring of all foreign journalists who were permanently working in Zimbabwe as well as the closure of four independent newspapers and the arrest of journalists working for independent newspapers.

A plethora of other legislation that had a bearing on elections included the Political Parties (Finance Act) of 1997, an amended form of the Political Parties Act No 14 of 1992, which allowed a political party with at least 15 seats in Parliament to benefit from state funding. The Act was amended by means of a court order which

reduced the quota to five per cent of votes to enable more political parties to benefit from state funding. The MDC could now receive election funds from government which were more or less equal to those given to ZANU-PF.

The Broadcasting Services Act of 2002 regulated the conduct of the public media during the election. Although the Act gave responsible and equal opportunities for broadcasting election material to all parties contesting the election, in reality the public media were heavily skewed towards the status quo. A constitutionality challenge brought to the courts by Capital Radio resulted in the Act being labelled unconstitutional. The government reacted by striking down the Act and reintroducing it after six months through the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act. This resulted in biased reporting and deliberate misrepresentation of political issues. It was very clear during the election that ZANU-PF had a clear advantage in political processes. POSA, AIPPA and the Political Parties (Finance) Act, were specifically put in place in order to diminish the popularity of opposition parties (*The Independent* 5 March 2005).

Presidential appointments to the MIC and the letter and spirit of the Act appeared to be in gross contradiction of the SADC guidelines. The polarisation of society, closing down of independent radio stations and monopolisation of information by the state media marked the 2005 parliamentary elections. The MIC was mandated to edit and evaluate programmes for political parties, deciding what was acceptable and what was not. The right to edit programmes was reserved for a partisan government parastatal, which was biased against opposition parties.

Basic values and principles governing public administration entail promoting and maintaining a high standard of professional ethics as well as the provision of services that are impartial, fair, equitable and free of bias. This was not the case with institutions mandated with administering the 2005 parliamentary elections. A successful election is not merely one in which everything works smoothly on election day, but one in which the legal environment and the systems it builds are equitable.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Section 58(4) of the Constitution makes provision for an Electoral Act to be put in place in order to conduct elections. The Electoral Act Chapter 2(13) sets out the bodies mandated to conduct elections in Zimbabwe – they constitute a complicated tripartite system. Following the SADC guidelines, Zimbabwe established the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), an independent authority, to administer and supervise elections and referendums. The commission consisted of a chairperson, who is a judge of the Supreme Court and was appointed by the President in consultation with the Judicial Service Commission. The President also appointed four other commissioners (two of them women), from a list of seven submitted by the Committee on Standing Rules and Order which is a parliamentary committee (ZEC 2005).

The functions of the ZEC were to prepare for and conduct efficiently and transparently presidential, parliamentary and local authority elections as well as referendums. The body was also mandated to direct and control voter registration, to compile voters' rolls and to conduct voter education and safeguard ballot papers and election materials (ZEC 2005). The ZEC also had the mandate to give instructions to the registrar-general voters and to keep the public informed about delimited constituencies and other electoral matters as well as about political parties and candidates contesting the election.

When confusion arose between the newly established body and the existing body, the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), which had the same general mandate, the Act was amended to give the ESC a supervisory and coordinating role, thereby ensuring it total control of the electoral process.

While the ESC was the supreme body conducting the elections, in practice the ZEC became the overall and supervisory body with total electoral control. The late establishment of the ZEC had a negative effect on election management, with the ZEC failing to carry out the initial tasks assigned to it, like the registration of voters, the maintenance of voters' rolls and registers, announcement of election boundaries and facilitation of the nomination of candidates and political parties, all of which activities were carried out by the registrar-general voters. When ZEC officials were finally appointed, they initially had no offices, telephones or vehicles. It was only at the voter education phase that the commission became active (Interview with a ZEC official 13 February 2004).

One of the threats to impartiality and transparency is posed by the fact that the president appoints all electoral bodies in Zimbabwe. The registrar-general voters has been a civil servant for 20 years and, despite allegations of partisanship and electoral rigging, continues to play a prominent role. Confidence will have to be built up and mutual trust cultivated if this office is to continue to be involved in elections.

The ZEC Act can be interpreted to allow the president either to consult or not to consult with the Judicial Service Commission. Although stringent measures were put in place to protect the terms of officials of the ZEC it is worrying to note that, once again, it is the president who appoints the tribunal to investigate and terminate the functions of ZEC officials. Over the years, Zimbabwe has experienced the overbearing nature of the executive branch in elections and political processes.

The case of Roy Bennett serves to illustrate the lack of impartiality in some election bodies. Bennett, the Member of Parliament (MP) for Chimanimani, was insulted and degraded by a ruling party MP, who made racist remarks about him and his ancestors. Infuriated, he pushed the other man to the floor and was sentenced to a year in prison for contempt of Parliament, the first person in the history of Parliament to have such action taken against him (*Daily Mirror* 20 February 2005).

When his wife filed nomination papers on his behalf, the nomination court sought the guidance of the Electoral Court, another newly established institution, created to solve disputes. The court ruled that the jailed candidate might run for

election. That evening, President Robert Mugabe attacked the court's ruling, making further racist attacks on Bennett, stating that Zimbabwe would not be held to ransom by an 'arrogant Rhodesian'. The following day, the court reversed its decision and barred Bennett from standing (*Daily Mirror* 20 February 2005).

Presidential appointees in Zimbabwe tend to fail the impartiality test. Legislation that allows for executive involvement and interference in the elections reduces the level of democracy.

Electoral administration in Zimbabwe is unnecessarily complex, cumbersome and expensive. It is recommended that only one electoral body, which is non-partisan, transparent and genuinely accountable to the electorate, be put in place. If an election is to be free and fair participants should not be in a position to set the standards for the conduct of that election. Legislation should be amended to allow a genuinely non-partisan body to administer elections. Regional and international jurisprudence recognise that elections are an important part of good governance and electoral institutions and constitutional amendments should intensify democracy, not threaten it. Electoral amendments made in relation to the 2005 election compromised legitimacy instead of extending it. The SADC guidelines are silent on oppressive legislation that compromises the conduct of democratic elections, an oversight that renders the guidelines useless in the face of authoritarian regimes.

DELIMITATION OF CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES

Gordon (1997) notes that the creation of electoral districts through a process of delimitation or demarcation is essential in a democracy to protect the principles of 'equal weight for each vote'. Boundaries must be drawn on a non-political basis to divide the total electorate into units of more or less equal population size. True to this specification, the government of Zimbabwe divided the country into 120 constituencies of about 46 000 people each (Report of the Delimitation Commission 2004). Allegations of gerrymandering of election boundaries were made soon after the report was made available to the president. The allegations appeared to stem from the fact that the composition of the Delimitation Commission, which is composed of presidential appointees who are alleged to be partisan and subjective, is questionable. Areas that lost constituencies were strongholds of the opposition, while the ruling party strongholds gained seats. This was contrary to census statistics and the theories of rural to urban migration. The conclusion drawn by critics was that the delimitation process was conducted to benefit the ruling party (Report of the Delimitation Commission 2004).

VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION

As a result of legislation put in place to disadvantage the opposition, the initial phase of the electoral period saw intimidation of opposition supporters by the police and over-zealous ruling party youths.

It was only after the President and the Commissioner of Police made calls for the violence to end that ruling party youths, used to committing acts of violence with impunity, ceased to do so. Tremendous pressure on the government to adhere to the SADC guidelines resulted in the arrest of violent ruling party supporters, a development unknown in the previous two elections. As a result, all political parties were able to conduct campaign rallies in the rural areas and basic human rights standards were observed (*Daily Mirror* 20 March 2005).

PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Intra-party primary elections were conducted according to the constitutions of the individual parties, with the two biggest parties in Zimbabwe confronted with similar problems – allegations of vote buying, vote rigging, and factionalism resulting in dissent, resignations and dismissals from the parties.

In the MDC, two-thirds of members in the local structures confirm a sitting MP and if the member is not confirmed, other aspirant candidates will tender their curriculum vitae for consideration. Accusations of factionalism, mud slinging and outright rigging of primary elections were levelled against top election officials of the party and only five of the 120 MDC MPs were not confirmed (Interview with the MDC Directorate 1 March 2005).

Democratic values should not be encouraged only at the national level but also at party level. Political parties cannot be undemocratic at party level and cultivate democratic values at national level. Political parties that are undemocratic at party level cannot be trusted with higher authority.

ZANU-PF involves all its supporters, who vote for party candidates at local level. The candidate with the majority of votes represents the party in the national elections. Imposition of candidates, selective application of justice, vote buying, violence, intimidation and faction fighting characterised the ZANU-PF primary elections and 17 of the 120 constituencies had to rerun their elections. Of the 1 000 people who submitted their CVs to contest the primary elections, only 117 were accepted (Interview with ZANU-PF candidate for Gutu South 15 March 2005).

The criteria for selection were questionable. When the party realised that party 'heavyweights' had been trounced by their juniors at local level, new criteria were put in place to ensure that senior members of the party were automatically selected. It was ruled that no members who had sat in the Politburo, the Central Committee or at provincial level needed to contest the primary elections. This caused a great deal of dissatisfaction among the 'Young Turks', who had spent time and money campaigning for seats. Besides, the senior members were likely to lose because they were unpopular with the masses, who believed most of them had done little about development in the past 25 years (Interview with ZANU-PF candidate for Gutu South 15 March 2005).

The manifestos of both parties were plausible and addressed key macro-economic, political and social issues. Both were concerned with reducing inflation,

managing public debt, reviving collapsed industries and reorganising the agricultural sector. The MDC extended its manifesto to include bringing about the rule of law, respect for human rights and a new constitution (MDC Manifesto 2005).

The ZANU-PF campaign departed slightly from the norm. Dubbed the Anti-Blair campaign, it emphasised national autonomy, sovereignty, social justice and redistribution of wealth and dealt more with external political issues than with national challenges. ZANU-PF put in place a quota system for women, a development that caught the MDC off balance. Human rights and women's organisations as well as party supporters and academics viewed the adoption of the SADC declaration on gender and development that calls for the allocation of 30 per cent of seats to women as an important step towards the empowerment of women (ZANU-PF Manifesto 2005).

POLITICAL PARTY FINANCING

In 1992 Parliament enacted the Political Parties (Finance) Act No 14. According to the provisions of the Act, parties that won at least 15 seats would be given financing. The United Parties, an opposition party, challenged the 15-seat threshold in the Supreme Court, calling it unconstitutional and the court reduced the threshold to 5 per cent of the votes. This amendment was incorporated through the Political Parties (Finance) Amendment Act No 20 of 1997. The Act enabled the MDC to receive state funds for its 2005 parliamentary campaign.

The finances allocated to both political parties were grossly inadequate to cover the entire election process. Fees for the registration of aspiring candidates were increased from US\$20 per candidate to US\$400. A political party fielding 120 candidates would have to pay US\$48 000. Access to the print and electronic media was also affected when fees were hiked. Only two major political parties were able to field all 120 candidates and air their programmes. Some minority parties withdrew their candidates or aired only a few programmes (Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe 20 February 2005).

Although there was legislation to criminalise private funding, the major political parties openly flouted this restriction. Allegations of the use of state resources were levelled against the ruling party. It is a generally accepted rule of democracy that, in order to level the playing field, the resources available to government should not be made available to the ruling party. However, as in previous Zimbabwean elections, on this occasion there appeared to be no separation of state and ruling party assets, with state helicopters used to conduct campaign rallies. Viewers who saw the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation News on 15 March, for instance, observed that vehicles, civil servants, schools, clinics and other state material, institutions and personnel were used by the ruling party in its campaign processes.

The Government of Zimbabwe should be commended for putting in place institutions and processes not previously in use in order to comply with the SADC

Principles and Guidelines. These include the financing of opposition parties, voter registration, candidate nomination and a multi-liaison committee stipulating specific rules of conduct and regulations governing election broadcasting. However prudent the gesture may be, there is a great deal of work to be done to ensure that the institutions are not only impartial, objective and non-partisan but that they are seen to be so.

AN ANALYSIS OF MEDIA COVERAGE DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Democratic, free and fair elections depend on the existence of free, informed and responsible media. If the media do not play an active role in observing, investigating, analysing and publicising all phases of the election process, it is difficult for them as a whole to hold the authorities and other stakeholders accountable. The media should accept their role in developing a culture of openness and tolerance, which is essential for free political activity. Good election practice dictates that the free media should have equal access to information about election processes and procedures (Gordon 1997, p 4).

The media, in turn, must take responsibility for making information available to the public and providing balanced coverage of election campaigns, by reporting on the positions of all contesting parties and offering objective analysis. Uneven coverage by the media, partisan access and uneven distribution of resources undermine smaller political parties.

Access to the media is crucial to the dissemination of party programmes and this access should not be impeded. Candidates should enjoy the right to free expression and opinion without intimidation, victimisation or imprisonment (Gordon 1997, p 4).

The media in Zimbabwe were heavily biased in favour of the ruling party throughout the campaign process. The government-owned print media naturally aligned themselves with the ruling party. With the closure of three independent newspapers and the bombing of another, the electorate was left with little choice but the government newspapers. These are heavily politicised and any journalists who appeared to be objective were transferred or relieved of their duties. There was deliberate misrepresentation of the opposition parties' policies and objectives (Human Rights Forum Report 2005).

The national television service was biased and heavily aligned with the ruling party until a month before polling day, when it opened up the airwaves to all contesting parties. In February 2005 the public media carried news of 33 campaign star rallies (major rallies usually addressed by presidential candidates and high-ranking party officials), 73 per cent related to the ruling party and reported positively on it while only 18 per cent focused on the major opposition party, the MDC, and 3 per cent were neutral reports on minor parties and 6 per cent covered unspecified matters. Coverage of the opposition parties was negative and intended to undermine

them. During the same period television presenters were seen adorned in ruling party regalia while presenting the evening news, a clear violation of election neutrality (Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe 20 February 2005).

Apart from the *Independent*, the private press consisted of the *Sunday Mirror* and the *Daily Mirror*, both owned by a ruling party sympathiser. The weekly paper was initially biased towards the opposition and carried stories heavily criticising the ruling party and glorifying the proposed policies of the opposition. The daily paper owned by the ruling party sympathiser was slanted towards the ruling party initially, but when the paper's sales started declining, it became objective and even critical of government policy, before swinging back again soon after the elections to criticise the opposition.

The electorate was bombarded with presentations and analyses by 'academics' who unashamedly humiliated and attacked opposition candidates. The Minister of Information and Publicity interpreted the Broadcasting Services Act to give the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH) the mandate to allocate airtime and to have the discretion to allow opposition parties reasonable access. He reiterated that opposition parties had no right to claim access as a result. Regulations governing the broadcasting of election material decreed that all advertisements which incite or perpetrate hatred of any group on the basis of its political affiliation will not only not be aired but will be criminalised. The regulation was clearly flouted throughout the campaign process by the ruling party, who called the main opposition party imperialists and stooges of the West (*The Herald* 9 March 2005).

CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION

No democratic system can function well without an educated and informed citizenry. The SADC guidelines stipulate that civic and voter education is grounded in citizen participation in decision-making processes, thereby consolidating democratic practice.

Given the high illiteracy levels in African countries voter and civic education play a paramount role in moulding democracy. Non-partisan, independent and consistent education enables voters to make informed choices. While civic education centres on information dissemination about basic rights and responsibilities as well as fundamental freedoms, it also involves an understanding of how government works, as well as holding accountable elected government officials.

Voter education is a sub-discipline of civic education. Its object is to promote high levels of informed and effective participation by all eligible voters. It should also help foster political tolerance amongst the electorate, emphasising the merits of respect and observing other people's rights. Voter education programmes should be political, professional, comprehensive and simple enough to be accessible. Piroshaw Camay (1997) notes that voter and civic education results in higher voter turnout and reduced numbers of spoilt ballot papers.

Voter education, a vital component of freedom of expression, which is considered the foundation of a democratic society, was the prerogative of the newly-formed ZEC, which was supposed to be apolitical. However, the ZEC's operations were severely curtailed by its late appointment as well as by a lack of mobility and it only started its voter education campaign less than a month before the elections, a clear violation of democratic ethos. Three weeks before polling day the Commission had no vehicles, offices or contact details. Consequently voter education was concentrated in the urban areas and conducted by means of pamphlets, posters, and radio and television announcements. As a result, large numbers of voters were turned away and a record number of ballot papers were spoilt.

Civic education also proved a problem. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were able to conduct it at workshop level for urban organisations but they were unable to access the wider populace because to do so was viewed as detrimental to the nationalist philosophies of the ruling party. The urban populace, however, was able to attend various meetings organised by NGOs in the central business district, mostly in hotels. Almost no civic education reached the rural areas, where there are more illiterate people than in urban areas.

The government's hostility to civic education can be attributed to the fact that it considered human rights and democratic principles to be Western imperialist devices intended to 'destabilise', 'polarise' and 'recolonise' the country. Individuals and organisations registered to implement human rights programmes were threatened with closure. An NGO Bill was drafted requiring all NGOs to register and those registered as trusts ceased to be lawful and were forced to stop functioning and re-register under a new legal instrument. All NGOs concerned with issues of governance and human rights were to be deregistered (s 9 of the NGO Bill).

The period before the 2005 elections was marked by confusion in the NGO sector, with NGOs uncertain about their survival after the election. As a result most of them were concerned with strategising and re-registration pursuits in anticipation of the passage of the Bill.

The result of the uncertainty was that the donor community held back funds, severely curtailing both civic and voter education. At the time of writing, the Bill had not passed through Parliament (Interview with ZESN official 6 March 2005).

If there is a lesson to be learnt from the Zimbabwean experience it is that voter education should be all-inclusive and be conducted by civil society, NGOs, academics, student bodies, churches, women's organisations, and the youth, among others. The number of people turned away because their names did not appear on the voters' roll, because they had inappropriate identity cards or because they went to the wrong constituencies was alarming. The percentages of voters turned away ranged between 9 per cent and 17, 7 per cent, an unacceptable percentage by any standard. This could have been a strategy employed by government to protect Zanu's rural strongholds from MDC infiltration (*The Herald* 8 April 2005).

ELECTION OBSERVATION

The need for international observers derives from several sources. They provide psychological support to participants in the election process. The mere presence of observers reassures a sceptical population about the secrecy of the ballot, the efficacy of the process and the safety of voters. Observers may also prevent fraud during the balloting and counting process and can report to the international community on the overall fairness of an election process (McCoy, Garber & Pastor 1993).

International election monitoring raises delicate questions of national sovereignty. Some African leaders consider the very idea to be in conflict with the principle of non-intervention, which is closely guarded by many today. Most African leaders viewed North-South election monitoring as vital during decolonisation, but now believe it is irrelevant and smacks of colonialism and the destabilisation of African states by the West. This notion is reinforced where the presence of international observers has coincided with regime change. African governments have therefore not always welcomed election observation outside the decolonisation context (McCoy, Garber & Pastor 1993, p 16).

The 2005 elections in Zimbabwe were held at a time when relations between Britain and Zimbabwe were at their lowest. The antagonism began in 2000 when the government drafted a proposed new constitution, which was seen by NGOs as intensifying the powers of the president. The legislation also gave the government the right to acquire land without compensation – a result of British Prime Minister Tony Blair's refusal to adhere to an agreement to compensate white farmers for the loss of their land. NGOs campaigned heavily against the draft constitution and Zimbabweans voted overwhelmingly against it in a referendum.

The stand-off resulted in government-organised land invasions, which displaced white farmers and compromised food security. The deteriorating relationship between Britain and Zimbabwe resulted in a campaign process so riddled with slogans of anti-colonialism, sovereignty and patriotism it might have been believed that Britain was a competing political candidate. Blair's announcement, in response to a question in Parliament that he intended to bring about a regime change in Zimbabwe was received with outrage by the ruling party (Cable News Network 2002).

Zimbabwe's response was to omit the European Union, the Commonwealth and Western countries from the observations teams, choosing, instead, African countries and revolutionary organisations. Also included were countries that were perceived to be neutral and with nothing to do with the political situation in Zimbabwe – South American, Asian and Caribbean countries. Russia and China were chosen because of their long-standing relationship with the ruling party and their socialist ideology (*The Herald* 20 March 2005).

Zimbabwe employed a sophisticated system of accrediting observers. The Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs issued invitations and would-be observers were to submit their credentials to the ministry and be accredited by

the ESC upon production of an invitation letter and payment of a levy. All accredited observers would be expected to submit a preliminary report after the closure of polls, before the count, and the final report within 14 days of the count (*The Herald* 21 March 2005).

Clearly both Western and African countries, with their strong political interests in the outcome of the election, had pre-judged it and neither bloc was likely to give an objective analysis.

Observers arrived only three weeks before polling day, contrary to the 90 days stipulated in the SADC guidelines, a possible result of the late issue of invitations. Critics speculated that the reduced period gave the government adequate time to deal with isolated incidents of violence before the observers arrived.

VOTER REGISTRATION AND NOMINATIONS

The registration of voters, together with the nomination of parties and candidates, was conducted in line with the SADC guidelines. Voter education was conducted on the requirements for registration and voters had no problems registering. International requirements demand that the registration of voters must be carefully conducted to ensure fairness and effectiveness of provisions concerning qualifications, residence requirements and voters' rolls. The procedures put in place in the 2005 parliamentary elections did not create unnecessary technical barriers to participation.

The nomination of parties and candidates was conducted according to the law of the land. Save for the problems caused by the exorbitant fees stipulated by the ZEC, all political parties were able to register. Nominations were conducted in a transparent manner. In previous elections many opposition candidates had been barred from submitting their nomination papers, while some found physical barriers erected on roads leading to nominations courts and others were thoroughly beaten or abducted and held until the courts closed. No such occurrences were recorded in the 2005 elections. There were no unreasonable restrictions placed on the registration of parties and candidates. The law was followed in terms of party names and symbols. Procedures for designation of party agents were clearly established by the Electoral Act.

Election material used in the 2005 elections met with international standards and was in line with the SADC guidelines. Translucent ballot boxes were used, voting booths ensured security and indelible ink was visible and only faded after three weeks. Ballot papers were clearly numbered with visible political emblems and symbols. Lanterns, candles and matches were dispatched to illuminate polling areas. Mobile booths were outlawed, as they were viewed as offering opportunities for vote rigging. Election agents, polling officers and presiding officers were well trained and efficient in their conduct (Interview with MDC Election Directorate official 1 April 2005).

POLLING, COUNTING AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS

Polling day was peaceful, with only isolated and minor cases of violence recorded. Unlike in previous elections, where there were deliberate attempts to frustrate the urban voters, the 2005 elections were conducted efficiently. The reduction of voting days from three to one was in line with the SADC guidelines and assisted in creating confidence among voters that there was unlikely to be electoral fraud. The increase in the number of polling stations greatly improved efficiency and effectiveness. The secrecy of the vote was respected at all times. Voting procedures were designed to encourage broad participation. Voters with special needs, including the disabled, the elderly, and foreign- service personnel, were assisted in a professional manner (Interview with MDC Election Directorate official 1 April 2005).

It was the counting of ballots that caused divisions and discontent in the country, the region, and even internationally. The National Command Centre, where election results are announced, is staffed by government officials and the law prevents any election agents or representatives of political parties from being present. By midday, the ZEC had announced that most registered voters had cast their votes. Live coverage of events taking place in the country was conducted through both the radio and national television. At 19:30, 30 minutes after voting had officially concluded, the Chairman of the ESC began to announce through the media the total number of votes cast in each constituency. After more than 30 constituencies had been announced, the exercise stopped abruptly, with no explanation. When the final results were announced, there were massive discrepancies between the original figures announced for the constituencies and the final figures. In some cases, the figures announced at the end of polling were lower than those that had been announced during polling. Attempts to explain the discrepancies were not convincing and opposition parties, some NGOs, and some international states rejected the results, calling them the most fraudulent in the history of Zimbabwe.

There were further allegations that some results of constituencies were announced before the counting was completed. Reports from opposition election agents noted that some agents for ruling party members brought in figures for postal ballots. The major problem was that the presiding officers, who, in most cases, were government employees, would not want to question or reject directives of senior ruling party officials who were often their superiors. Although these allegations were never confirmed, the majority of Zimbabweans, both rural and urban, perceived that they had been cheated once more (Human Rights Forum 1 April 2005).

Although the results were received with political maturity, despondency and hopelessness continued to grip Zimbabweans in the face of an economy that maintained its nosedive. Election petitions are not likely to be resolved in the near future as courts have not cleared petitions filed in relation to the 2000 and 2002 elections. Regional and international leaders who tried to facilitate dialogue were

lambasted by the President for meddling in Zimbabwe's affairs (*The Herald* 15 April 2005).

Soon after the elections, government embarked on an operation called 'Restore Order', during which illegal houses, cottages and shacks were destroyed in order to 'clean up' the cities. Housing schemes belonging to war veterans who had helped the ruling party secure victory in three elections were ravaged amid speculation that the move was intended to curb the powers of the war veterans in the face of their demands to be included in the Senate. Another school of thought is that the operation was intended to 'dilute' urban voters who had voted for the opposition ever since its inception. After a visit, the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements, Alice Tibaijuka, produced a damning report revealing that the national budget included no item for housing which would enable the evicted citizens to be rehoused. The government, however, insisted that the protests were part of a plan by the West to discredit the Zimbabwean government's noble attempts to restore order and provide better accommodation, an unlikely explanation in light of the facts contained in the report (Tibaijuka 2005).

CONCLUSION

The same legal framework that governed the 2000 and 2002 elections is still in place today and has compromised basic freedoms and fundamental rights. Although the government put in a great deal of effort to ensure that the elections were free and fair and to adhere to the SADC Principles and Guidelines, a lot of political will will have to be nurtured to ensure that there is no gerrymandering of constituency boundaries, that the voters' roll is revamped, that any statute or constitutional provision that compromises human rights is struck down, and, finally, that the announcement of results is never manipulated to enable a single party to benefit. It should also be noted that, though elections themselves are a good measure of democracy, they are only one vital component; they are not an end in themselves but a means to an end. Genuine political will is vital to bring about democratic institutions and processes. As a result, the 2005 parliamentary elections were free but not fair.

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PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES

Women and Electoral Politics in the Zimbabwe Elections in 2005

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the 2005 elections in Zimbabwe in the context of persistent gender inequalities that have existed since 1980. These inequalities have been exacerbated by an entrenched patriarchal culture and an electoral system that neither facilitates nor adds value to the increased representation and participation of women. The 31 March 2005 parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe were held amid profound struggles and disagreements over how best to change the formal political machinery. At the same time, struggles by the opposition to broaden and deepen political, economic and civil rights had intensified. Within this same struggle for democratisation the women's movement has defined itself by a liberal human rights-based agenda and has waged the struggle at two levels. The first is the level of a feminist consciousness, where women have fought a war against patriarchy since 1980, through a critique of discriminatory legislation and demands for committed measures to increase women's political representation. The second is at the oppositional level, where some women's groups in alliance with other civil society organisations and opposition political parties have challenged the state and the legitimacy of the ZANU-PF rulers and the lack of a free participatory environment. A reflection on the results of the 2005 elections shows that women have not won these two battles. Patriarchy still remains entrenched in political institutions and political parties. A culture that uncritically accepts the need for women as political leaders does not exist. The under representation of women in Zimbabwe has been so stark since 1980 that the injustice seems beyond question. When women occupy a mere 16 per cent of the seats in Parliament, it should be clear that there is something unsatisfactory in the current political arrangements or in the electoral system.

INTRODUCTION

Since independence in 1980 women in Zimbabwe have consistently engaged the state in two ways: through strategy and critique and the mobilisation and growth

of an autonomous feminist movement. The feminist movement has also pushed for a significant presence for women within political parties and state institutions. It has been a hard road of experimentation with different strategies of mobilisation and state penetration. However, the inequalities persist and are reflected more clearly in the legislature.

On 31 March 2005 Zimbabwe held its sixth legislative elections since independence. Much attention was focused on whether the elections would be free and fair and on Zimbabwe's compliance or non-compliance with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) guidelines governing democratic elections, signed at the SADC summit in Mauritius in 2004. The guidelines are silent on specific measures that should be implemented by states to ensure the increased participation and representation of women. In the list of guidelines women are mentioned only once, and are lumped together with the disabled and the youth. The responsible government is only asked to encourage the participation of disadvantaged groups.

During the election campaign little was said about women's participation in politics, and gender issues and women's concerns were not central to the campaign. Social and political issues were more paramount and the struggle for survival was so crucial that gender issues took a back seat to issues such as land, the economy and the perceived imperialist threat by the opposition in alliance with Western countries. The women in Zimbabwe had wanted a quota at the legislative level, which would be guaranteed, and be enforceable by law. Women parliamentarians representing organisations like Women in Politics Support Unit (WIPSU) and others lobbied for the adoption of a legislative quota through a constitutional amendment as well as calling for a change in the electoral system to one of proportional representation, which is considerably more favourable to women candidates than the current first-past-the-post (FPTP) or winner-takes-all constituency system. Although the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) had adopted a provincial quota it still failed to nominate enough women to satisfy the quota requirements.

The 2005 Zimbabwean elections were conducted in conditions where there was no consensus about the institutions and legal framework governing the elections. Women participated as voters as well as candidates, although some were dissatisfied with both the Constitution and the electoral laws. There were no major constitutional reforms except a few last minute cosmetic reforms to comply with the SADC guidelines. These included the establishment of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and the Electoral Court, which came into being two months before the elections.

The changes also included a deliberate restraint on violence, which led observer teams to conclude that the elections were well conducted and peaceful. There was also some opening up of the state broadcasting media a month before the election. Further administrative changes included that all the voting should be done on one day; the absence of mobile polling stations; the use of translucent ballot boxes and

indelible ink used to prevent people voting twice. None of these administrative changes had any value for women.

Zimbabwean society is polarised ideologically over how to manage the rules of the political game. The election was prejudged as not free and fair by the opposition because of the absence of a level playing field. Women were also divided according to political allegiances, a factor that resulted in tensions when they were organising on issues that affected them as women. Although equal before the law, women were severely limited in the manner in which they engaged with the electoral process by a number of new laws governing the process. Furthermore, thousands of men and women were brutalised by the state-sponsored campaign of terror and political violence that had swept the country since the 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections.¹ An increasingly hostile political environment has not only affected women's political participation but has also presented formidable challenges to their perceptions of and relations with the state. This paper reviews the literature on women's perceptions of the state and of gender equality and the environmental and institutional factors that led to the under-participation and under-representation of women in the 2005 elections. The paper concludes by arguing that although women had the right to vote, the prevailing socio-economic and cultural conditions and the lack of a credible and transparent electoral framework since 1980 totally undermined notions of a free and fair election.

WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE STATE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The role of the state has always been a matter of dispute among feminists. Some see it as a useful tool in furthering women's rights and quality of life, while others see it as an essential element in the development and maintenance of patriarchy and, therefore, as being of no use to women (Craske 1998, p 103). Gendered and feminist analyses reveal that the state is, in almost all cases, male dominated and a masculinist construct (Pettman 1996, p 5). It is not possible to explain state power without explaining women's systematic exclusion from it. Radical feminists have seen the state as inherently patriarchal and simply reflecting the male-dominated nature of society. Socialist feminists see the state as propagating dominant class as well as gender interests and often race and ethnic interests as well. They are therefore more ambivalent towards the state and the possibility of using the state for feminist goals (Pettman 1996, p 10). However, Philips (1995) argues for the 'politics of presence', which enables those who were excluded from politics to engage more directly in political debates. She advocates a straightforward quota as appropriate. Although gender quotas remain controversial they involve significant elements of

1 Most of the violence against the people until the running of the 2005 elections is well documented in human rights reports. One of these is 'Not a level playing field: Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Elections in 2005'. A Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, 21 March 2005.

positive action, as shown by the increase of women in legislatures in Mozambique and South Africa. Political equality does carry with it an equal right to be politically present (Philips 1995, p 36).

However, most women in Zimbabwe have engaged with the state in defence of women's practical gender interests rather than keeping completely clear of it and its institutions. Nonetheless, it is possible that there are some women in Zimbabwe who would totally avoid state engagement because they believe that the state and its rulers are illegitimate. The Zimbabwean state is still largely masculinist in its assumption of elite male interests and characteristics as the norm, although there is now a marginalised feminist presence. The state, through its legislation and policies, is still the main organiser of the power relations of gender. Analysts like Catherine MacKinnon (1983) have outlined how the state institutionalises male interests through the law or what has been termed 'state feminism', a system of laws and policies directed at women, mostly protective legislation and reproductive rights such as maternity leave and abortion laws (Waylen 1996, p10). The impact of state action and inaction is gendered, affecting differently men as a group and women as a group. Many of the provisions that are directed at women have been instituted after many years of struggle. For example, the constitutional clause that outlaws gender discrimination came in 1996 after 16 years of struggle, and a National Gender Policy was finally launched only in March 2004.

THE WAR AGAINST PATRIARCHY

At independence in 1980, women were, for the first time in the history of the country, officially recognised as an oppressed group and, as such, were the targets of a conscious government policy to change their situation. The power of the state was sought to fight inequality; the state was regarded as a partner in the struggle to abolish inequality. For its part, the Zimbabwean state expressed a strong commitment to the removal of all discrimination against women and the promotion of their participation on equal terms in the social and economic life of the nation. The ruling ZANU-PF party, in accordance with its official Marxist ideology, acknowledged the importance of the woman's role in the struggle for liberation, regarding the emancipation of women as part and parcel of the liberation struggle. Thus, the Ministry of Cooperative and Community Development and Women's Affairs was set up to implement government policy. Teurayi Ropa Mujuru, the then minister of that ministry and now Vice-President of Zimbabwe, summed up government policy as follows:

The policy of this government aims at the transformation of women's status so that they can assume their rightful role in society as participants alongside man on the basis of equality. The department of women's affairs has a programme for the progressive removal of all

customary, social, economic and legal disabilities that women have suffered in the past and still suffer now.

Africa Report 1983

But as soon as the party and the state began to consolidate and entrench particular positions of power, women were relegated to their old identity almost overnight. From being resisters during the liberation war they were turned into welfare recipients and social dependants. It was 16 years before the Constitution was amended to outlaw gender as a basis for discrimination. However, women continue to be discriminated against as the same Constitution, in s 23, allows discrimination in the areas of 'family law, marriage, divorce, inheritance and customary law'. This constitutional clause, which entrenches customary law, disarms women in their battle against patriarchy. There was no concerted effort by the government to increase the numbers of women in positions of power. The politics of presence was subordinated to mainstream debates about nationalism, nation building and development, which put the emphasis on women's socio-economic status in terms of empowerment, and social development. The deliberate policies designed by the state, the party, donor organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) led to the political and economic disempowerment of women, thereby excluding them from the new post-colonial dispensation (Jirira 1995).

Essof (2005) argues that in these formative years the political will to address gender inequality in Zimbabwe diminished rapidly and was replaced by intensified regulation of women in both the public and the private spheres. Women who organised and demanded the review of customary laws were regarded as pro-imperialist and anti-nationalist (Essof 2005, p 1). However, legislative changes which sought to give equality to men and women were encouraging. A range of laws was passed in the early 1980s concerning minimum wages for various unskilled occupations, equal pay, maternity leave, divorce, pensions, child maintenance, the legal age of majority (which conferred full legal capacity on every Zimbabwean aged 18 years) and finally, the Constitutional Amendment Act of 1996 outlawed gender discrimination (Zimbabwe Human Development Report 2000, pp 122-124). While the socio-economic status of women improved considerably, their presence in politics rose from 8 per cent to a mere 14 per cent in both the 1990 and 1995 elections.

In terms of keeping up with international trends, Zimbabwe had adopted the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1991. Although the government has ratified CEDAW it has not yet made it fully operational, with s 111B of the Constitution stating:

No international treaty, covenant or agreement signed and ratified by the Zimbabwean government shall form a part of the local laws unless parliament passes a law making the agreement part of the laws of Zimbabwe.

Thus, women in Zimbabwe cannot approach the courts alleging the infringement of any rights they may have under CEDAW since such rights are not protected under local laws (Gaidzanwa 2004, p 9). So, while organisations such as the Women's Action Group, (WAG) Women and Law in Southern Africa (WILSA), MUSASA, Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association, (ZWLA) and Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN), to name a few, struggled together for gender justice, the pace of change remained tightly in the grip of the male-dominated state. The Zimbabwean state remained a male exclusive and women remained outside the confines of state power. Those who managed to get into positions of power did so either because of their liberation credentials or because they were related to a man prominent during the struggle. No newcomers managed to penetrate state power. Only one woman, Margaret Dongo, tried to challenge the status quo, breaking away from ZANU-PF and participating in the 1995 elections as an independent. Her reason was her abhorrence of ZANU-PF's intolerant and patriarchal structures. She faced the full wrath of the ZANU-PF state machinery and since then the government has ensured that she remains on the margins of Zimbabwean politics.

WOMEN OPPOSING THE LEGITIMACY OF THE STATE

It is important to consider the implications for women of authoritarian tendencies and liberalising trends. Women's political gains in the West and in South Africa have, to some extent, been premised upon the existence of liberal democratic assumptions and institutions. We cannot talk of women's participation in politics without examining the impact of repressive policies and violence on their potential for participation. Paradoxically, in Zimbabwe the suppression of political activity within mainstream political institutions has increased the importance of women as political actors through their role within the social movements. However, it should be noted that civil society is not automatically more accommodating of women's claims than are state institutions. As clearly stated by Rai (1996, p 32) 'The state and civil society are both complex terrains fractured, oppressive, threatening, while at the same time providing spaces for struggle and negotiation.'

The failure of the structural adjustment programme in Zimbabwe created conditions for liberalisation, which led to the flourishing of civil society. Because of economic hardships brought about by the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), there were suddenly multiple demands upon the state from a multitude of citizen groups representing different constituencies such as labour, women, war veterans, youth, and others, to deal with issues of the economy, poverty, land reform, corruption, the rule of law and of political exclusion. This new advocacy brought to the fore the failure of political institutions, participation and governance, leading to calls for constitutional reform. At all times women had to put their agenda on the table via male-dominated civil society organisations. For example, in the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a network formed in 1997 for

constitutional reform in Zimbabwe, women had to ruffle a few feathers in order to be recognised and given positions within the network. Women campaigned vigorously for increased female representation on task forces and eight were elected to the 18-member committee in 1999 (Essof 2005, p 4). However, despite the election of a prominent feminist as chairperson of the NCA, the assembly remained male-dominated and encouraging a women's agenda involved changing mindsets.

The constitutional reform process was therefore a vital opportunity for women to consolidate their demands for gender justice after many years of engaging unsuccessfully with the state over issues of customary law and culture. As part of the strategy, and in order to have a strong voice on constitutional reform, women formed the Women's Coalition, a network of women's organisations, women activists, academics, and individuals. The coalition organised national and consultative workshops in both rural and urban areas to formulate a women's agenda. As long as the Women's Coalition carried out this work it was regarded as apolitical, but these smooth relations with the state changed dramatically when, together with the NCA, it campaigned successfully for a 'No' vote in the Constitutional Referendum held in February 2000. It was as if civil society had declared war on the ZANU-PF government. Most of the 'No'-vote gatherings were violently dispersed by police.

The NCA and the Women's Coalition argued that the government-orchestrated draft constitution would again firmly entrench the powers of the executive president. The women campaigned for a 'No' vote on the grounds that the draft constitution did not guarantee women's rights to equal social and economic standing, including healthcare and education, and it did not uphold their right not to experience violence. Furthermore it did not offer equal political representation or protect women from discriminatory cultural practices and it generally ignored the wishes of the Zimbabwean people (Essof 2005, p 5).

The surprise rejection of the draft constitution, a victory for the opposition, civil society and women's groups, shocked the government and led to a campaign of violence that left 31 people dead in the lead-up to the 2000 parliamentary elections. State-sponsored violence against all political opponents and women who opposed ZANU-PF presented a real threat to women, many of whom were beaten and assaulted because they supported the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In the face of such violence it was difficult to mobilise women candidates to stand in the 2000 parliamentary elections and the need for opponents who could stand up to the threats of violence meant that women were left out of the nomination process. The newly formed MDC, which espoused democratic norms, proved a disappointment in the area of gender equity. Equity for women was not a central plank of the party's platform and often disappeared from the political terrain altogether. The major issue for the MDC was unseating ZANU-PF from government and the politics of power became the major driving force rather than the complete democratisation of the political system and the establishment of a more democratic and inclusive political environment.

As women have positioned themselves in opposition to the state the state has not hesitated to unleash its violent arms and has also rewarded those who are accommodating and loyal to state policies. For example, in February 2004 three women were appointed to powerful positions in the public service commission, the comptroller and the auditor general's office (*Herald* 26 February 2004) but those who demonstrated against the prevailing political economic environment were beaten and arrested. Women In Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) has demonstrated against declining standards of living, the lack of good governance and the state-sponsored violence. Its members have protested as women, some with children on their backs, who want to see the society in which they live embrace more democratic ways of dealing with the governance and economic crisis. In the run-up to the March 2005 elections demonstrators were beaten and arrested at least four times (Amnesty International News 4 April 2005).

With this history of struggle, exclusion, and persecution, the women of Zimbabwe found themselves at the dawn of the 2005 elections in a situation in which nothing had substantially changed. Their relationship with the state remained problematic and they had no united front. Although the election days were peaceful the whole process was haunted by repressive laws and no provision was made to give women better access to power.

The two major parties, ZANU-PF and the MDC, remain the central cause of women's lack of progress. ZANU-PF has consistently marginalised women since 1980. The MDC is no different – it is patriarchal and the pace of women's advancement, even in party ranks, depends on the goodwill of the male leaders. It failed to nominate many more women candidates than did ZANU-PF in both the 2000 and the 2005 elections. The women in both parties operate within a framework defined by men, hence their failure to push for a national women's agenda.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ZIMBABWE 2005 ELECTIONS

The 2005 elections did not provide a legislative and political environment conducive to ensuring the full and unhindered participation of women. The initial threats from the opposition that it would not participate unless a level playing field had been established affected the preparedness of women in the opposition. Both ZANU-PF and the MDC did very little to ensure women's increased candidature or representation, save for the ZANU-PF provincial quota, which did not meet the 30 per cent quota called for by the SADC declaration on gender and development.

A GENDER INSENSITIVE LEGAL AND ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK

A country's constitutional and legal framework should guarantee equal civil and political rights to every person on a non-discriminatory basis. However, s 23 of Zimbabwe's Constitution, which outlaws discrimination on any grounds, whether sex, race or religion, has a clause permitting discrimination on the grounds of family

law, marriage, divorce, inheritance and customary law. This clause has entrenched patriarchy and allowed women not to be treated as equal citizens under customary law. Furthermore, while Zimbabwe is a signatory to CEDAW, the law has not been approved by Parliament as part of the local law of Zimbabwe. So women cannot look to CEDAW for redress in the event of infringements of their rights (Gaidzanwa 2004, p 9).

Furthermore, an amendment to the Citizenship Act, which came into effect in 2001, by which citizens of Zimbabwe who also hold foreign citizenship had to renounce their foreign citizenship and claim Zimbabwean citizenship within six months has affected women's right to vote. Although there has been insufficient research into how many people were deprived of their citizenship, because the amendment was publicised largely in the urban areas, many women in rural areas (where about 60 per cent of households are headed by women) were disenfranchised. The system for renouncing one citizenship and applying for another was laborious and expensive and many rural women could not afford it. It is believed that the majority of those affected were farm workers and rural dwellers born in Zimbabwe's neighbouring countries or whose parents were born in those countries (Gaidzanwa 2004, p 10).

Women's political participation is also affected by Zimbabwe's electoral laws, which are an important factor in determining the number of women elected to legislative office. It is widely acknowledged that electoral systems are not gender neutral. Women fare very poorly in a FPTP system unless there are special measures for their inclusion. Research in the SADC region, where 8 of the 13 countries use the FPTP system has shown that the system is stacked against women (Morna 2005, p 22). A number of reasons have been put forward for this but it appears that the biggest problem for women is winning a nomination. Membership of political parties is a strongly gendered process based on the availability of time, energy, resources and skills to participate in the public domain (Gaidzanwa 2004, p 11). Very few women can find the time and resources to devote to party activities as well as to the gendered roles of childbearing and caring and domestic responsibilities. As Morna (2005) argues most of the political parties are 'old-boy networks' which maintain firm control of their candidates and know that selecting a woman means dropping one of 'their own'. Furthermore, most women are regarded as lacking political clout, especially when the stakes are high, as in the 2000 elections when parties preferred to place highly competitive candidates, who were mostly men.

Zimbabwe's electoral system contains no affirmative action measures and the election of women has been left to chance. Table 1 illustrates the 'slow climb' to power of women in Zimbabwe since 1980 and the persistent inequalities in gender representation.

The largest women's presence in Parliament was in the period between 1990 and 2000 when they were there not because of any special measures but because of the 'benevolence' of male party leaders. The years 1990 and 1995 were the most

comfortable election years for ZANU-PF, with no serious threats from a weak opposition. The Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), which was the only viable opposition, had been swallowed up in a Unity Accord in 1987 in the hope of instituting a one-party state in 1990.

Table 1
Women in the Legislature 1980-2005

Year	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Total seats	100	100	150	150	150	150
Women	9	8	21	22	14	24*
Men	91	92	129	128	136	126
% women	9%	8%	14%	14.1%	9.3%	16%

Adapted from Gaidzanwa 2004, p 45

* 20 women were elected directly to the legislature, 2 were appointed as governors by the president and 2 were appointed as non-constituency MPs, bringing the total number of women parliamentarians to 24.

To begin with, the feeble opposition parties that would contest the elections – the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), formed in 1990, and the United Parties (formally Bishop Abel Muzorewa's UANC) – boycotted the elections, leaving ZANU-PF the clear winner. However Krieger (2005), in a study of ZANU-PF strategies in general elections since 1980, exposes startling similarities between the tactics used in the 1980s and the ruling party's discourse and coercive mechanisms in the 2000 and 2002 elections. Krieger (2005, p 31) asserts that the intensity and degree of orchestration of ruling party violence in 1985 and 2000 stand out sharply from the violence in the 1990 and 1995 elections. This clearly puts the 1990 and 1995 elections in a category of their own in terms of electoral environment and the level of violence and intimidation and also the level of women's participation. The slight decline and the slight increase in women's numbers reflect the change in electoral dynamics and environment within which ZANU-PF has operated since 1980.

To further illustrate Zimbabwe's lack of commitment to gender equality since 1990, s 31h (c2) of the Constitution allows the president to appoint members of Parliament according to s 38 of the Constitution, which stipulates the composition of Parliament. The president may appoint 30 of the 150 members of Parliament. At least eight of these appointed members must be provincial governors, at least ten must be chiefs elected in accordance with the electoral law and twelve are non-constituency members. The president has never used this prerogative to increase the number of women – in the 2005 elections he appointed two women and six

men as governors. Two women were appointed among the 12 non-constituency MPs, bringing to 24 the total number of women represented in the legislature.

A GENDERED PARTICIPATIVE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Political participation extends beyond parties and their organisational structures. Women in unstable and violent political environments such as that in Zimbabwe are often active participants in civil society, which is an entry point to the political arena. However in Zimbabwe the erosion of the democratic space through the passage of repressive laws has defined the rate and level of women's participation in the political process and in the 2005 elections. The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) imposes severe restrictions on the ability of citizens to meet and assemble freely. Police permission is required for a public meeting/rally of more than three people. Police use the powers given to them under POSA on a discriminatory and partisan basis.

Furthermore, the opportunity for voters, specifically women, to access the information necessary to make an informed choice at the ballot box is curtailed by the absence of a free media environment. Restrictions on a free press and the flagrant lack of equal access to the state media preclude the free flow of information and ideas especially in the rural areas, where most poor women live. Furthermore, provisions contained in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) violate Zimbabweans' constitutional right to freedom of speech. This piece of legislation was promulgated in April 2002 just after the presidential election. No attempt has been made to repeal sections which blatantly infringe people's basic right to receive and impart information of their choice. In terms of AIPPA all journalists and media organisations have to register with the Media and Information Council (MIC), a partisan body given wide ranging powers under the Act to decide which newspapers may operate and which journalists may practise their profession. A number of local as well as foreign journalists have been arrested in terms of AIPPA while not a single journalist working for the state-controlled media has ever been arrested, confirming the partisan nature of the police force. The ZANU-PF Government, after restricting certain freedoms and civil liberties, went on to try to curb civil society activism by passing the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) Act on 9 December 2004, although the President has not yet signed the Act to bring it into force.

The Act, which seeks to ban all foreign-funded NGOs in the areas of governance, threatens the livelihood of many governance related NGOs, most of which are women's entry point into political activities. It would effectively curtail women's ability to use the platforms provided by civil society to participate in the political process and influence political developments and government policy. One thing it did achieve was to cause NGOs which would otherwise have supported electoral activities related to the 2005 elections to waste valuable time strategising about how they would survive if the Act was passed, with some contemplating

relocating to other countries. If the Act ever does become law it will mean that the vast majority of women's voices will be silenced, as most women are found in NGOs rather than in political parties and government structures.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AS CANDIDATES IN THE 2005 ELECTIONS

Women's participation in politics generally is affected by a number of factors, ranging from personal to institutional and structural. However, in Zimbabwe, the hostile political environment is an additional factor. Since the disputed 2000 and 2002 elections the country has descended into political violence and lawlessness. Through the use of repressive legislation the citizen's rights to freedom of expression and association and assembly in many parts of the country have been significantly restricted. Opposition party members and ordinary citizens have been intimidated by ruling party supporters and officials, war veterans and the youth militia. One of the most pervasive problems for women politicians is funding. Running a campaign, starting with the primary election, is an expensive venture.

These problems clearly illustrate that the political and economic environment were not conducive to the holding of a free and fair election. Nonetheless, 58 women were among the 272 candidates who entered the electoral race in spite of the odds stacked against them. In 2000, 55 women stood and only 14 were elected. In 2005 ZANU-PF fielded 30 women among its 120 candidates, the MDC 18 out of 120, ZANU (Ndonga), another long-time opposition party, fielded 8 women and 2 stood as independents (WIPSU 2005). It was clear that the SADC 30 per cent was not going to be met. However, apart from the elevation of Joice Mujuru, a former minister, to the position of vice-president, the issue of women's presence was sidelined by the more pressing issues of land and the economy.

ZANU-PF's decision to adopt a 30 per cent provincial quota for women candidates is said to have been the result of intense lobbying by the party's women's league. The pressure to meet the SADC minimum also came from the women's movement (WIPSU 2005). However, within the party the implementation of the quota faced a number of problems with allegations that some of the women were imposed as candidates. Some men also felt that their constituencies were designated women's constituencies. In the end only 30 women candidates from ZANU-PF stood. In their analysis of the participation of women WIPSU believes that the success or failure of women candidates depended on the constituencies they contested. All the ZANU-PF women in urban constituencies lost in the traditional MDC support bases. Of the six women who won seats for the MDC, five won in urban constituencies and one in Matebeleland, a rural constituency. Twenty women contested rural constituencies for ZANU-PF, 14 won, while the ten who contested urban constituencies all lost. WIPSU concludes that if ZANU-PF had fielded more women in rural constituencies and the MDC had fielded more in the urban areas more women would have won across the country. In the end, ZANU-PF had 14 women MPs and the MDC 6. The women of ZANU (Ndonga) and the independents

did not win any seats. There was a clear lack of commitment by both parties to ensure women's increased candidature and ultimately their representation.

A SKEWED MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Neither the media environment nor the political environment has been conducive to gender mainstreaming since 1980. AIPPA, which regulates the print media, ignores gender issues on two levels – its technical provisions and its overall effect on the right to information and expression. The Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) argues that the Media Information Council (MIC) is male dominated (MISA 2005). The use of AIPPA to close four daily newspapers – *The Daily News*, *The Daily News On Sunday*, *The Tribune* and the *Weekly Times* – deprived Zimbabweans, more specifically women, who are already marginalised in relation to acquiring information, of alternative sources of information.

On 16 February 2005 the government gazetted regulations permitting opposition parties reasonable access to the state-controlled electronic media. These regulations were introduced too late to have any meaningful impact, especially for the opposition and women candidates, who are rarely newsmakers. Most of the news coverage on national television was reported by MISA to have been biased in favour of the ruling party.

MISA surveyed the coverage of women in the media (three print media houses and television) from 1 March to 31 March 2005. Within this period women candidates accounted for only 17 per cent of the news (MISA 2005). Even on 8 March, International Women's Day, there was no more coverage of women candidates than at any other time. None of the media gave women more than 19 per cent coverage. Furthermore, in all the stories monitored, women were identified as 'mother' or 'wife of'. According to MISA most of the actions and opinions reported are those of men – of the 403 election stories monitored only 37 (9%) had women at the centre of the story. Making space for women candidates during the election campaign was a non-issue although there were calls by SADC for equitable access to the state media across the socio-political and economic divide.

DISCRIMINATORY VOTER REGISTRATION

The accuracy of the voters' rolls and the inclusiveness of the lists are central elements in ensuring women's full participation in the electoral process. But the voters' roll in Zimbabwe is alleged to have been in a shambles since 1985. There have been incidences of the inclusion of deceased persons, misspelt names, voters slotted into incorrect constituencies and members of the same household allocated to different constituencies. This has resulted in the disenfranchisement of potential voters (ZESN 2005). In the 2005 elections a series of new criteria for voter registration were instituted. For urban dwellers these included a lodger's card or rate bills in the voter's name as proof of residence. Given the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean

society most of the documents bearing proof of residence have the man's name on them. While there is no evidence to show how many women were affected by these new criteria, there is no doubt that a number of women might not have registered because they did not have such documents.

The automatic change of citizenship to that of a woman's husband, which was carried out by the registry office without alerting the affected woman, might have meant that women had identity documents which did not match those on the voters' roll. The MDC alleges that voter registration was carried out in a discriminatory and secretive manner with the aim of securing political advantage for the ruling party. The whole registration process carried out in May and July 2004 was barely publicised in the urban areas, which are the opposition's stronghold, with information targeted at the rural areas, the stronghold of ZANU-PF (MDC Report April 2005, p 11). Women who were opposition supporters were doubly discriminated against. The ZESN report confirms some of the opposition's claims, observing that voter registration was the weak link in the electoral process. There was insufficient publicity about the process, which was not supervised by an independent electoral body. Access was only permitted to the voters' roll late in the process and was costly (ZESN Report 2005, p 9). The opposition MDC, dissatisfied with the registration process, alleges that the voters' roll 'was the government's principal vehicle for electoral fraud; an inflated voters' roll created tremendous capacity for ballot stuffing' (MDC Report April 2005, p 12).

INADEQUATE VOTER EDUCATION

Voter education can be a critical factor in enhancing women's participation in elections, particularly if emphasis is placed on the right of women to be elected. It also helps women to make more informed and responsible choices. Voter education should include information on voting rights, the political system and candidates as well as information about where and how to vote.

In the 2005 elections the role of non-state actors, especially NGOs, the organisations that are able reach more women because of their grassroots membership, was restricted because of the NGO Bill. The Zimbabwe Election Commission started its voter education campaign late and with only a limited reach (ZESN Report 2005). Voter education by non-partisan bodies would have been crucial in the rural areas, where there was manipulation of food aid and where traditional leaders were used to coerce the electorate. Numerous reports from independent media organisations recorded how ruling-party officials denied food aid to those suspected of supporting the MDC (MDC Report 2005, p 23). Since women are far more vulnerable to threats of a lack of food and also far less politically informed, some, who would have voted for the MDC, may have stayed away from the polls, fearing that their choice might be made public. Targeted voter education would have helped to allay some of these fears and enhance women's participation.

CONCLUSION

The political environment in Zimbabwe, which values power struggles, remains one of the major obstacles to women's participation and representation. For the majority of Zimbabwean women the playing field is far from level and considerable societal and cultural prejudices are still attached to being a woman in politics and promoting women's causes. In addition the electoral system was a major obstacle to the full participation of women in the 2005 elections. The system in its present form does not facilitate higher levels of representation of women.

The political parties appear to have no clear policies on gender equality and have not developed a systematic approach to it. It is the male-dominated political parties that will have to create the avenues for women's presence. Women in Zimbabwe should be able to demand not just a presence but a broader democratic process that guarantees liberties together with broader political representation and political space to demand social and economic rights, better living standards and basic services. Unless major changes occur in Zimbabwe's political institutions and its constitutional and legal framework persistent gender inequalities will remain a foregone conclusion. The struggle for the politics of presence should go together with the overall democratisation of Zimbabwean politics.

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE /MILITIA¹ IN ZIMBABWE AND ITS EFFECT ON THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, 2001-2005

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ABSTRACT

What explains the re-emergence of the National Youth Service/Militia, launched in Zimbabwe in August 2001? This paper argues that, amid the intense political struggle between the ruling party and a largely worker- and urban-society-based political opposition, there was an urgent need to have in place a cheap and available institution that could be relied upon both to toe the party line religiously and to execute state supported extra-legal activities, including violence. The institution, drawn from the country's earlier political history, was the Zimbabwe Peoples' Militia, now reincarnated as the National Youth Service (NYS). This assertion is supported by the role and function of the NYS, deployed to 'police' the results of Operation Murambatsvina, the forced removal of the poor from the country's urban centres, which has been universally condemned, even by the African Union. However, if this analysis is correct, post-crisis Zimbabwe will be faced with the challenge of having to put down the NYS, a situation similar to what happened in Malawi, towards the end of the reign of the late Malawian President, Kamuzu Banda, and his Young Pioneers.

INTRODUCTION

In August 2001, at the height of the political crisis in Zimbabwe that followed the near defeat of the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), in the June 2000 parliamentary polls by the one-year-old political opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), government

¹ The current National Youth Service (NYS) in Zimbabwe emerged from the ashes and was built on the foundations of the Zimbabwe People's Militia, 1982-1988, and is popularly believed to be the same organisation.

re-established the National Youth Service (NYS), a reincarnation of the 1980s Zimbabwe Peoples' Militia (ZPP) (Trocaire 2004, pp 12-13). This move met with strong opposition from the political opposition, students, the independent media, churches and other opinion-making groups in whose view the political temperature was not conducive to the creation of a neutral national youth service (Zvayi. 2003; Mathuthu 2001; *The Chronicle*, 30 October 2001, p 5; *The Daily News*, 13 October 2000; Chimhete, 2001; Kahiya 2002; *The Daily News*, 6 July 2002; Nyathi 2002; Wakatama 2002).

In 1982, the Zimbabwean government had established the Zimbabwe People's Militia (trained exclusively by North Korean instructors) as the 'eyes and ears' of the national army. The ZPM later turned out to be the vanguard of the ruling party in the ethnic-based civil war and undertook partisan operations against the then political opposition, the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) (*Zimbabwe Government Gazette Supplements* 1985, pp 1-151; *Zimbabwe Defence Forces Magazine* 1988, pp 15, 17, 40-42; *The Chronicle* 7 July 1983).

The ethnic and political crisis of the 1980s ended with the Unity Accord of December 1987. However, it was subsequently established that the role played by the ZPM and other units as part of the armed forces had generated excesses which culminated in more than 20 000 people losing their lives in Matabeleland, an event that has continued to be a source of tension between the ethnic groups in Zimbabwe.

While the ZPM died a natural death in the late 1980s, largely as a consequence of economic stagnation, its contribution to the excesses was only expunged through the Presidential Amnesty Act No 1 of 1990 (Kagoro 2004). It is against this earlier background that, in August 2001, when the announcement was made, the establishment by government of a national service was viewed with open suspicion. The *Daily News* wrote:

The national youth service is doomed because the general populace of Zimbabwe recognises it as a Zanu PF manoeuvre aimed at strengthening the power base of the ruling party, especially among the youth, as it faces its stiffest challenge from the MDC.

Nyathi 2002

The presidential elections, due to be held in March 2002, were just around the corner and there was increasing political tension in the country. This environment provided further fuel to detractors of the mooted national service scheme. A significant event in the run-up to the elections was the statement by the armed forces chiefs that placed them, and the National Youth Service, squarely in the camp of the ruling Zanu-PF. On 9 January 2002 the military chiefs appeared on national television and announced that they would not 'salute' – a euphemism for 'recognise' – people without 'liberation credentials'. This criterion expressly ruled out the leader of the MDC.²

2 The result of the March 2002 presidential election has been in dispute ever since and is still before the courts.

In the series of elections held between 2001/02 and 2005, a pattern established itself – the opposition dominated the urban vote, whether at local government or at national level. This confined the ruling party to popular support in the rural areas, a fact that it later consolidated by working through the traditional chiefs.

On 21 August 2005 the government-controlled³ *Sunday Mail* reported that:

The City of Harare has resolved to re-engage 300 National Youth Service graduates for the next three months at a cost of nearly Z\$6-billion (US\$250 000) to ensure that illicit business activities (are) curbed and illegal buildings destroyed during *Operation Murambatsvina* (Restore Order) do not resurface.⁴

Mail & Guardian Online 22 August 2005;
see also Tibaijuka, para 1.1

Operation Murambatsvina had been launched, to borrow the wording of the report of the head of the United Nations Fact Find Mission, Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka (2005), 'with little or no warning, [in a] military-style "clean-up" operation that began in the Zimbabwe capital Harare on 19 May, before spreading to all urban areas of Masvingo, Mutare, Bindura, Gweru, Victoria Falls, Karoi, Harare Bulawayo, Kwe-Kwe, Kadoma and Chitungwiza, amongst others, within days'. The impact of the military-like operation was devastating. It not only destroyed thousands of urban shacks, dwellings and informal business premises but also, in the process, rendered homeless an urban-based population of between 700 000 and 1,4 million people. This represents 11,6 per cent of the population, summarily ordered to leave the urban areas and relocate in the rural areas (Olaleye & Tungwarara 2005).

The campaign drew howls of protests from local and international human rights organisations as well as from the United Nations Human Habitat agency. In a development interpreted as a response to the harsh international censure, the government appeared to relent. On 24 June a spokesperson announced the end of *Operation Murambatsvina* and the introduction of *Operation Garikai/Hlanani Kuhle*, a construction and rebuilding exercise managed by a senior military officer, Major General A Chingombe, at the head of the newly formed Inter-Agency National Operations Committee. The Inter-Agency headquarters are located in the capital, with representatives in each of the country's twelve major cities and towns. These representatives are military officers, deployed to work closely with urban municipal authorities throughout the country.

The irony, however, as will become clear below, is that the majority of elected mayors and councillors in all the urban areas are drawn from the MDC. Their

3 Although this paper purports to criticise, the term 'government controlled' should not be construed as value laden, but simply as a statement of fact, accepted by both government and outsiders.

4 The same report also asserts that the 300 youths were drawn from 'more than 18 000 graduates available from the NYS programme that was launched in 2001'.

primary responsibility is to enforce local government laws and the provision of housing, a function that has now been summarily usurped by the Inter-Agency. Put differently, the election results in the urban areas since 2000, which the ruling party has consistently lost, have been reversed by an executive decision to deploy appointed officials who are perceived to be in favour of the government. Furthermore, the presence of the national service graduates 'whose purpose is to police' the enforcement of measures taken against the 'illegal' urban population has assumed political implications that characterise the current crisis gripping the nation.

In order to facilitate the reconstruction task, a previously unbudgeted Z\$3-trillion (US\$300-million), was allocated to the building of 15 000 housing units. The task was to be completed within 67 days. The announcement was made on 24 June 2005, with the deadline for completion given as 30 August 2005 (*Zimbabwe Independent* 24 June 2005; Tibaijuka Report; *Sunday Mail* 26 June 2005).

In practice, the policing of former 'illegal squatters and traders' has been characterised by the thinly disguised use of violence. Order has thus far been maintained by simply chasing away 'illegal pavement vendors' and, where vendors are caught, summary justice in the form of beatings, followed by confiscation of goods and trashing/trampling on the merchandise, is the norm. During the evenings, mushrooming grass, plastic or wooden structures that have resurfaced have immediately been torched or physically destroyed. This state-sanctioned violence has left victims with no recourse to legal protection, only the assurance of further impoverishment. These developments also reveal a much more fundamental transformation and a change in the role of the armed forces that has confirmed the suspicions of detractors expressed before 2001. Evidence suggests that the armed forces, by deploying the NYS as the vanguard to 'enforce' what has clearly become a controversial government policy of urban clean-up aimed at urban voters, has now usurped the electoral expression of the urban voter, setting the stage for yet another round of political struggle in the country.

Given the resources allocated by government in an environment of accelerating economic meltdown, the question of whether or not the goals set out will be achieved is academic. What is more fundamental is to question both the motive for and the choice of employment of the National Youth Service effectively to enforce the banishment of informal settlers from urban Zimbabwe? This paper seeks to address the dimensions of this question in order to answer the related questions of who exactly constitutes the National Youth Service and what role / function this institution has played in the electoral processes of Zimbabwe since the tumultuous era of August 2001? In answering the latter, we interrogate the notion of what role the armed forces have played since independence in 1980 and whether aspirations of national unity through an integrated military have been maintained?

This paper argues that the armed forces in Zimbabwe have partly diverted from this mandate in 1980 in which they were expected to evolve and serve as an instrument of national unity and integration. This conclusion is drawn after

assessing the role of the NYS since its inception in August 2001. The paper concludes by calling for an urgent realignment of roles and functions for the armed forces, along the lines envisaged in 1980, once the current political impasse is overcome.

The discussion comprises three sections. The first looks at the universally accepted concept of national service and the youth. This is followed by an account of the establishment of the first militia organisation, the Zimbabwe Peoples' Militia, which lasted from 1982 to 1991-2. Finally, the paper looks at the second attempt to establish the NYS, in August 2001, asking the questions why, how and to what effect? The purpose of this discussion is to assess aspects of policy, composition, command and control, deployment and impact of the NYS in relation to the electoral process in the country.

BACKGROUND TO AN INTEGRATED ARMY AND THE QUEST FOR NATIONAL UNITY

A critical challenge facing ruling parties in post-colonial Africa is the task of creating an integrated armed force. In many instances, independence is achieved after a protracted armed struggle during which different parties, many of which tend to be based on regional and ethnic persuasions, have formed armed factions. At independence, while the political parties reach some sort of coalition arrangement, the armed factions are then required to form an integrated national force as one of the preconditions for security and stability in the new state. However, once the integrated army is created, the next challenge is how these elements can be deployed internally without impacting negatively on the evolving new nation. For purposes of this discussion, the concern is to try to understand how the emerging institutions have affected the electoral process, the route to which competing political parties traverse in their bid for office.

In 1980, in the independent state of Zimbabwe, the creation of a national army included a deliberate attempt to use the institution to address the serious ethnic and regional fault lines that had been shown up by the election results of February-March 1980.⁵ This role was, of course, over and above the usual reasons for the creation of a national army – defence and security. Against the stark reality of racial, regional and ethnic differences, the policy of national reconciliation relied on the deliberate structuring of the armed forces as one of the key instruments for consolidating the shaky internal peace. Policy makers were convinced that the social engineering was critical for the purposes of internal stability and the inculcation of a new national consciousness.

5 Twenty seats in the 100-seat chamber were reserved for whites. The Western Matabeleland Ndebele voted almost unanimously for the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) leaving the majority of more than 50 seats to the Shona-speaking Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). The United African National Congress (UANC) secured 3 seats while ZANU (Ndonga), led by the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, secured a single seat.

The lesson to be learned from Zimbabwe is not unique in the Southern African region. In March 1990, independent Namibia adopted a similar approach in which one of the primary tasks of the new Namibian Defence Forces (NDF) was 'the promotion of national reconciliation and consolidation of a unified nation' (Government Ministry of Defence website). However, in both states it is important to locate how national service or militia groups are created and to what extent their presence contributes to maintaining the unique goals set out for armed forces in the post-colonial era?

The Concept of National Service and Militia

The history of national service or militia forces as part of the armed forces has been established over two epochs. The first was its emergence and acceptance as a form of organising a society for war during the French revolutionary wars of the late 18th century. At the time, surrounding European monarchs sought to invade and remove from power the revolutionary regime. Faced with these threats, a new military order was established with nationals being permanently requisitioned for military service in a process also known as *the levée en masse*. This was an effective method of stimulating national consciousness and mobilising French society. Soldiers could be marshalled and mustered at little cost but based on a 'national consciousness' that sought to preserve the sovereignty of the nation. From this point onwards, the state could call upon its citizens to discharge a military obligation without cost.

The second development that consolidated the concept of national service/militia groups was associated with lingering militarism and the process of disbanding large armies. The need to have a 'loyal, cheap and readily available national reserve' provided the motivation for re-focusing youths to well-designed programmes, sometimes known as 'volunteerism' and created around young people's career growth and development. In the United States from 1887, soon after the Civil War ended, the government introduced the bi-partisan 'industrial army' designed to provide government training for youths in a national service scheme. A similar move was also made during the 1945 post-war period under the New Deal. A common concern of these programmes was how to present them as a national project instead of a partisan scheme, exploited for political purposes by one of the parties (*Zimbabwe Independent* 1 February 2002). In Europe, consolidation of national service/militia after the French experience became an almost permanent feature in most states after 1945 and continued until it began to lose steam towards the 1960s. Finally, closer to home in Tanzania, after the mutiny of January 1964 was aborted, a national youth service which had been launched in 1963 became the mainstay of the ruling party in carrying out security related tasks. However, expansion of this scheme nation wide, as the *Jeshi la Mkoa*, led to active opposition in 1966, leading to the closure of the country's university.

Given this brief survey, we may be able to draw some conclusions about raising and maintaining a militarised youth service. The first is that the setting up of a

national youth service, militarised or otherwise, is a universal phenomenon established in the late 15th century and linked to the rise of the nation state system. The second is that, in spite of the general agreement on the above, a concern that has persisted is the susceptibility of such a scheme to manipulation by ruling parties. In most cases, parties provide an ideological focus for national service that is subjective and narrowly defined. Finally, the creation of a national service system must be linked to the long-term economic interests of the country, with factors such as human resources and skills training at the core of the decision to adopt the system.

Since the 1960s, however, there has been a general decline in militarism and enthusiasm for national service schemes and where they do exist this is because of the deliberate whipping up of emotive 'national consciousness' for purposes of political survival. As a consequence, national youth schemes throughout the world have experienced resistance from sections of society, the youth and other organisations, resulting in the best and brightest declining to 'volunteer'. The response of governments has been to institute compulsory legislation or other incentives in order to entice youths to its ranks. Finally, the greatest danger has been the role and mandate that youths are given after training, a development that either bonds them with or further distances them from the community.

In Zimbabwe the coalition government of April 1980 had all but collapsed by the end of the year. The political differences spread to the nascent attempts to force integration, leading to many of the new units disintegrating and plunging the country into near civil war. This early disturbance of attempts to maintain a factional and ethnic balance made it possible to create partisan forces without attracting too much criticism. Three units were established with the assistance of North Korean instructors – the Presidential Guards, a Ground-to-Air Artillery Regiment and the Zimbabwe Peoples' Militia.

In 1982 the ZPM was established as a para-military force of 20 000 for purposes of being 'the ears and eyes' of the armed forces against internal insurrection believed to be led by the political opposition, ZAPU. Its second task was also to act as an intelligence arm as well as first line of defence, organising local people against sporadic invasions by the rebel Mozambique National Resistance Army (RENAMO). The latter operated along amongst the rural communities located on the Zimbabwe-Mozambique eastern border. The composition of the militia, its regalia as well as command and control were very much part of the ruling party, besieged by both internal and external enemies after the collapse of the coalition government. To an extent, the existing security environment provided the rationale for such an institution existing without too much criticism.

The ZPM was intended to consist of 20 000 youths, trained for three months and placed amongst the community to act as the eyes and ears of the standing army. However, in the context of the political crisis that had seen the coalition government collapse, the militia unit reflected the ethnic and regional differences between the two major ethnic groups, the Shona and the Ndebele.

The deployment of some of these elements in the internal operations that ensued culminated in a pogrom between the two groups. In less than five years, an estimated 20 000 people, mainly from Western Matabeleland, were to lose their lives. In the words of James J Hentz (2004) '... there [was] extraordinary repression that Robert Mugabe's government visited on Matabeleland (in southwest Zimbabwe) in 1983 and 1984 ...'

The civil war was only halted by an internal political settlement reached in December 1987. Soon afterwards, the Presidential Amnesty Act No 1 of 1990 was passed, providing immunity to members of the armed forces whose participation in the pogroms was considered 'bona fide actions'. Once the regional security situation improved during the late 1980s, the ZPM died a natural death. Its demise was further hastened by the debilitating economic situation that soon saw the country adopt the International Monetary Fund (IMF) inspired Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) by 1991. The security situation both in the Southern African region and within the country was also peaceful during the early 1990s, allowing for the gradual termination of the militia units. It was, however, during the intense political rivalry that re-emerged in 1999 that thoughts appeared to turn yet again towards reviving the National Youth Service or militia.

This event represents a failure to maintain the difficult security policy in which the armed forces acted as a national institution in the first ten years of independent Zimbabwe. Has the country learnt any lessons from this experience to apply to the new National Youth Service programme launched in August 2001?

ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE NATIONAL SERVICE 2001-2005

Reliance on militia groups to execute internal political roles as part of the armed forces is not an entirely new phenomenon in Zimbabwe, as we have noted. After a lull in the expansion of the armed forces after their deployment in the Democratic Republic of Congo in August 1999, a situation of intense political rivalry emerged within the country, spurred on by a rapidly deteriorating economic situation and events that included the rejection of a government preferred position on the February 2000 Referendum and a close parliamentary election in June, in which ZANU-PF was returned to office with only a five-seat majority.⁶ The next major challenge was the presidential election, set for March 2002. Again it was not certain that the sitting president would prevail in that contest. It was against this background then that concerted efforts gained momentum to create a national service that would 'instil a sense of belonging, patriotism and respectable citizens'.⁷

6 Of the 120 seats contested, ZANU-PF won 62, the opposition MDC 57, and 1 (Chipinga South) went to Ndonga.

7 Minister of Youth, Development, Gender & Employment Creation, Border Gezi., speaking to *Mashonaland Guardian Telegraph* 13-26 April 2001.

According to the top civil servant in the Ministry of Youth, the creation of the NYS followed extensive consultations, visits to countries with functioning schemes and the engagement of a consultant to advise the country on how best to establish this organisation (*The Voice* May 2001). Officials in the ministry, in the company of a United States consultant, Antony Forestainer, travelled to China, Yugoslavia, Israel and Canada to investigate national service schemes in those countries for purposes of establishing a local one.⁸

It appears from the available documents that plans were adopted to set up a National Youth Training Programme for 20 000 cadres to be trained before 2007 (*The People's Voice* 18 August 2002). The age groups targeted are between 18 and 30, equipped with either 'O' Levels (four years' secondary education) or 'A' levels. Recruitment is from throughout the country for a training period of three months before release into the economy and communities. The curriculum for the National Youth training is based on four subjects (Trocaire Working for a Just World pp 12-13; Ranger 2004, pp 219-220): orientation (patriotism) history; disaster management (natural climatic challenges); skills training (carpentry and agriculture and vigilance (moral education) defence (*The Herald* 13 October 2000).

However, images of graduates on national television and other evidence points to a heavier emphasis on the military aspects of the curriculum, although this is not explicitly acknowledged in the four modules cited above. Furthermore, the actual training of the youths has been made the responsibility of a small nucleus of serving army personnel supported by retired officers and soldiers as well as war veterans. This is significant, as the ruling party in the political crisis perceives the latter as loyal and patriotic. Among the 'enemies of the state' are the political opposition, NGOs, civic movements and the majority of people living in urban areas.

As regards the content of the curriculum, the famous Zimbabwe historian, Terence Ranger, has been scathing. He argues that:

All training materials in the camps have, from inception, consisted exclusively of ZANU-PF campaign materials and political speeches. This material is crudely racist and vilifies the major opposition party in the country ...

Ranger 2004, p 219

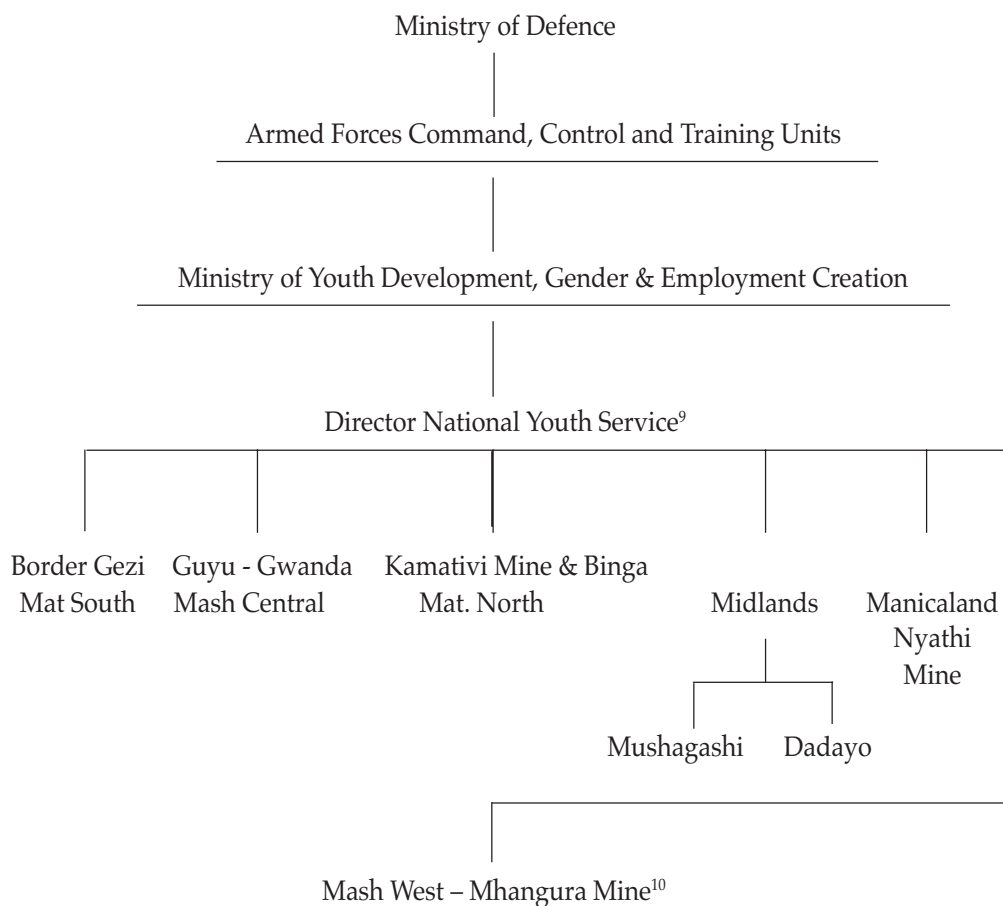
As an incentive, the scheme is compulsory for those wishing to enter government controlled tertiary institutions (universities, technical and vocational training colleges and teacher training) as well as employment within the security and defence establishment.

8 Among the officials were the current Minister of Information, Dr Tichaona Jokonya; James Mutero; and Thompson K Tsodzo.

IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

In August 2001 the NYS programme was launched, with just over 1 000 recruits, at the Mount Darwin Border Gezi Camp, a former 2 Brigade military camp. By December 2002 an estimated 9 000 recruits, or 50 per cent of the original target, were in training, distributed among six main camps, with smaller numbers scattered in district level centres.

The organisational structure of the National Youth Service is outlined below:



⁹ Initially, retired brigadier Boniface Hurungudo held the post, with an office in the ruling party headquarters in the capital, Harare.

¹⁰ Presentation by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Service, Dr Thompson Tsodzo, to the 3rd Executive Course in Defence Management held at the University of Zimbabwe, 7-11 May 2001.

The location of elements of the graduates has also drawn protest and intrigue and has clearly compromised the national character that must be the hallmark of the project (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, pp 76-81). Outside of the major training areas cited, operational deployment has been with urban councils, especially in the capital, Harare, where government has suspended popularly elected and dominant opposition officials. Many graduates have been deployed in townships, in commercial growth points, in ZANU-PF offices, in war veterans offices, near police stations, church schools and even at the residences of ruling-party officials (*Eastern Star* 6 May 2001).

Impact of the Deployment of the NYS Graduates

The electoral process consists of several phases: delimitation, voter registration and education, campaigning, access to potential voters by contending political aspirants, polling, vote counting, the announcement of results and the acceptance of the wishes of the electorate, especially by the losing parties. All these facets constitute the mechanism through which power is retained or transferred from interest group to interest group in a democracy. In Zimbabwe the military has either been legislated or simply mandated by the executive to participate in all these facets and the NYS has featured prominently in the execution of tasks that are normally carried out at grassroots level.

The establishment of the NYS by met by howls of protest from the political opposition. Opposition parties and human rights organisations reported attacks by the militia on striking workers and on opposition strongholds such as those in the cities during and after the now disputed presidential election of March 2002, which drew statements of solidarity and protest from outsiders, such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). Officials appeared in public media calling for the disbandment of the NYS in Zimbabwe. There was a similar response to the local government elections in August of the same year. Some of the evidence relating to human rights repression is presently being considered by the African Union Human Rights Commission, whose preliminary response was to upbraid the country's ombudsman for ignoring violations carried out by the NYS graduates.¹¹ In the continuing deteriorating situation in the country, the state has found new roles for the NYS.

The electoral process in Zimbabwe from 2001 to date has been severely influenced in a particular direction – that of the ruling party – through the participation and presence of the NYS. This trend is also evident in other sectors that manifest the socio-economic and political crisis. For instance, as the staple, maize, became unavailable, legislation was passed limiting the movement of grain while authorising the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) to be the sole handler and distribution agency (SADOCC 2001; Amnesty International Report 5 April 2002).

11 A final discussion is still to take place at the African Union on this aspect and, as researchers, we await confirmation of the evidence gathered.

In order to enforce this new piece of legislation, government has deployed the NYS on all major routes and at GMB silos across the country. Any maize transported without GMB authority is impounded and forfeited to government.

Public response to the legislation and enforcement measures has been bewilderment and the moves have affected the hitherto placid relationships between the organs of the state and society. The maize shortage is occurring in a country that has traditionally been a breadbasket of the region and its people have had no experience of food shortages and have no survival mechanism to deal with them. The discovery that they are unable to shift supplies from one part of the country to the other has left the older generation confused, frustrated and angry. The same is true of large sections of the population now reduced to queuing for food handouts.

The NYS's newfound roles also include enforcing many laws relating to shortages of basic commodities such as cooking oil, fuels and foreign exchange and to perceived political gatherings and strikes or work stoppages. In rural areas teachers were seen as the vanguard of the political opposition and during the elections of March 2002 and the parliamentary poll of March 2005 they 'were temporarily relieved of their duties' by graduates of the NYS. The move appeared to be condoned by the state as no effort was made to reverse the development. Examinations were supervised and invigilated by the graduates, with serious implications for the integrity of the country's educational system in the future.

During the 2005 elections the NYS became more brazen in its treatment of the political opposition. On 3 August this year the MDC Member of Parliament for Hwange, Edward Mkhosi, was detained and beaten for 27 hours and was eventually rescued by the police, who took no action against the NYS. Clearly, government is condoning militia violence that serves a political purpose. This is the context of the launch and continued enforcement of Operation Murambatsvina.

CONCLUSION: 'WE HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE'

The current deployment of the NYS raises serious questions about the integrity and acceptability of the force as a national institution in the future and its relationship to elections since 2000. The NYS as presently constructed has been fed a diet of selective and subjective history as defined by the ruling party (Ranger 2004). The outcome of this process is an organisation that carries out without question functions mandated by the ruling party. Such a development fails to pass the test of the safeguards considered essential to the establishment of a truly national national youth service.

In so far as the NYS has been mandated to 'police' (in other words, prevent) 'illegal pavement vendors and former shack dwellers' from frequenting the urban areas, this paper concludes that this is a futile task, bound to fail and fritter away the Z\$6-billion allocated to the NYS. However, it is only when we place the role of the NYS as a political wedge against the urban electorate that we begin to understand the proletariat role that they are playing on behalf of the waning fortunes of the

ruling party. The struggle at hand is basically a socio-economic and political one that has placed the rural against the urban communities, with the state and ruling party surviving on the rural vote. To try to use strong-arm methods to address this consistent pattern, established since 2000, is to miss the point. A single example will demonstrate how futile the exercise is: only one dimension has not changed and that is the presence of the 300 NYS and the allocation of Z\$6-billion. First, the state was forced to acquiesce to IMF pressure to reduce the Z\$ 3-trillion to Z\$1-trillion, 50 per cent of which was to be secured from the market. This will result in major changes in the delivery expectations of the 10 000 units and has serious implications for the coping and survival strategies of the poor victims.

Already preliminary evidence of the failure to achieve the spectacular goals of Operation Garikai/Hlalani Khuhle suggests that the role of the NYS in the process has not been fully stated by the regime.

At the time of writing, the target cited in June appears to have been overly ambitious. Gwanda mayor Thandeko Mnkandla has given the reasons for failure to meet the original target as:

- pressure by the international community for government to live within its means, which forced 'Minister of Finance, Herbert Murerwa, to cut government's earlier commitment of 3 trillion to only 1 trillion. Half of this amount is to be raised through the more expensive financial market instruments';
- pressure was added by the absence of sufficient fuel to facilitate the construction projects, resulting in a significant increase in costs. Yet another significant increase was witnessed during the second week of September (*IRIN* September 2005).

Available evidence shows that fewer than 500 of the promised 15 000 housing units country wide had been constructed.¹² Against this background, the Acting Minister of Information, Chenhamo Chimutengwende, announced in the second week of September that there was a need to radically adjust the 60-day deadline by 'extending this to the end of the year'.

Furthermore, yet another potentially divisive civil-military relations nuance had emerged in the allocation of the new serviced plots and housing units. Preference in the allocation appears to have been given to police, army and prison service personnel who are also being provided with loans for the high deposits and proof of regular income required by the new criteria. In the process, the former urban squatters have been edged out. In a new twist in the reconstruction

12 Of the 200 units that should have been completed in Gwanda by 30 August, not a single structure was available, resulting in Minister of Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development, Ignatius Chombo, and Brigadier Nyikayaramba 'threatening to unleash soldiers on civil servants unable to reach the targets'. See 'Chombo threatens military action' *The Standard*, 12 September 2005.

programme of Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle, underperforming civil servants working on the construction projects have now been 'threatened with unspecified action from the soldiers' (*The Standard*, 12 September 2005). Again, this is a 'new coercive role' that has been added to the existing tasks of the armed forces. At the same meeting, a military brigadier responsible for supervising the reconstruction also accused civil servants of either being 'derelict of their duties or representing British and American lackeys' (*The Standard*, 12 September 2005).

The extension of the programme to the end of the year may have been the result of several developments. The first is that employing strong-arm tactics cast within military time lines to address basically socio-economic issues that border on political differences does not necessarily work. Anecdotal evidence from the streets suggests that the dispersed communities have not all relocated to the rural areas and are already back in the urban areas and playing hide-and-seek with the authorities. The second reason is that it may well mean the military is forced not only to extend but to expand the responsibilities of the NYS against the background of the country's alarming and accelerating economic melt-down. Until there is widespread economic revival in the short to medium term, the conditions that led to the squatters emerging in the urban areas will continue.

In these circumstances, the NYS has been selected for only one reason – its ability to mete out violence without retribution. When victims report human rights violations to the police no action is taken. Hence, the state is relying on the NYS to undertake certain functions to which no legal responsibility can be attributed. While in 1990 the excesses of elements of the armed forces forced the president to pass Clemency Order No 1 (Kagoro 2004, p 4) it is our conviction that if the NYS is not withdrawn, the country will retrace the steps it took in the mid-1980s.

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ZIMBABWE'S 2005 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Lessons for the Movement for Democratic Change

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the theoretical and practical weaknesses of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the main opposition political party in Zimbabwe. To do justice to its struggle for political power, the MDC must wage a decisive war against these weaknesses, which are among the key reasons why it lost the March 2005 parliamentary elections and are important challenges it is facing in its struggle to defeat the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF). In focusing on these weaknesses the paper makes extensive use of the literature produced by critics of the ruling party. The paper maintains that the MDC has not recognised either in theory or in practice the strategic importance of mobilising for political, economic and ideological hegemony and has failed to provide comprehensive theoretical and practical alternatives to the ruling party as prerequisites for the realisation of its aim to replace it. As a result, the paper concludes, the MDC faces the danger of being reduced to exerting pressure upon the state of Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries for policy changes and victories which will not be sufficient for it either to achieve political power or to consolidate or expand these changes and victories.

INTRODUCTION

The MDC has been chosen for this case study because, since its formation, it has posed a more serious threat to Zanu-PF rule than any other political party and, with the ruling party, is one of two major parties in the country and the only one apart from Zanu-PF to have fielded candidates for all 120 contested seats in the parliamentary elections. The other parties – the Zimbabwe People's Democratic

Party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Ndonga (Zanu-Ndonga) and the Zimbabwe Youth in Alliance, which took part in the March 2005 elections, and the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe, the International Socialist Organisation and the National Alliance for Good Governance are minor parties. The MDC is the official opposition and is represented in both houses of Parliament.

The ruling party won the 2005 elections with an increased majority, taking 78 seats to the MDC's 41 and, according to the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC), winning nearly 60 per cent of the vote, an increase of 11 per cent over its showing in the 2000 elections in which it won 62 seats to the MDC's 57. Jonathan Moyo, former Minister of Information, who contested the election as an independent candidate, was the only independent to win a seat, taking the Tsholotsho constituency from the MDC. The MDC's share of the vote decreased by 9 per cent to 39 per cent. With an additional 30 seats allocated by the president to the ruling party, Zanu-PF occupied 108 of the 150 seats – more than the two-thirds majority it needed to change the Constitution.

Responding to the results, the MDC, citing massive inconsistencies, demanded new elections under a new constitution, contending that elections could not be free and fair in the current socio-political and economic situation. It also maintained that it had won 94 seats and not the 41 allocated by the ZEC. However, it did not specify how a new constitution should be drafted and approved, how new elections should be conducted or how it calculated the figure of 94 seats.¹

The pattern of the results of the 2005 elections is essentially the same as that of the 2000 elections. The MDC won almost all the seats in the main cities, Harare and Bulawayo, where civil society organisations are relatively effective in their opposition to the ruling party. It also won a majority of seats in Matebeleland, where Ndebeles who had supported Zanu under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo continue to oppose the Shona-dominated ruling party. Zanu-PF won overwhelmingly in rural Mashonaland, where the majority of the population lives. Emmerson Mnangagwa, Speaker of the previous Parliament, lost his Kwekwe seat to Blessing Chebundo of the MDC. Jonathan Moyo's victory in the elections was a loss for the MDC. Another significant loss was the Chimanimani constituency, contested by Heather Bennett, wife of Roy Bennett, the former MDC MP jailed for assaulting two Cabinet members in Parliament in May 2004. (Bennett was released from prison on 28 June 2005 after serving eight months of a one-year sentence.) The 16 seats lost by the opposition party were all in rural areas. In the 2000 elections, the MDC had won all 15 seats in Matebeleland and the majority of urban seats, with the ruling party winning the majority of rural seats. The two main cities – Harare, with a majority Shona population, and Bulawayo, with a majority Ndebele population – voted overwhelmingly for the MDC.

1 The MDC's claims are disputed and rejected by Munyaradzi Gwisai, a former MDC Member of Parliament. See Gwisai 2005, p 8.

This pattern suggests that ethnicity is becoming less important in Zimbabwean politics and that policies, not ethnicity, drive political contest in the country, with the main dividing line being rural-urban. The ruling party has failed to win support from the urban working class and middle class. The MDC, supported by developed countries and white Zimbabweans, has failed to win support in the rural areas. It has also failed to provide shrewd political leadership and viable theoretical and practical alternatives to the ruling party. It is viewed as the organisational means of reversing the improvements made since political independence, including the land redistribution programme. While the ruling party supports the active role of the state in the management and direction of the economy, the MDC defends neo-liberal socio-economic policies.

Zimbabwe's adoption and implementation of the structural adjustment programme in the 1990s which substantially reversed the socio-economic improvements achieved since political independence and the socio-economic problems the country faced in the 1990s not only led to mass strikes and demonstrations but also to an alliance of various social forces and organisations, which led to the formation of the MDC (Dansereau 2003, pp 181-85; Andreasson 2003, pp 393-97; Sachikonye 2000-2001, p 7).

The MDC became the beneficiary of demands by popular social forces and organisations that the state solve these problems and of the state's failure to do so. These are some of the key reasons for the party's achievements in the 2000 and 2002 elections – achievements which have now been substantially reversed. Since 2003 the MDC has failed to prove that it is politically capable of solving Zimbabwe's socio-economic problems.

EVIDENCE THAT THE MDC WOULD LOSE THE 2005 ELECTIONS

The economic problems, corruption and mismanagement which plagued Zimbabwe in 2004 were no indication that the MDC would win the 2005 parliamentary elections. In early 2004 its four Harare councillors, including the acting mayor, Sekayi Makavara, left the party, citing leadership problems as the key reason behind their decision. The ruling party defeated the MDC in a key by-election in Zengeza, the township near Harare, in the Chitungwiza area, stronghold of the MDC. The MDC's supporters and loyalists maintained that poor organisation, a weak candidate and infighting within the leadership were key reasons why Christopher Chigumba of Zanu-PF won 8 744 votes to the 6 706 for James Makore of the MDC in the 27-28 March by-election. In the 2002 elections, Chigumba had been defeated by Tafadzwa Musekiwa of the MDC by 14 814 votes to 5 330. Musekiwa left for London after several alleged threats on his life. This led to a by-election in Zengeza. Local MDC supporters maintained that they were betrayed by Musekiwa's decision to leave and were not happy about the imposition of Makore as the party's candidate in the election. It was reported that voters were questioning the MDC's failure seriously to challenge the ruling party and that morale was so low that the majority of them

concluded that it would be pointless to contest elections under the prevailing electoral rules (*Africa Confidential* 2004a, p 2).

Africa Confidential provided overwhelming evidence immediately before the 2005 elections that the ruling party would win, suggesting that the political situation in Zimbabwe had changed in favour of the ruling party in 2004. While in 2000 people wanted Zanu-PF out because of the deteriorating economy and they still wanted 'Mugabe and his allies' out in 2004, 'many' people 'hope that Zanu-PF with a new leader would be less destabilising than a switch to the opposition' party. There had been economic improvements since 2004, with products which were scarce becoming available. The MDC launched its 2005 election campaign late, having earlier insisted that it would boycott the elections. Many of its supporters failed to register and, as the economic problems intensified, voters showed a preference for candidates who claimed they were able to improve their material conditions. MDC Members of Parliament had done little for their constituents since winning the 2000 parliamentary elections (*Africa Confidential* 2005, p 1).

Before the 2005 elections, *Africa Confidential* forecast that the MDC might win 49 seats and that should it win fewer than 49, the ruling party would have the two-thirds majority it was seeking (2005, p 2). It believed the MDC would win all seven Bulawayo seats, all the seats in Matebeleland North except Tsholotsho and all 18 Harare seats. It might face problems in Zengeza and it was possible that it would win six of the seven Matebeleland South seats, three urban Manicaland East and Central seats, one Chimanimani seat, two or three seats in Mashonaland West, one or two urban seats in Mavingo and three seats in the Midlands (2005, pp 1-2). This forecast was borne out by the results of the elections, with the MDC winning 41 seats and Zanu-PF 78 (see Table 1).

Table 1
Results of 31 March 2005 Parliamentary Elections

Party/Independents	No of Votes	% of Votes	No of Seats	% of Seats
Zanu-PF	1 569 867	59, 59	78	60
MDC	1 041 292	39, 52	41	40
Zanu-NDONGA	6 608	0,25	0	0
INDEPENDENTS				
(Jonathan Moyo)	16 878	0,64	1	1
TOTAL	2 634 645	100	120	101

Source: Zimbabwe Election Commission

THE 2005 ELECTIONS AS A LESSON FOR THE MDC

The 2005 elections served as an important lesson for the MDC in its struggle for political power, compelling it to reassess its strategies and tactics critically and objectively and to change them in response to the dynamics of the Zimbabwean national situation. One of the key reasons for its poor performance is that it has become a moderate political party with conservative socio-economic policies, abandoning the direct programmes of action which had played a leading role in its formation and enabled it to pose a serious challenge to the ruling party in 2000 and 2002. It replaced forms of direct action such as demonstrations and strikes with international fund-raising, providing obvious ammunition for the ruling party's contention that it is a tool of the imperialist powers, particularly Britain,² and of Zimbabwe's white farmers. It replaced the struggle against neo-liberalism with its commitment to privatisation and the cost recovery policies articulated by Eddie Cross in March 2000. Pointing out that the MDC in power will not support government interference in the way in which people manage their lives and that it will fast-track privatisation, he maintained that it will privatise all parastatals within two years, privatise the Central Statistical Office and virtually the entire school delivery system, and decrease 'government employment from about 300,000 at the present time to about 75,000 in five years' (Cross, in Bond 2001, p 15; Cross in Alexander 2000, p 394).

These policies were articulated and defended when the ruling party attempted to increase social spending and price controls and condemned privatisation.³

The Bulawayo town council, led by the MDC, implemented unpopular cut-offs of basic services. Its neo-liberal policies reflect a fundamental structural problem which made it difficult to advance in theory and practice the interests of the masses of the people and to go beyond criticising the violent and repressive policies of the ruling party. Even staunch critics of the ruling party acknowledge that the MDC does not provide viable theoretical and practical options and that, enmeshed as it is in neo-liberal socio-political and economic policies, it has failed to address itself adequately to the land question, which has a decisive impact on politics in former settler colonies. It has succeeded in winning the support of peasants, the youth, women, intellectuals and other social groups and it has made it possible for the ruling party to consolidate its position (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003, pp 127-8).

Gwisai (2005, p 8) maintains that leaders of the International Socialist Organisation told MDC leaders in 2001 that 'unless they immediately changed their strategy of opposing the land reform programme and hanging on the aprons of

2 Richard Dowden of *The Independent* (United Kingdom) maintains that British support for the MDC and regime change and the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq contributed to the success of the ruling party in the 2005 elections. On this see Gwisai 2005, p 8.

3 Patrick Bond (2002, p 2) maintains that by August 2001 the MDC's Economic Stabilisation and Recovery Programme had codified these policies.

white farmers', national 'capitalists, the West and the International Monetary Fund and instead adopt an anti-neo-liberal anti-imperialist stance they would be buried in future elections even without violence'.

The MDC has failed to embark on the sustained programmes of mass action which are essential for the creation and consolidation of the socio-political, legal and economic conditions conducive to free and fair elections and which are also demanded by civil society organisations. These programmes would help to compel the ruling party to accede to the scrapping of the constitutional clause which guarantees the president 30 seats before the elections, to the establishment of an independent body which regulates the media, and to the abolition of laws giving police the power to authorise meetings.

Lovemore Madhuku, leader of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a coalition of civil society organisations fighting for constitutional reform, believes that neither the MDC nor civil society organisations has struggled 'enough' for change and that there has not been a 'united popular mass pressure' upon the ruling party to respond affirmatively to their demands (Madhuku, in Tabane 2005, p 11).

Responding to the question of whether, after the defeat of the opposition party in the 2005 elections, the people will still look to it to 'deliver them from Mugabe' Madhuku concludes that this will depend on the MDC's programme of action. 'If it is still obsessed by minute details such as results being tabulated late or figures that it does not like, people will lose interest in the MDC,' he says, adding that 'Tsvangirai must do less talking and start focusing on the bigger picture' and the party should no longer try to 'create the impression' that Zanu-PF has no support (Madhuku 2005, p 11).

The MDC must embark upon programmes of demonstrations, protests and strikes against the violent and repressive policies of the state and the ruling party and the socio-economic problems affecting the masses of Zimbabwe. It must have viable strategies and tactics for confronting the ruling party and sustaining itself and programmes of action under its leadership. It must adopt and implement means which will enable it to survive the ruling party's onslaughts and retaliation.

It must have a viable programme of action which will inspire the masses of Zimbabwe. It must promote and advance popular national demands such as job security, social welfare, and land reform. Its economic policies do not constitute a qualitative move towards solving Zimbabwe's socio-economic problems, rather⁴ they are bound to intensify these problems.⁵ It has adopted the same neo-liberal policies that have 'brought the Zimbabwean economy to its knees and devastated the lives of the masses'. It opposes 'the land invasions' and stands instead for an 'orderly' resolution of the land question although it has 'not spelled out what exactly that means'. It will be 'incapable of solving any of the fundamental problems of the masses' on 'the basis' of its economic policies and programmes (Hamilton 2000, p 2).

⁴ For the MDC's economic policies see Movement for Democratic Change 2004.

⁵ For an analysis of the MDC's economic policies see, among others, Dansereau 2005, pp 22-24.

The MDC's close working relationships with conservative and moderate political parties and civil society organisations which support it politically, morally and financially have prevented it from forging working relationships with progressive political parties and civil society organisations throughout the Southern African region, the African continent and beyond and from adopting and implementing viable or progressive strategies and tactics as well as direct programmes of mass action. Its socio-economic policies, its views of democracy and political good governance and its political platform are not fundamentally different from those of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank – multilateral organisations whose primary task is to advance the interests of neocolonialism and imperialism (Dansereau 2005, p 24).

The MDC lacks viable progressive strategies and tactics and a programme of action that promotes and advances popular national demands and differs on these issues with its allies, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and the NCA. Trade unionists were allocated about a dozen of the 57 parliamentary seats the MDC won in 2000 (most of which went to academics and civil society activists) and many are demanding more militancy and more representation within the MDC. Trade unions have criticised the MDC for concentrating on court actions and international sanctions, issues they maintain do not benefit the masses, particularly the workers (*Africa Confidential* 2004a, pp 2-3).

Pointing out that the 'sharpest weapon in the struggle' against what he refers to as 'the outpost of tyranny' is 'internal opposition', Tim Hughes maintains that 'despite its political dominance in the cities and overwhelming support in Matebeleland', the MDC 'shows no signs of effectively challenging the Mugabe regime at any level' and that it 'has failed to maximise its comparative advantage and mobilise unions, workers and the urban youth in a concerted campaign of rolling mass action' (Hughes 2005, p 2).

Party militants maintain that the MDC must intensify the struggle by going beyond 'parliamentary opposition tactics and legal challenges to the election'; that ruling party militants went to jail and were killed in the struggle and that the MDC should demonstrate to the ruling party that its members will 'do the same for a second liberation' (*Africa Confidential* 2002, p 2).

Thus far the MDC has failed to transform itself so as to challenge the ruling party decisively. Political activists and writers such as Brian Kagoro, the former coordinator of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, have been calling upon it since the 2002 presidential election to adapt in order to meet the challenges of Zimbabwe after that election. Kagoro maintains that the presidential election and the events before and subsequent to it have presented the opposition party with new challenges and severe tests. The first challenge is the issue of cohesion. The MDC, formed as an organisation consisting of social forces with different and antagonistic interests united by the need to defeat Mugabe through an electoral process, has not been able to adopt and implement the 'inspirational and strategic' positions essential to an effective opposition party striving for political power. While some of its members

have called for mass uprising, others advocate the continued use of negotiations and international intervention and it is the latter who have won the day. The position of the leadership on key issues is not only contradictory but also antagonistic or irreconcilable.

The issue of leadership is one of the key challenges for the MDC. Most of its leaders occupy their positions because of the urgent need to defeat Mugabe in the elections. The negative consequence of this factor is that their democratic credentials, integrity and capacity have never been interrogated. They do not meet the requirements of the post-presidential 2002 election period, which are 'greater clarity, immense integrity and commitment to the ideals of building a truly democratic Zimbabwe' (Kagoro 2003, p 24).

The MDC's lack of shrewd leadership is evident in its relations with the masses of the people, a challenge referred to by Kagoro as a lack of 'street credibility'. It was expected that if Mugabe 'stole' the elections there would be a mass uprising. The party's 'leaders seem to have expected the masses to initiate this uprising, whereas the masses looked to' its leadership to initiate and lead it. Related to this issue is the fact that the MDC 'has also not been as effective in demonstrating its continuing relevance to the people's strongly felt needs in the present situation'.

The party has failed to respond adequately to the ruling party's view of Zimbabwe's problems as a pan-African struggle against imperialist domination and exploitation. It has so far not recognised the fundamental need to 'rethink its regional strategy', which has not been successful and to articulate clearly 'its position on the contentious issues of race relations, North-South relations, resource redistribution and the broader pan-African agenda'. Kagoro (2003, p 24) concludes that the MDC 'has missed many good opportunities to regain the upper hand in the political contest in Zimbabwe'.

The theoretical and practical weaknesses of the MDC have led some organisations and individuals to conclude that even if Zimbabwe were to comply fully with all the Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections adopted by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit in Mauritius in August 2004 (Zimbabwe Election Support Network 2005, pp 301-31), the ruling party would win the 2005 elections. The MDC's absence of vision and strategy and its lack of capacity to lead Zimbabwe's reconstruction and development process have led many, among them South Africa's African National Congress, to believe that the resolution to the country's problems lies within the ruling party, not the MDC (Dawes 2005, p 10).

This position is captured in Godfrey Kanyenze's contention that people should focus on Mugabe and the ruling party, not Tsvangirai and the MDC and that the 'greatest threat to Zanu-PF right now is Zanu-PF itself, not the MDC' (Kanyenze, in Rukuni 2005, p 2).

Critics of the ruling party, including some MDC members, maintain that Morgan Tsvangirai does not have the intellectual capacity to lead an effective opposition party, particularly one that is challenging a hegemonic party which has

been in power since 1980 and whose leaders have provided it with enormous intellectual capacity and resources in its quest for the continued exercise of state power. Tsvangirai, they aver, is not a shrewd leader. He lacks 'a degree of political imagination and ruthlessness' (*Africa Confidential* 2001, p 4). In 2000 Tsvangirai made a crucial political mistake when he allowed international media to record white farmers, many of them soldiers in the Rhodesian army that had fought against the forces of national liberation, handing cheques to him. The film made him appear either to be hungry for money or 'naïve'. Mugabe's advisors used the incident in a propaganda war that presented the MDC as the servant of the white minority and of Britain (*Africa Confidential* 2003, pp 4-5). Tsvangirai's association with the farmers isolated him from progressive people nationally and internationally (Kanhema 2003, p 5).

Jonathan Moyo, who some people thought might join the MDC upon his expulsion from the Cabinet and the ruling party, declared that he would not join it because it was 'immature and ideologically shallow' (Moyo, in Rukani 2005, p 1).

Trevor Ncube, the Zimbabwean chief executive officer and owner of South Africa's M&G Media Ltd, wrote immediately before the 2005 elections that Tsvangirai was no match for Mugabe and that the MDC was divided, 'paralysed' and 'ineffective', lacking vision and strategy. There was, he wrote, a popular position 'in and outside the party' that it had 'long lost the passion and drive for a people's revolution'. He also maintained that Zimbabwe 'faces an acute leadership crisis that only Mugabe has the capacity to resolve, if he so decides' and that if the ruling party won the elections Mugabe could 'undo some of the damage he has inflicted on Zimbabwe and lay the foundation for a stable political dispensation that would deliver economic development and growth' (Ncube 2005, p 29).

Pointing out that the possibility of an MDC victory in the 2005 elections 'cannot be totally discounted' or 'completely ruled out', provided the MDC mobilised the people's anger against the ruling party to deliver its victory, Ncube concluded that an MDC victory would be 'a frightening prospect for Zimbabwe', which would find itself faced with the prospect of 'a hugely divided and inexperienced group' trying to solve problems of 'more than two decades of misrule' (Ncube 2005, p 29).

Newton Kanhema, a Zimbabwean journalist, maintains a similar position, contending that Tsvangirai and his advisers do not constitute leadership material for Zimbabwe. Tsvangirai's position on the land question is not clear and he has not articulated a feasible plan for solving the country's economic problems. His contribution to the debate about how best to solve Zimbabwe's economic problems has been his position that the economic situation will improve once Mugabe is no longer in power. Instead of building alliances or working relationships with Southern African leaders he has 'elected to insult them and, at the same time, court favour with Western leaders'. This, says Kanhema (2003, p 5), is not the best way to 'win friends and influence people, let alone get support' in the struggle for political power.

If it is to be taken seriously the MDC must change its regional strategy and articulate its position on key issues such as the race question, North-South relations,

redistribution of resources such as land and the pan-African agenda. The International Crisis Group supported this reality in its report on Zimbabwe after the 2005 elections and in its recommendations of what should be done by internal and external interested parties to resolve its problems. It recommended that the MDC develop a clear position on the best and most effective way to exert pressure on the government, revitalise tactical and strategic alliances and working relations with civil society and other social forces, renew its leadership and structures by holding elections, develop viable alternative programmes for the socio-political and economic issues affecting the people of the country and rebuild external relations, especially with Southern African governments and the African Union (International Crisis Group 2005, p 3).

Blade Nzimande, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, maintains (2003, p 7) that the 'mission' of 'the conservative forces' who support the MDC is to 'roll back the national liberation movement, and might be positioning themselves to implement the World Bank programme better than Zanu-PF' and that this is 'partly illustrated by the fact that the MDC has no clear programme on the key issues facing the Zimbabwean revolution'. Academic Patrick Bond (2001, p 46) maintains that the MDC shifted rapidly and dramatically to the right before the June 2000 parliamentary elections by endorsing neo-liberal policies in order to attract about US\$2-million in campaign funds from white businesses and conservative international allies and that Zimbabwe's post-1997 crisis is a direct result of the context of the early 1990s in which the government's power and Mugabe's decisions were repeatedly limited, conditioned and ultimately reversed by the USA (Bond 2001, p 73). If these positions are correct, they raise the fundamental question of why the progressive forces of Africa and the rest of the world should support the MDC in its quest for political power. To the extent that these forces support imperialism it raises the question of whether the ruling party's position that the MDC is a front for the interests of national and external 'white businesses' and of imperialism has a validity and enjoys support among progressive forces of Africa.

THE MDC 'S THREAT TO BOYCOTT THE 2005 ELECTIONS

In August 2004 the MDC decided it would not participate in the 2005 elections until the electoral playing field had been levelled. Its Secretary General, Welshman Ncube, told *Africa Confidential* (2004a, p 2) that there was 'no sense in legitimising a process whose result is already predetermined' and that the MDC would expose electoral fraud and pursue court actions to correct it. He said that the decision was taken unanimously by the party's national executive committee, which was 'not prepared to dignify a flawed electoral process'. Pointing out that the 'fundamental principle is whether the people of Zimbabwe have their freedom or not', he concluded that if 'they [Zanu-PF] want to have the 150 seats, they can have them' and they 'will definitely know the people of Zimbabwe did not elect them' (Ncube, in Gandu 2004, p 17).

It was difficult to see how the MDC could survive as a serious, leading opposition party if it boycotted the elections. In fact, it would seem that the key reason for the party to contemplate a boycott is that it was reluctant to organise mass action outside of its urban strongholds and to compel the government to reform the electoral rules and appoint an independent electoral commission (*Africa Confidential* 2004a, p 2).

Another reason was an attempt to exert pressure on the ruling party to accede to the MDC's demands that it postpone the 2005 elections and adopt and implement electoral reforms. It was also intended to pressurise SADC leaders to coerce President Mugabe to adopt and implement electoral reforms, a fact acknowledged by Tsvangirai when he maintained that: 'We have suspended [participation in elections] to give SADC leaders time to rectify problems so we may have a legitimate outcome' (Tsvangirai, in Katzenellenbogen and Muleya 2004, p 1). It was clear that any boycott would be temporary as, indeed, it proved to be.

DIVISION OVER THE MDC'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SENATE ELECTIONS OF 26 NOVEMBER 2005

Elections for the re-established Senate, created in terms of a constitutional amendment enacted on 30 August 2005, were held on 26 November 2005. The upper house has 50 senators elected by ballot to five-year terms. In addition, six members and ten chiefs are appointed by the president.

The divisions within the MDC over its participation in the Senate elections highlighted its theoretical and practical weaknesses. Its failure to make an early announcement about its participation demonstrated its lack of a clear political strategy and tactics. It was evident that the delay in taking a decision on the issue would cost it a number of seats should it decide to participate and it had failed to learn from past experience – it had lost a number of seats during the March 2005 parliamentary elections because of its late announcement that it would contest them.

The very fact that the party had participated in the parliamentary elections made nonsense of Tsvangirai's opposition to the party's National Council's decision to take part in the Senate elections. In a secret ballot of the National Council 33 members voted in favour of participation, and 31 against.

Less than 15 per cent of the electorate voted in the Senate election. Public confusion about the purpose of the upper house of Parliament, the inability of many people to reach the polling stations because of the national petrol shortage and the differences within the MDC over participation in the election are some of the factors responsible for the low turnout. Of the 50 provincial constituencies 31 were contested and 19 ruling party candidates were not opposed. Only 26 members of the MDC registered their candidacy. The results gave the ruling party control of 43 of the 50 elected seats, with The MDC winning 7. Given the fact that 16 members of the Senate are appointed by the president, the ruling party has 59 senators.

Table 2
Results of the Senate Elections

Province	Zanu-PF	MDC	Total
Bulawayo Metro	0	5	5
Harare Metro	5	0	5
Manicaland	5	0	5
Mashonaland Central	5	0	5
Mashonaland East	5	0	5
Mashonaland West	5	0	5
Masvingo	5	0	5
Matebeleland South	5	0	5
Matebeleland North	3	2	5
Midlands	5	0	5
Total	43	7	50

Source: Zimbabwe Election Commission

A key consequence of the divisiveness within the MDC over its participation is the possibility that party may split – an event which will seriously damage the prospects of the opposition and further entrench the ruling party's hegemony.

THE MDC'S 'MUGABE MUST GO' STRATEGY

The developed countries, which are responsible for the MDC's 'Mugabe must go' strategy, regarded the resolution of the land question as the means by which the ruling party and its leader won elections and consolidated power. Experts on the Zimbabwean socio-historical situation contest this position (Moyo, in Chirambo & McCullum 2000; Thompson 2000; Thompson 2003). The MDC criticises the land policy on the grounds that it is not popular with the masses of the African people of Zimbabwe. The reality is that the state's land reform policy is more popular with older Zimbabweans than the MDC's accusations of government mismanagement and corruption and the promise of new land may win more votes than criticism. While Zimbabweans born after the achievement of political independence are not as interested in land, the reality is that it is more difficult to mobilise them behind the MDC (*Africa Confidential* 2004a, p 3).

Again, the developed countries and their supporters saw political reform as a solution to what they regarded as the problem and President Mugabe represented the problem. They hoped that Tsvangirai would defeat Mugabe in the 2002 presidential election and when this failed to materialise they declared the election

not to be free and fair and the Zimbabwean government to be illegitimate. They embarked upon various programmes of action to isolate the Zimbabwean government.

Mugabe is regarded by his opponents as authoritarian, corrupt and a dictator who has been stealing elections since the MDC posed a challenge to his rule in the 2000 elections. He is seen as a threat to the socio-political and economic development and progress not only of his country and the Southern African region, but of the whole African continent as well as of Africa's initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Leaders of developed countries have exerted pressure on the leaders of Southern African countries to join them in condemning Mugabe, demanding that South Africa play a leading role in acting against Mugabe because of what they regard as his violations of human rights (Rotberg 2004, p 9). One of the issues central to this view is the profound failure to view the Zimbabwean situation beyond Mugabe.

The MDC's position is that the responsibility to exert pressure on Mugabe to step down lies with the leaders of African countries, a position that is maintained by its supporters both within and outside Zimbabwe. It is interesting to note that the opposition party does not maintain that this responsibility lies also with leaders of developed countries. This reality supports those who believe that this is a means by leaders of developed countries to use African countries, particularly South Africa, to play a leading role in achieving their objective in Zimbabwe and has bolstered the contention of the ruling party that the MDC is a tool of the imperialist powers (Phimister & Raftopoulos 2004, pp 385-400).

Pointing out that Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Bakili Muluzi of Malawi 'failed to persuade Mugabe' when they 'visited' him on 5 May 2004 in Harare to 'say whether, or when, he intends to step down', *Africa Confidential* (2003, p 3) concludes that this 'puts the responsibility back where it belongs, with Zimbabwe's own leaders'.

The MDC's belief that the responsibility to exert pressure upon Mugabe lies with the leaders of African countries, not with the people of Zimbabwe, is defended by Tsvangirai. After the efforts of Presidents Mbeki and Obasanjo to promote dialogue between the ruling party and the MDC, he pointed out (*Africa Confidential* 2003, p 3) that their attempts to 'legitimise Mugabe' enabled Mugabe to consolidate his power and position.

Weizmann Hamilton maintains that the MDC 'gave Mugabe' and the ruling party political 'space to consolidate' their 'position'. The fact that the MDC is supported by 'big business and white farmers at home and imperialism and its institutions' has 'undermined its support among the masses in Zimbabwe and throughout Southern Africa'. Its support from white farmers 'who continue to oppress and exploit farm labourers' has helped to undermine its rural support. It has refrained from mobilising mass action against the government and has concentrated on appealing to external forces to exert pressure upon Mugabe and the ruling party. This has enabled Mugabe to maintain that the survival of his

administration is a struggle against external interference in defence of 'white minority business and farming interests' and to present the MDC as the organisational agent of imperialism (Hamilton 2002, p 2).

The 'real threat' to Mugabe and his party is 'the desperate state of the economy and its effects on Zimbabwe's long-suffering people' (Hamilton 2002, p 2). 'Economic failure confronts Mugabe more sharply than opposition parties and foreign critics and the 'government's main foe is the shrinking economy, an everyday reminder of mismanagement and corruption which makes most Zimbabweans long for political change – even those who could never vote for Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC, damned by British Prime Minister Tony Blair's claim to be working closely with it' (*Africa Confidential* 2004b, p 3).

Tsvangirai, on the other hand, sees his strategy (articulated to Joseph Winter of the BBC) as 'to wait while Mr Mugabe mismanaged the economy to such an extent that he was forced out of office'. This 'long-term, passive view has, so far, steered the country away from civil war, but has not seriously perturbed the authorities' (Winter 2003, p 2).

The MDC's strategy of unseating Mugabe does not do justice to its 'immediate objective' which 'has been to dislodge Zanu-PF from power' (Sachikonye 2002, p 17) – it would be quite possible for Mugabe to be removed from power while his party remains on. Mugabe should not be confused with the ruling party, which might still overwhelmingly win free and fair elections under a new leader.

STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES OF THE MDC

The MDC has not addressed itself seriously and effectively to the issue of power relations in Zimbabwe and the fundamental need to change them in favour of the interests of the vast majority of the people of the country. It has not seriously, in theory or in practice, recognised the importance of organising or mobilising the people to achieve political, economic and ideological hegemony as a prerequisite not only for removal from political power of those controlling the state, but also for establishing an alternative socio-political and economic order.

For these key reasons the MDC has not seriously and effectively challenged the ruling party in its struggle to 'legitimately exercise power and authority over the control and management of the country's affairs in the interest of the people and in accordance with the principles of justice, equity, accountability and transparency' (Moyo 1997, p 61).

It is on the strategic issue of the fundamental need for political, economic and ideological organisation for transformation of power relations in the interests of the masses of the people that the content of policies and the programme of action of the progressive opposition party are tested (Cheru 2000, p 128).

The MDC should fundamentally transform itself to serve as the social agent for change in Zimbabwe. It should no longer personalise the socio-political and economic problems or continue to regard President Robert Mugabe as the problem.

The cases of Malawi, Zambia and some other African countries have proved that the removal of the leader of the ruling party from power is not, in itself, the solution to socio-political and economic problems.

The MDC has focused more and more on personalities, elections, the Constitution and Parliament and less and less on the form and content, role and future of the state in the democratisation struggle. At issue is the fundamental and structural need for it to provide reasons why the state should be transformed fundamentally so as to direct and underwrite the achievement and consolidation of the process of meaningful socio-political and economic change.

Central to this need is credible policies providing options to those of the ruling party and of international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It must develop programmes of action capable of responding to the socio-political and economic challenges in Zimbabwe. It should also have a concrete understanding of socio-political and economic developments and debates in other countries, particularly those in the Southern African region and the African continent and view them progressively within the context of a pan-African agenda for resolving Africa's problems.

CONCLUSION

The paper has analysed the theoretical and practical weaknesses of the MDC and the fact that it has not waged a decisive war against these weaknesses in its quest for state political power. These two key issues were used to analyse the socio-political situation in Zimbabwe in 2004, which indicated that the ruling party was going to win the 2005 elections; the opposition party's threat to boycott the 2005 elections; its 'Mugabe must go' strategy and its failure to understand and recognise the importance of internal factors over external in the resolution of Zimbabwe's problems.

The MDC has not substantiated in practice its leader's position, articulated in an interview with Netsai Mlilo, that the 'solution' to Zimbabwe's 'national crisis is not just elections', that it is 'about the traditional mechanism of resolving the power contestations and structure of power beyond the elections', that 'removing Mugabe without transforming the institutional base is not going to solve the problem' and that MDC leaders 'know it is not just a change of personality that is required. It is a deeper transformation of the political culture in the country' (Tsvangirai, in Mlilo 2004, p 9). Mlilo had pointed out that the MDC had failed to rally or mobilise people; that it was widely regarded as an urban-based party which seemed unable to win support in the rural areas; that it did not appear to have 'the smartest advisers' and that its leaders did not seem able to 'shrug off' their 'tag as Tony Blair's messengers'. Answering the question 'Other than opposing Mugabe, does the MDC have policy on land and the economy?', Tsvangirai pointed out that its 'solution lies with' its 'policy programme called Restart, which is a reconstruction programme to ensure that there is sufficient confidence in rehabilitating industry, tourism, the mining

sector, manufacturing of basic goods, including food' (Tsvangirai, in Mlilo 2004, p 9).

The MDC, by concentrating its efforts on parliamentary opposition tactics or electoral, legalistic strategy in its struggle for power, is overestimating the importance of elections. While elections are important to the achievement or consolidation of democracy, democracy is not simply the electoral victory over one party by another or about holding periodic free and fair elections. Democracy as a project is the struggle either to achieve or to consolidate socio-economic development in the interests of the masses of the people.

Eghosa E. Osaghae (2004, pp 1-2) articulates the organic relationship between democracy and socio-economic development. The democratic project is 'about and for citizens who have stakes in and expect dividends from it'. The masses of the people, who queue for long hours to vote or who take part in 'riots and demonstrations' to defeat oppressive governments, and those who lead and join progressive social movements and political parties expect 'immediate and long-term dividends'.

The MDC has not recognised, in theory or in practice, the strategic importance of mobilising for political, economic and ideological hegemony as a prerequisite to the seizure and exercise of political power through elections and the establishment of an alternative socio-political and economic order. As a result it is in danger of being reduced to the practice of exerting pressure upon the state of Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries for policy changes and victories which will not be sufficient for it either to achieve political power or to consolidate or expand these changes and victories.

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REVIEW

Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation

Brian Raftopoulous and Tyrone Savage (eds)

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation

INTRODUCTION

The book consists of 15 chapters written by academics and professionals who have written widely on Zimbabwe. Most of them are either Zimbabwean citizens or have been involved in Zimbabwe in their professional careers. Their previous work on Zimbabwe gives their interpretation of the situation more weight. Brian Raftopoulos, who sets the tone of the book, attributes the current problems in Zimbabwe to a reconciliation policy that was a compromise between the liberation movement, the colonial power and the settler elite. He indicates that at independence the newly elected Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, made reconciliation statements which never translated into action given the contours of the political landscape in the early years of the new state.

ABOUT THE VOLUME

Chapter 1: The Promised Land: From Expropriation to Reconciliation and Jambanja
LLOYD SACHIKONYE (pp 1-18)

The first chapter looks at the land question in Zimbabwe, tracing it from the 1800s to the present time. Land commissions are said to have been responsible for the land expropriation throughout the entire period. The author argues that contrary to the commonly held perception that there would be reconciliation after independence, reconciliation seems to have been a distant mirage in Zimbabwe. This has in part been because the importance of dealing with past injustices has been overlooked. The author also brings up an equally important issue of economic reconciliation, which was not addressed in Zimbabwe at independence in 1980. The British government's failure to keep its side of the bargain after the Lancaster House negotiations in terms of support for the redistribution process is also ably discussed. The recent land occupations are attributed to Britain's abdication of responsibility.

Chapter 2: Memories of Underdevelopment: A Personal Interpretation of Zimbabwe's Economic Decline
ROB DAVIES (pp 19-42)

The costs of economic decline in Zimbabwe is looked at in terms of three distinct periods: 1980-1990; 1990-1997 and 1997 to date. While this discussion is limited by

a lack of empirical evidence to substantiate some views raised about the country's economic morass, the author has managed to depict the situation and to make pertinent comments which provide grounds for further examination. Some important observations have been made, such as the presence of economic gains in the 1980s, which lacked sustainability as opposed to gains in assets which would go a long way to sustaining the economy of post-colonial Zimbabwe. Put somewhat differently, the centralisation approach adopted by the government saw black people being given access to land but no title, thus leaving the title as the domain of the state. The situation presents contradictions where the government has now embarked on an aggressive land redistribution programme under the guise of redressing the past, yet at the same time destroying the future as the agricultural sector is stifled.

Chapter 3: 'Gukurahundi': The Need for Truth and Reparation

SHARI EPPEL (pp 43-62)

Starting with a comparison of the Smith and Mugabe regimes the chapter draws a picture of how, even in a post-colonial condition, the country is increasingly returning to a one-party state in which the ruling party is not tolerant of the opposition and orchestrates violence against its own people. Reference is made to the notorious Five Brigade, which was responsible for the massacres of many people, particularly in the Matebeleland Province. The author argues that the absence of truth about the massacres in the 1980s and political torture since 2000 has affected many Zimbabweans.

Chapter 4: Reintegration of Ex-Combatants Into Zimbabwean Society: A Lost Opportunity

PAUL THEMBA NYATHI (pp 63-78)

The important subject of the integration of ex-combatants into the national army is put under the spotlight in this chapter. The author points out that the failure not only successfully to integrate the ex-combatants but to rehabilitate them has come back to haunt ZANU-PF. This was witnessed when they forced Mugabe to offer them Z\$50 000 each as compensation for their involvement in the liberation war. However, now the ruling party appears also to be benefiting from the situation, using the ex-combatants to fight its political battles. As the author puts it, the ex-combatants who were not integrated are being made to destroy the democracy they strove for.

Chapter 5: Contextualising the Military in Zimbabwe Between 1999 and 2004 and Beyond

MARTIN RUPIYA (pp 79-98)

This chapter discusses the role of the army and its inability to maintain a neutral position, particularly since the 2000 referendum. The author, himself a retired senior army officer, has skilfully analysed the motive behind the army's involvement in politics that culminated in the military announcing its preferred candidates for the presidential election. The author establishes a link (and reasons for the close ties) between the army and ZANU-PF by explaining the Zimbabwe Defence Force's (ZDF) involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo. While he acknowledges the importance of reforming the military, particularly in the post-colonial era, he stops short of emphasising this need in the case of post-conflict Zimbabwe when he discusses the army's future role. This important aspect should be highlighted in the discussion and lessons can be learned from countries such as Lesotho which have already embarked on this process.

Chapter 6: Whither Judicial Independence in Zimbabwe?

CHARLES GOREDEMA (pp 99-118)

In this chapter, the independence of the judiciary, a sacrosanct element of a democratic society, is questioned. In the author's view the absence of such independence is another factor that compounds Zimbabwe's political problems. Many of the cases brought before the courts of law in the recent past have been opposed by the ruling party and the judges have been threatened and forced to retire. A critical question that the chapter addresses is who should ensure that the government gives the judiciary the respect that it deserves.

Chapter 7: Liberating or Limiting the Public Sphere? Media Policy and the Zimbabwe Transition, 1980-2004

WALLACE CHUMA (pp 119-139)

Evidence points to the fact that the media have not been spared by the authoritarian arm of the government in Zimbabwe. State-media relations and the transitions that the media have gone through from the colonial era to recent times are discussed here. The argument raised is that as in the colonial period, when there was a clampdown on liberal voices, the post-independence media in Zimbabwe are experiencing government heavy handedness. Media have been silenced by the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), which came into force in 2002. Under the AIPPA privately owned newspapers such as the *Daily News* and the *Daily News on Sunday* were closed down.

Chapter 8: Reconciliation, Ethnicity and School History in Zimbabwe, 1980-2002
TERESA BARNES (pp 140-159)

The chapter introduces the debate on ethnicity, which is seen as one of the trigger factors for violent political conflict in Zimbabwe today. This is manifested in the relations between the two major ethnic groups, the Ndebele and the Shona. The discussion on this issue posits the commonly held view that the dichotomy between the two groups translated into the sour relations between the two main political parties, ZAPU and ZANU, that manifested in bloody conflicts in 1981. Also important in this chapter is the issue of historiography. Colonialist historiography was used for Zimbabwe even after independence. The author indicates that it was only recently, in 1991, that a new history, with which the majority of the people could identify, was written. The concluding note on this issue draws attention to the fact that, even so given, the nationalist history has created rivalry between black and white Zimbabweans, with the latter portrayed as evil.

Chapter 9: Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics
BRIAN RAFTOPOULOS (pp 160-175)

No book about Zimbabwe would be complete without a comment on ideology and its contribution to the crisis there. The author of this chapter has demonstrated how the ruling party is using ideology to withstand pressure from within and outside the country. He also points out that ZANU-PF is desperately entrenching liberation history as a form of religious fundamentalism and using the state media in the process to advance its messages and gain political mileage. The ruling party has also employed a strategy of attacking opposition parties, especially the MDC, and alienating them from the people, particularly in the rural areas.

Chapter 10: The Worm and the Hoe: Cultural Politics and Reconciliation After the Third Chimurenga
ROBERT MUPONDE (pp 176-192)

This author draws a picture of an 'us and them' scenario between the ruling ZANU-PF and the opposition MDC, each of whom is said to behave as a victim of the other in their quest for recognition and their hopes of winning the sympathy of the voters, who, ironically, are the real victims of the political tug-of-war between the two major political parties. The author demonstrates some of the complexities of reconciliation in Zimbabwe, using some vivid imagery. For instance, he quotes one poet who asked 'can the worm bask in amity with the hoe which only yesterday cut its spine into halves?' The other image employed to illustrate the magnitude of the task is that of the fox and the lamb – can they, the author asks, feed together?

Chapter 11: Orphans of the Empire: An Analysis of Elements of White Identity and Ideology Construction in Zimbabwe

KARIN ALEXANDRA (pp 193-212)

The chapter discusses issues of citizenship in a country with many races. The dilemma of the white Zimbabweans in terms of how they need to respond to being alienated in the country of their birth is raised. In other words, the chapter brings up the frustrations that whites face daily in Zimbabwe and their consideration of whether or not to emigrate. Importantly, the chapter highlights the fact that the citizenship issue does not begin with the coming to power of a black-led government but that it has also been an issue between whites groups in the competition for power, with the Britons considering themselves to be more citizens than the whites from South Africa.

Chapter 12: 'Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans': Invisible Subject Minorities and the Quest for Justice and Reconciliation in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe

JAMES MUZONDIDYA (pp 213-235)

The dilemma of white Zimbabweans in the wake of land occupations has received most of the media attention but this chapter draws attention to the dilemma of the other minority races in Zimbabwe, whose struggle to survive the citizenship politics in the past and today is discussed. The chapter argues that even as people talk about justice and reconciliation the minority races are not considered and end up facing the toughest conditions as the country grapples with contradictions in the process of justice and reconciliation caused by conflation of terms such as citizenship and nationality.

Chapter 13: Constitutional Reform as a social movement: A critical narrative of the constitution-making debate in Zimbabwe, 1997-2000

BRIAN KAGORO (pp 236-256)

The chapter touches on the need for constitutional reform to address specifically the most contentious issues such as the presidency, citizenship and land redistribution, which were not adequately addressed by the Lancaster House negotiations. At the core of this issue is the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to the constitution-making process which will provide healing for the victims and shape the future of the country.

Chapter 14: The church and reconciliation: A mission impossible?

DEPROSE T MUCHENA (pp 257-270)

In the same line of argument on inclusiveness raised in the preceding chapter this chapter touches on the role played by the church and civil society organisations in

the political problems of the country. The church is said to have played and to continue to play a critical role in striving to build peace and stability in Zimbabwe. Various activities of the church are explored and it is interesting to note that, as a result of the volatility of the situation, even the church is looked at suspiciously and many of its leaders are labelled enemies of the state.

Chapter 15: South African diplomacy and the crisis in Zimbabwe: Liberation solidarity in the 21st century

IAN PHIMISTER (pp 271-290)

The last chapter deals with South Africa's foreign policy with regard to Zimbabwe. The author points out that there is a perception from the South African side that there is a general plan to destabilise the region so as to protect the whites' interests. Mugabe's defeat would therefore be the beginning of problems for South Africa as he is being used as a test-case by the West in its attempt eventually to remove other liberation movements, including the ANC.

By way of conclusion

The book's major strength is the frank, open and balanced manner in which the complex issues of justice and political reconciliation in Zimbabwe are discussed. It also succeeds in giving the larger picture in terms of the political history of the country, the state, non-state actors, external actors, political parties and the people in the context of Zimbabwe's colonial and post-colonial development. Much of the literature about Zimbabwe's recent political crisis fails to look at all the races and indicate how the situation affects them. Most of it dwells on situations in which blacks are victims and whites villains, or vice versa, as well as on ZANU-PF versus MDC, without analysing the situation to show that behind these 'whites versus blacks and ZANU- PF versus MDC' situations there are ordinary young and old people who long to belong to a peaceful country. While the importance of scientific analysis cannot be overlooked, readers should not be made to consider the Zimbabwean situation in terms of statistics and academic abstracts at the expense of understanding the reality. The authors featured in this book have attempted to tell the stories that transcend the statistics and academic sophistry.

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