ZANU-PF’s Long Reign: A Gramscian Perspective on Hegemony and Historic Blocs

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to account for the nearly four decade-long rule of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) using the methods of Antonio Gramsci’s historical political economy, particularly his concepts of historical blocs and hegemony. Gramsci’s theories provide useful tools for explaining Zanu-PF’s and by generalisation other similarly entrenched regimes across Africa by employing an ontology, an epistemology and a method that incorporates historical, economic and ideological factors. Gramsci’s theories help us analyse dynamics of structure and agency, modes of production and ideology, as well as consent and coercion in the creation and maintenance of long lasting political dominance. The Gramscian concept of the historical bloc supplies a conceptual continuum between the base, a society’s mode of economic production and reproduction, and the superstructure, the dominant ideologies and political institutions. The thesis identifies three post-independence historical blocs in Zimbabwe, the 1980 era’s ‘corporatist/welfarist’ or ‘compromise state’ historical bloc; the attempted neo-liberal Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) historical bloc and finally the crisis hegemonic bloc which corresponds with the Third Chimurenga and the Fast Track Land Reform Programme.

The thesis considers that this last bloc includes the period of the Government of National Unity Between 2009-2013 and has to the present. Hegemony is understood as the continuum between ‘intellectual and moral leadership obtained by consent’ and the strategies employed on the terrain of ‘relations of force’ in achieving and maintaining political dominance (Gramsci, 2000, p. 202). The thesis concurs with the observation by Gramscian scholar David Moore that Zanu-PF has never enjoyed leadership based solely on intellectual and moral leadership without the threat of violence. Neither, however, is it the case that the party has ruled entirely by force without claiming to derive its authority from a higher ideological and moral source.

The thesis will therefore seek to make explicit at which points either consent or coercion has been primary in maintaining the party’s dominance within each historical bloc. In applying Gramscian theories to Zimbabwean history and politics the thesis remains sensitive to the conundrums at the centre of Gramsci’s and indeed wider
Marxian theory. Firstly, the question of whether politics and ideology can be read off an analysis of a society’s mode of production and reproduction? Secondly whether scholars and political actors can develop accurate analyses or political strategies bound by relations of consent and coercion based off the analysis of production and the class structures it creates? The above theoretical questions notwithstanding; the primary concern of the thesis is to understand how Zanu-PF (and by generalisation other similarly entrenched African regimes such as those for instance in Algeria, Sudan, and Ethiopia) has used varying combinations of consensual and coercive measures within the framework of history defined by economic and ideological factors. The abovementioned theoretical concerns must be considered if reductionism and subjective voluntarism about base or superstructure, structure and agency or the dominance of either consent or coercion, are to be avoided. However the resolution of the theoretical questions will not be the core aim of this thesis. The dissertation applies the Gramscian method to address the question of Zanu-PF’s rule rather than using the Zimbabwean case to refine Gramscian theoretical debates. The methodological approach holds that Zimbabwe’s turbulent history is determined as much by modes of production as it is by ideology, politics and methods of representation and that Zanu-PF’s maintenance of power has relied on both coercion and consent. Gramsci’s theories provide useful heuristic tools to understand these dynamics and their deep historical roots in a manner that equally considers structural factors as it does key moments of agency and strategic decisions by important political leaders.
Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis is the work of the candidate alone and has not been submitted to any other University or Institute of Higher Education in support of a different award. Citations of secondary works have been fully referenced.

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Date: …………………
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIPPA</td>
<td>Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFC</td>
<td>Agricultural Finance Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSAC</td>
<td>British South Africa Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPP</td>
<td>Botswana People’s Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCJP</td>
<td>Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFU</td>
<td>Commercial Farmer’s Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNDD</td>
<td>Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPAC</td>
<td>Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CZI</td>
<td>Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries</td>
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<tr>
<td>EOM</td>
<td>Election Observer Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESAP</td>
<td>Economic Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPRDF</td>
<td>Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>FES</td>
<td>Friedrich Ebert Stiftung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>Front de Liberation National (Algeria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRELIMO</td>
<td>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>FROLIZI</td>
<td>Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe</td>
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<td>FTLRP</td>
<td>Fast Track Land Reform Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNU</td>
<td>Government of National Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>Global Political Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMB</td>
<td>Grain Marketing Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRI</td>
<td>International Republican Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISO</td>
<td>International Socialist Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICU</td>
<td>Industrial Commercial Workers Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOMIC</td>
<td>Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOC</td>
<td>Joint Operations Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDC</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDC-M</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change- Mutambara</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDC-N</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change-Ncube</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDC-T</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai</td>
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<tr>
<td>MKD</td>
<td>Mavambo Kusile Dawn</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMD</td>
<td>Movement for Multiparty Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPLA</td>
<td>Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>National Constitutional Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDI</td>
<td>National Democratic Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>National Democratic Party</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUST</td>
<td>National University of Science and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>NWPC</td>
<td>National Working People’s Convention</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORAP</td>
<td>Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>POSA</td>
<td>Public Order and Security Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICU</td>
<td>Reformed Industrial Commercial Worker’s Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>Revolutionary Command Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPF</td>
<td>Rwandan People’s Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAPES-Trust</td>
<td>Southern Africa Political Economy Series Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRBVA</td>
<td>Southern Rhodesia Bantu Voter’s Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>STERP</td>
<td>Short Term Economic Recovery Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRC</td>
<td>Student Representative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDI</td>
<td>Unilateral Declaration of Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDPS</td>
<td>Union pour la Democratie et le Progres Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United Stated Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZCTU</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZCC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZCC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Council of Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZCC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Constitutional Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZANLA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zanu-PF</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZAPU</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African People’s Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZBC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZPP</td>
<td>Zimbabwe People’s Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZEC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Electoral Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZESN</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Election Support Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZINASU</td>
<td>Zimbabwe National Student’s Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZIPRA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZLHR</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZNLWVA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veteran’s Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZUM</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Unity Movement</td>
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis applies Antonio Gramsci’s historical political economy, particularly his concepts of historical blocs and hegemony, to account for the nearly four decade-long rule of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF). Gramsci’s theories provide useful tools for explaining Zanu-PF’s and other similarly entrenched regimes across Africa by employing an ontology, an epistemology and a method that incorporates historical, economic and ideological factors. Gramsci’s theories help us analyse dynamics of structure and agency, modes of production and ideology, as well as consent and coercion in the creation and maintenance of long lasting political dominance. The Gramscian concept of the historical bloc supplies a conceptual continuum between the base, a society’s mode of economic production and reproduction, and the superstructure, the dominant ideologies and political institutions. The thesis identifies three post-independence historical blocs in Zimbabwe. These are the 1980 era’s ‘corporatist/welfarist’ or ‘compromise state’ historical bloc; the attempted neo-liberal Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) historical bloc and finally the crisis hegemonic bloc which corresponds with the Third Chimurenga and the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. The thesis considers that this last bloc includes the period of the Government of National Unity Between 2009-2013 and has persisted beyond the coup of 2017 and Emmerson Mnangagwa’s pronounced ‘Second Republic’. Hegemony is understood as the continuum between ‘intellectual and moral leadership obtained by consent’ and the strategies employed on the terrain of ‘relations of force’ in achieving and maintaining political dominance (Gramsci, 2000, p. 202). The thesis concurs with the observation by Gramscian scholar David Moore that Zanu-PF has never enjoyed leadership based solely on intellectual and moral leadership without the threat of violence. Neither, however, is it the case that the party has ruled entirely by force without claiming to derive its
authority from a higher ideological and moral source. The thesis will therefore seek to make explicit at which points either consent or coercion has been primary in maintaining the party’s dominance within each historical bloc. In applying Gramscian theories to Zimbabwean history and politics the thesis remains sensitive to the conundrums at the centre of Gramsci’s and indeed wider Marxian theory. Firstly, the question of whether politics and ideology can be read off an analysis of a society’s mode of production and reproduction. Secondly whether scholars and political actors can develop accurate analyses or political strategies bound by relations of consent and coercion based off the analysis of production and the class structures it creates? The above theoretical questions notwithstanding the primary concern of the thesis is to understand how Zanu-PF (and by generalisation other similarly entrenched African regimes such as those in Algeria, Sudan, and Ethiopia) has used varying combinations of consensual and coercive measures within the framework of history defined by economic and ideological factors. The abovementioned theoretical concerns must be considered if reductionism and subjective voluntarism about base or superstructure, structure and agency or the dominance of either consent or coercion, are to be avoided. However the resolution of the theoretical questions will not be the core aim of this thesis. The dissertation applies the Gramscian method to address the question of Zanu-PF’s rule rather than using the Zimbabwean case to refine Gramscian theoretical debates. The methodological approach holds that Zimbabwe’s turbulent history is determined as much by modes of production as it is by ideology, politics and methods of representation and that Zanu-PF’s maintenance of power has relied on both coercion and consent. Gramsci’s theories provide useful heuristic tools to understand these dynamics and their deep historical roots in a manner that equally considers structural factors as it does key moments of agency and strategic decisions by important political leaders.

Research Question

How to account for the durability of Zanu-PF rule.
Zanu-PF came to power in 1980, following a fourteen-year armed struggle against the Rhodesian settler state which had ground to a stalemate by the end of the 19070s. The armed struggle concluded in the Lancaster House Agreement, which established a new constitution for the independent state of Zimbabwe. The party won the country’s first elections by universal suffrage in 1980, securing 57 of the 80 seats open for black contestation. By agreeing to the Lancaster House constitution in 1979, the nationalist party’s leadership, despite explicitly portraying themselves as Marxist, effectively acquiesced to maintaining the Rhodesian settler state’s modes of production intact and avoiding radical economic policies such as the nationalisation of businesses and initiating the kind of moderate land reform that the British would fund to the extent of £45,000 instead of seizing settler estates (Herbst 1990; Karumbidza, 2004). Why the nationalist leadership compromised some of the more revolutionary aims of the liberation struggle and whether they had the intention or ability to made good on their promises is a central debate in the scholarship on Zimbabwe. Zanu-PF’s leadership would justify the compromises citing the pragmatic necessity to bring about independence and would point to the potential for land reform once the sunset clauses in the Lancaster House Agreement had expired. Scholars such as Mandaza (1986) and Moore (1991) argue that despite their ostensibly Marxist values, Zanu-PF’s leadership had never been ardent Socialists neither in terms of their petit-bourgeois class interest nor in their ideology. The system in which the means of economic production remained in the hands of white capital and land owners while a black nationalist party governed the state adding a welfarist dimension by increasing public spending on education and health created a compromise historical bloc in the state. Socialist or not, except in Matabeleland, there was little question about the party’s initial capacity to harness popular consent. Simultaneously, the machinery of state coercion began to be occupied by the guerrilla armies that had engaged in the fight for independence. The party’s authoritarian intolerance of opposition would become apparent between 1983 and 1987 during the Gukurahundi, the brutal reaction to supposed dissident activity by former Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) combatants in the south of the country. By the end of the 1980s, against the tide of history, Zanu-PF had made clear its intention to establish a de jure one-party state in Zimbabwe, ostensibly due to a preference for Socialist systems of government. The chorus for the one-party-state gained momentum within the party following the signing of unity accord between
Zanu-PF and the opposition PF-ZAPU in December 1987. The accords subsumed PF-ZAPU within Zanu-PF, rendering the country a *de facto* one-party state.

The contradictions of a party that portrayed itself as ideologically Socialist while maintaining the economic structures of the settler state would become manifest in the 1990s. The early part of the decade was defined by the application of market-based Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP). Structural adjustment with its prescribed liberalisation of foreign exchange and trade, the deregulation of the economy and rationalisation and privatisation of public enterprises, all while rolling back on public expenditure and social welfare represented such a significant change to the economic base of the country that it is possible to determine the period between 1990 and 1997 as a specific ESAP historical bloc. On the level of the superstructure the decade saw the abandonment of welfarism accompanied by the centralisation of power and intolerance to opposition just as the negative effects of structural adjustment began to affect the urban working class with a knock-on effect in the rural areas. ESAP and the drought of 1992 produced persistently high inflation, high unemployment and stagnant demand within Zimbabwe’s economy producing a real impact on the country’s poor and working classes. Inflation rose from an average of 14% in the 1980s to 42% in 1992. By 1995, 20 000 workers had been retrenched in the public sector and 25 510 in the private sector, while real wages had dropped by 41% between 1990 and 1993 (ZCTU 1996).

The results of the economic downturn caused by ESAP and the increasingly visible erosions of political freedoms began to produce pockets of opposition against the ruling party. In 1996 public sector workers were joined by third-level students in a general strike over wages (Sachikonye, 2002; Nordlund, 1996). Under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions began to articulate the linkages between the economic crisis and the problems of governance (Danserau, 2003). Protests began to address issues of governance and the economy, and to decry the pronounced authoritarianism of the government. A movement comprising various strands of civil society (including the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, the student movement and a burgeoning field of human rights NGOs), began to coalesce around the issue of the constitutional reform. They
formed the National Constitutional Assembly in 1997 and went on to form a political party in the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999.

The hegemonic contest between Zanu-PF and the MDC since 1999 has taken place within a crisis historical bloc, an era which the ruling party declared the *third chimurenga*. The crisis historical bloc and the contest for hegemony which has taken place in this context has seen the country undergo large-scale land reform, catastrophic economic collapse marked by historic levels of hyperinflation and an attending humanitarian crisis. Throughout this period six separate elections were held; all of which resulted in violence and have been less than credible.

The particularly violent elections of 2008 culminated in five years of a government of national unity. This thesis concurs with Brian Raftopulous’s Gramscian categorisation of this phase of Zimbabwean history as one of *passive revolution*. The concept refers to a historical phase in which hegemonic forces and those in opposition to them remain static often as the outcome of a war of position by the dominant classes after a war of manoeuvre by the dominated classes. While the GNU halted the economic freefall of 2008, and led to the drafting of a new constitution and electoral laws; by the end of the power sharing government’s term in 2013, the opposition movement had failed to make good on the momentum of its inception and appeared to have stalled by the end of the shared government’s term of office. While Zanu-PF’s hegemony was arguably based less on popular support and consent than on coercion and fraud, it is certain that in the aftermath of the 2013 elections the rules of the political game in Zimbabwe had not changed.

When Robert Mugabe was finally removed from power in November 2017 it was ultimately through unconstitutional means and at the hands of his own party rather than through the ballot box. This event and Morgan Tsvangirai’s death in 2018, before his party had determined his successor, represent clear indicators of Zanu-PF’s durability and the degree to which the opposition in Zimbabwe had failed to decisively bring about a change in the power dynamics of the country either electorally or ideologically. Zanu-PF’s internal change of leadership through unconstitutional and coercive means would ultimately be legalised and made legitimate through the party’s decisive victory in the 2018 elections. The foregoing would justify the continued
relevance of this thesis’ research question which is how do we explain Zanu-PF’s capacity to maintain power against a viable opposition for over twenty years, in the context of economic and political breakdown?

**Accounting for Zanu-PF rule**

The study of Zimbabwean post-independence politics and political economy is inescapably the study of Zanu-PF rule and the failure of opposition forces to bring about a decisive change in hegemony. The nationalist party has governed Zimbabwe since independence in 1980 and has in its evolving forms been the central political actor in the country’s history since 1957. Accounting for the party’s durability, particularly after the genesis of a viable opposition since 1999 is therefore fundamental to the study of Zimbabwean politics. Scholarship on Zimbabwean politics has been contributed to by a wide variety of approaches including political economy, history, and orthodox political studies. Notably however despite the different paradigmatic approaches, studies of Zimbabwean politics since the late 1990s have tended to demonstrate a transition bias which implied Zanu-PF’s eventual downfall (Bratton, 2016, Moore 2001, Murithi et al 2011). So the question has often been how and when is Zanu-PF going to be removed from power rather than why it is managing to remain in power in the first place. The various disciplinary approaches situate the primary drivers of political history on different factors including the country’s mode of production and the classes it produces, the balance of coercive power, contesting ideologies, the agency of key historical actors and political movements as well as international relations and Zimbabwe’s place in the global system. Despite the above diversity in emphasis, Zimbabwean political studies have generally tended to eschew stark epistemological categorisation and the most prominent scholarship in the field often overlaps the various sub-disciplines.

Assuming the interaction between economic base and superstructure in interpreting political events and explaining historical development, political economy studies of Zimbabwe can be traced to Giovanni Arrighi’s 1967 article “The Political Economy
of Rhodesia”. Arrighi demonstrated the interaction between colonial modes of extraction to the social systems and the classes production would generate to Rhodesia’s colonial history until 1965. Arrighi in his own right would become associated with Gramscian International Relations theory in general. Arrighi’s heirs addressing Zimbabwean history through the lens of political economy have included Mandaza, Sam Moyo, Ian Scoones, Suzanne Dansereau, Patrick Bond and Manyama, and Lloyd Sachikonye and Hevina Dashwood. Through this lens Zanu-PF’s durability has mostly been explained in relation to dynamics which have arisen from the country’s modes of production.

A Gramscian focus on the ideologies legitimating Zanu-PF rule would overlap with and be informed by the rich historical work which is most prominently traced back to the work of Terence Ranger. The strand of historical scholarship on Zimbabwe has its roots in his studies of historical consciousness connecting anti colonial and modern nationalist struggles to primary resistance and pre-colonial society have been crucial ingredients in the regime’s deployment of a “patriotic history”. This itself has drawn upon academic analyses of Zimbabwe’s liberation war and its continuing political salience have informed contemporary academic debates. We will be including a consideration of Zimbabwean nationalist historiography in Chapter Three. Historiography is ultimately the study of intellectuals and the ideologies they generate, and in the case of Zimbabwe, academic historians have been critically engaged in hegemonic maintenance and contestation (Blessing-Miles, 2008). This thesis will also show how Zimbabwean intellectuals have consciously been involved in the construction of intellectual and moral leadership of the country.

Within the paradigms of orthodox political science, Zimbabwe is considered a prototypical example of a hybrid regime, what Schedler terms an electoral authoritarian regime or what Schmitter has caslled a competitive authoritarian regime (LeBas, 2013; Levitsky and Way, 2010; Masunungure, 2009; Schedler 2006), to cite particular phraseologies associated with definitions of “democracy with adjectives” (Carothers, 2002). Hybrid regimes combine inherited authoritarian reflexes with a modern democratic facade, in such a way that the one undermines the other. As
Nicholas van der Walle suggests, they are often the product of incumbent authoritarian administrations imposing democratisation from above, on their terms, usually in response to external fiscal pressures rather than domestic rebellion (Van der Walle, 2002). They may be neo-patrimonial, drawing principally upon networks of “affection” supplied by kinship and ethnicity rather than institutional sources of power; the latter co-exist with them but have little force (Erdmann et al., 2007). As this thesis will show, the Zanu-PF regime was not an incumbent regime forced into a pro-forma democratisation, but rather the product of a bargained transition into power of a popular liberation movement, relatively freely elected into office, and circumscribed by constitutional provisions which its leaders appeared to adhere to until faced with increasing dissent. Zimbabwean political power is effectively bureaucratised, as well, as its opponents learn to their cost. Hybrid regimes are often assumed to be transient or short-lived; as one very optimistic observer at the beginning of the 1990’s noted, “the half house does not stand” (Huntington, 1991, p. 174) and more widely “semi democracies” were believed to be unstable (Knutsen and Nygaard, 2015; Geddes, 1999; Brownlee, 2009 and Hadenius and Teorell, 2006). In power for nearly forty years, Zanu-PF’s rule has evidently enjoyed durable foundations.

In the paradigm of positivist political science, Zimbabwe and indeed most African regimes are studied in the context of “Third Wave” democratisation (Huntington, 1991): a chapter in the sometimes meandering but inevitable drive towards democratic transition and consolidation, a teleology popularised by Fukuyama (1992) but analytically implicit in much of the more recent writing on “stalled” democratic transitions. At the end of the Cold War, the empirical conditions for democratisation
to take root were more favourable in Zimbabwe than in most countries in the region (Bukart and Lewis-Beck, 1994, p. 907; Levitsky & Way 2010). The adult literacy rate was 76% and Zimbabwe was wealthier than most countries in Africa (Stoneman & Cliffe 1989). Indeed, Bratton and Van der Walle (1994) counted Zimbabwe as a “consolidated democracy” in their study, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, between 1988 and 1994, as the country had held regular multi-party elections, possessed an independent judiciary and a relatively vibrant civil society with constitutionally protected freedom of association and speech. If this was true, then Zimbabwe would embody a very rare example of a country that has degenerated from democratic consolidation. In fact, though by 2018 the country had held eleven separate elections and two referenda since independence but there had not yet been a single definitive turnover in power, for several analysts the key distinguishing characteristic of democratic consolidation (Huntington, 1991, p. 267; Przeworksi, 1991, p. 10) Again, objections can be raised simply to the chronology of such a presentation: Zimbabwe’s democratisation was in fact a decolonisation happening well before the end of the Cold War and its abandonment of constitutional forms has been halting and piecemeal.

Studies of Zimbabwe within this paradigm either as a single case, in small-n or as part of large-N comparative studies have been marked by the teleological democratisation bias from which the entire transition paradigm suffers. This democratising bias affected a great deal of the work on Zimbabwe as even scholars from outside the strict positivist framework have at times viewed Zimbabwe as being “at a turning point” or “in transition” and that Zanu-PF as a regime which was likely to collapse. The fact that Zimbabwe, along with a large number of other such hybrid regimes has not actually transitioned or consolidated as a democracy points to the theoretical (both descriptive and predictive) weaknesses of the democratisation paradigm, with its emphasis on elite decision-making and organisational power (O’Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Mainwaring et al, 1992; Whitehead 2002; Schmitter and Karl, 1991).

The shortcomings of the democratisation scholarship with respect to understanding modern Zimbabwean politics are not the principal preoccupation of this thesis, though. Here our main point is that if we consider the problem of the durability of the Zanu-PF regime, we need to remember that in a day to day context administrations rely on beliefs and perceptions, on either willing acceptance or resigned acquiescence of their
presence among citizens. It is therefore necessary to place ideology at the centre of any analysis that seeks to account for why ZANU-PF has succeeded in staying in power. In other words, the regime’s hegemony is a continuum between coercion and consent, though the balance between the two shifts at different moments. We have noted above, scholarship on Zimbabwe has rarely been exclusive in its theoretical and methodological approaches. The prominent political economists of Zimbabwe have often traced historical trends even in their granular detail, and historical studies have been framed within political-economic context. The thesis would therefore not claim to make a significant methodological contribution to Zimbabwean studies, rather it uses Gramsci’s methods to explain Zanu-PF’s endurance because the method explicitly applies historical context, engages with economic as well as political and ideological elements and includes an analysis of consent as much as it does coercion. There have also been scholars who have written on Zimbabwe within an explicitly Gramscian perspective. The most resolutely Gramscian of these would be David Moore, though other prominent scholars such as Brian Raftopulous have sometimes used Gramscian theories in their work. In explaining and accounting for ZANU’s continued hold on power, Moore has drawn upon Gramscian ideas to argue that ZANU-PF rule is principally coercive and hence not hegemonic in the sense of exercising intellectual and moral authority, while Raftopoulos has used the Gramscian concept of “passive revolution” to explain the phase of the Government of National Unity between 2008 and 2013. By contrast this thesis—uses Gramscian notions of hegemony and historical blocs as a tool for understanding ZANU-PF rule more generally through its duration.

**Gramsci’s historical political economy**

Antonio Gramsci, Marxist political theorist and the General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party, wrote his most famous contributions to Marxist political thought *Prison Notebooks* while imprisoned under Mussolini’s Fascist regime between 1926 and 1937. Gramsci’s writing covers a gamut of interests including his concern with an authentic and practical understanding of Marxist political theory, research methodology and political strategy. At the heart of Gramsci’s method is the
determination to balance the analytical and strategic importance of both the consciousness of material facts and ideological aspects of political change so as to avoid either the exaggeration of ‘mechanical causes’ of ‘economism’ or the ‘voluntarist and individual element’ of what he calls ‘ideologism’. Arguing that the method of historical materialism was not ‘a string of parables laden with categorical imperatives, with absolute unquestionable norms beyond the categories of time and space’ (Gramsci, 2000, p. 37), Gramsci stressed that: ‘the history of a people is not documented by economic facts alone’ (Gramsci, 2000, p. 45). To support his argument, he turned to the historical texts of Marx and Engels, the Theses on Feuerbach, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, The Civil War in France and Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany. From these historical works Gramsci observed a number of methodological rules or ‘precautions’ from the works of his precursors.

In a concept he appropriated from Georges Sorel, Gramsci understands the structure or base and the superstructure as reciprocally and dialectically interwoven in the ‘Historical Bloc’. Linking the base and superstructure in this concept, Gramsci goes to great lengths to explain that the base should be studied with the methods of the ‘natural and exact sciences’ because of the objectively verifiable ‘consistency’ of the structure (Gramsci, 2000, p. 195). However, in order to avoid the pitfalls of economism, the concepts of ethico-political history and hegemony are attached to the historical bloc. The first idea was borrowed from Benedetto Croce and is an awareness of the significance of cultural and ideational facts as key to understanding the maintenance of the historical bloc. The concept of hegemony has its roots in the work of Lenin, who refers to the political, cultural and ideological struggles. Thus, ‘Men acquire consciousness of structural conflicts on the level of ideologies’. The point is, ‘the dominant factors in history [are] not raw economic facts, but man, men in societies, men in relation to one another, developing through these contacts (civilisation) a collective, social will; men coming to understand economic facts, judging them and adapting them to their will until this becomes the driving force of the economy and moulds objective reality’ (Gramsci, 2000, p.33). Hegemony is therefore understood as the combination of ideological ‘intellectual and moral leadership obtained by consent’ as well as the strategies employed on the terrain of ‘relations of force’ in order to bring about the task a movement has set itself
The concept of hegemony encapsulates a number of dichotomies in his ontology, epistemology and strategy which apply to the dilemmas of durable regimes and the movements that oppose them. The first of these dichotomies, taken from Marx and Engels, consists of that between the base and superstructure (or material vs ideological factors). The second is the dichotomy between structure and agency. As a theory of both analysis and strategy, Gramsci’s hegemony seeks to account for continuity as much as it does for change. Furthermore, in seeking to account for political change, or indeed the lack thereof, the dynamic between consent and coercion is also crucial. It is this complex set of overlapping dichotomies and dynamics which we will attempt to outline in the following section.

Hegemonic change is dependent on the ‘relation of forces’; the measure of which rests firstly within the structure-superstructure relation, and secondly with the nature and character of the movements seeking to challenge the hegemonic status quo. By nature and character here we refer to whether or not a movement is organic, meaning relatively permanent, or conjunctural which would designate an occasional, almost haphazard phenomenon.

It is important here to reiterate that Gramsci was concerned not merely with analysis, but also with strategy. The question of the relation of forces is not merely a matter of analytical rigour but of historical strategy. He distinguishes these relations of forces as follows: the first of these relations is of economic forces incorporating the mode of accumulation and production, and the development of material forces. This aspect of economic relations is measurable using the methods of natural science. The second moment is the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness and organisation attained by the various social groups. The third is the relation of military forces. This last moment encapsulates not only brute coercive power, but also ideological consent. Power is therefore both a question of consent generated by how convincing an ideology is to a significant proportion of a polity, which may also be a function of the a movement’s capacity to organise and make itself heard, and coercion the physical capacity to make others do what they may not otherwise normally do. To symbolise this dialectic Gramsci used the metaphor of a Centaur the Greek “half man-half beast”. Precisely where on the continuum between consent and coercion a specific politically dominant entity derives its power is not only a question of historical analysis but also a
core theoretical conundrum of Gramscian theory. While Gramscian scholarship including the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Cox (1983) and Worth (2015) would place the accent on theoretical debates on where precisely on the continuum of consent and coercion hegemony exists and where Gramsci would have been situated, this thesis chooses to avoid hermeneutic engagement with Gramscian theory on consent or coercion and uses hegemony as a heuristic rather than a rigid formula to be tested on the Zimbabwean case. The goal is not to determine whether or not Zanu-PF has been completely hegemonic in a Gramscian sense at any given moment. The answer to this question is probably that the party has more often relied on violence or the fear of violence than it has on consent to maintain its power. The point is that the party has never relied solely on elements of consent or coercion but rather shifting combinations of both. The purpose of this thesis is to understand how Zanu-PF (and by generalisation other similarly entrenched African regimes) has used varying combinations of measures of consent and coercion at different times to maintain its power and at what moment either of the two factors has been dominant within the framework of the historical bloc.

The thesis will however be informed by Gramscian concepts which will enrich our analysis of how Zanu-PF has been able to maintain its grip onto power. Among these will be Gramsci’s various understanding of opposition to a hegemonic power. While Gramsci didn’t use the term counter-hegemony, Gramsci’s concepts of opposition to a hegemonic power has been developed from his ideas by a series of more recent followers and commentators. As such counter-hegemony doesn’t just mean opposition. Deeper conceptualisation of the ideas around ‘counter-hegemony’ would go some way to explain why opposing forces succeed or indeed fail to bring about decisive changes to hegemonic power, probably Gramsci’s principal pre-occupation as he wrote from Mussolini’s prisons. The ‘counter’ idea means thorough examination of how forces challenging the ruling group create alternative possibilities; and furthermore how those contestations are thwarted, either through the rulers or their organic intellectuals. This latter concept of will be applied further to ask: to what extent are members of an intellectual stratum or elite within a ‘fundamental’ social group or class or free-floating and autonomous, taking on new discourses and practices of reform or increased coercion.
In analysing why opposition or counter-hegemonic movements fail Gramsci’s distinction between organic and conjunctural movements is also necessary. The difference between the two kinds of movement is as much a question of correct method as it is of correct strategy. Gramsci explains the method of hegemony for analysing a political movement during the course of its development, with reference to the 19th Century Boulangist movement\(^2\) in France. Gramsci provides this example to develop an ideal method of how to analyse a movement during the course of its development. Gramsci proposed that research of opposition movements be guided by analysing the social content of the mass following of the movements, their function in the balance of forces – which is in the process of transformation and the means they apply toward the proposed end. Only in the last analysis, and formulated in political not moralistic terms, is the hypothesis considered that such a movement would be necessarily perverted, and serve quite different ends from those which the mass of its followers expected (Gramsci, 2000, p. 217).

**Analytical advantages of Gramsci’s political economy**

In order to answer the key research question we need to be able to decipher when structural factors or ideological factors are the most effective in maintaining power and when coercion or consent are decisive in maintaining power. Through the concept of the historical bloc, which combines both the material economic facts of production and the ideological explanation of the hegemonic forces and the forces which oppose them, the method provides a useful analytical tool for explaining both the role of economic realities and how polities understand them. This tool is particularly useful in a case such as Zimbabwe where economic catastrophes including historic hyperinflation, and mass unemployment were not sufficient to trigger a mass uprising against the incumbent government. Part of the reason for this is ideological, as will be shown in this thesis: that Zanu-PF was able to make a reasonably convincing argument for economic failure being due to western sanctions for which the opposition

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2 ‘The Boulangist movement was a right-wing movement led by General Boulanger, revanchist ex-minister of war, in 1887-89. It called for a new constituent assembly, reform of parliament and military regeneration of the nation. Elected with a huge majority, Boulanger appeared about to attempt a coup in 1889 but hesitated and fled the country.’ (Gramsci, 2000, p. 410)
movement was to blame. The thesis will therefore aim to use this historical political economy to explain the material facts, but also to explain how the leadership is able to guide the perceptions of these facts and the reasons for their existence. Factors such as class and class identities are thus of importance in an analysis of a particular historical bloc and the hegemonic contestation taking place within it. Gramsci’s concept of civil society does not view it as a space of essentially virtuous organisations (in contrast to the dominant contemporary definitions) but rather a contesting space of ideas. The concept of civil society as an arena of contestation may help to account for the failure of certain movements to catalyse either mass support or adequate mass mobilisation to bring about a hegemonic change. Gramsci’s method accounts for why movements fail as much as why they succeed. The political significance of the opposition movement’s ideas and their capacity to resonate with the majority of the society are an important consideration in why a movement succeeds or fails.

Factors such as the internal cohesion of the movement and its organisational and mobilising capacity have an impact on the outcome of contestation. The origins of the constituent parts of the movement will therefore have an influence on the movement’s methods. The methods the movement uses are also important in determining the success or failure of the counter-hegemonic push. Gramsci’s concepts of the war of position and the war of manoeuvre (in relation to the strategic choices taken to confront a hegemonic power or indeed to erode its ideological and cultural influence) are useful tools to apply in contexts such as Zimbabwe.

The Gramscian method considers a number of individual variables such as methods of mobilisation, coercive capacities, and ideology that can and have been applied and controlled. The combination of structural and ideological factors, the analysis of the coercive as well as ideational power and the applicability to a single historical case make Gramsci’s method suitable to this kind of analysis.

**Research methodology**
This section provides an outline of the research design used in this thesis and justification, before elaborating on the practicalities of research methodology and how data collection was conducted in the case study.

**Research design for case study of hegemony and counter-hegemony in Zimbabwe**

This thesis is a structured focused case study of Zanu-PF rule as a durable authoritarian regime. The case study approach in this instance is understood as, ‘the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events’ (George et al., 2005, p. 5). This case study fulfils a number of objectives.

First it will accomplish the objective of what Lijphart and Eckstein refer to as disciplined configurative or disciplined interpretive case studies. These are case studies which have the capacity to impugn established theories that ought to fit but do not. Secondly, the case study approach serves a heuristic purpose by inductively ‘identifying new variables, hypotheses, causal mechanisms, and causal paths’ (George and Bennett, 2005, p. 75). Heuristic case studies are often conducted on deviant or outlier cases where outcomes do not reflect those predicted by traditional theories. In designing this project, I have been sensitive to the debates surrounding selection bias, whereby cases are selected on the dependent variable (in this instance incomplete democratic consolidation). I have taken the debates into account but believe, as do George et al., that case selection based on the values of the dependent variable is appropriate in some cases, and that ‘case studies allow a researcher to achieve high levels of conceptual validity, or to identify and measure the indicators that best

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3The disciplined interpretive case study interprets or explains an event by applying a known theory to the new terrain. The more explicit and systematic the use of theoretical concepts, the more powerful the application. Although this method may not test a theory, the case study shows that one or more known theories can be extended to account for a new event. This type of research will interest critics as well as defenders of the theories, even those who care little about the particular event. This type of case study cannot fairly be called a theoretical nor is it broader contribut ions nil (Odell, J. 2001, International Studies Perspectives).

Harry Eckstein (1975, p. 103): ‘Aiming at the disciplined application of theories to cases forces one to state theories more rigorously than might otherwise be done.’ As a result of this conceptual work, the author may often be able to generate an additional type of contribution or new suggestions for improving the theory.
represent the theoretical concepts the researcher intends to measure’ (George, 2005, p. 22).

The method is structured, meaning that the researcher proposes general questions to reflect the research objective, and that these questions are asked of each case under study. This is in order to guide and standardise data collection, thereby making possible the systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases. The method is focused in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined. The requirements for structure and focus ‘apply equally to individual cases since that may later be joined by additional cases.’ (George et al, 2005, p. 67). This thesis is not an atheoretical inductive case study; it will be employing a theoretical framework that combines elements (ontological and epistemological approaches) of critical political economy, particularly Gramsci’s hegemony, and the concept of the historical bloc.

It is important to note that, in contrast to the dominant transition and consolidation theories in modern studies of African politics and indeed a lot of the scholarship on Zimbabwean politics, this thesis seeks to reject the teleological implication that the transition and consolidation of liberal democracy is inevitable. The phenomenon under consideration here is limited to a long standing “durable” regime which has used various levels of consent and coercion in order to maintain its power.

Data collection: semi-structured interviews

Data for this thesis was collected mainly through semi-structured interviews conducted in person by the researcher in Zimbabwe. The researcher conducted an initial seven-month field study between January and July 2010 in Zimbabwe while attached to the Zimbabwe Election Support Network in Harare. This period consisted of participant observation with the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, a prominent governance NGO in the country, participating in conferences and in the day-to-day activities of the organisation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with actors in the NGO sector in Zimbabwe. By semi-structured interviews we refer to a flexible set of questions which allowed for elaboration by the interviewee, as well as additional
sub-questions following the direction of the interviewee’s narrative. More in-depth focused research interviews were conducted in Harare in June 2011 with key actors who straddled the space between NGOs, donors, the opposition political parties, and labour. Follow-up interviews were conducted in November 2016, July 2017 and January 2018. This period of interviews allowed the researcher to have an overview of the evolution of dynamics within the counter-hegemonic movement.

Sampling for interviewees was dependent on a number of contextual variables in Zimbabwe which made access to some opposition movement actors difficult as a number of them held positions in the Government of National Unity and had their access restricted due to government business. The ability to find informants who straddle multiple organisations and roles in the movement, is a reflection of the extent to which these NGO-style civil society organisations have monopolised the non-state sphere; their undoubtable political influence, as well the polarisation of the civil society in the broad sense.

**Observation**

As noted above, between January and July 2010 this researcher was employed in the Zimbabwe Election Support Network. This position allowed a great deal of access into the workings of a prominent coalition of civil society bodies as well as Zimbabwean civil society in general. During this period, he was able to attend a number of important rallies and commemorations of major events in the preceding 20 years of the movement’s struggle. The position allowed him to make personal contact with a number of prominent civil society actors as well as some of their former comrades who had moved into the political space through the MDC and the Government of National Unity. In June 2011, while based at Sabanci University in Istanbul as a Marie Curie Research Fellow in Sustainable Peace Building, this researcher spent two months at the Southern Africa Political Economy Series library in Harare. He conducted the bulk of his interviews during this period while attending the policy dialogues held at the SAPES trust, often meeting key actors in both the Government of National Unity and the opposition movement. From April 2013 he was employed by
the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, initially in Johannesburg and subsequently in Somalia, during which time he was in contact with key actors in Zimbabwe’s politics from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, as well as civil society organisations working in the arena of elections and democracy.

**Documentation**

As well drawing upon the experiences just described, this thesis also relied on official and unofficial documentation from individual organisations and the Movement for Democratic Change. Documentation was collected in hard copy by the researcher while present in Zimbabwe. In addition, the researcher subscribed to regular updates from civil society organisations and the MDC daily newsletter – which became a regular source of information about the vicissitudes of the party between 2010 and 2013 – and to the Allafrica.com news service. This website has archived newspaper articles in Zimbabwe since 1996 and allowed for in-depth archival research of events and issues that came up in the research interviews.

**Data analysis**

Interviews were transcribed on F4, a free transcription software, soon after leaving the field and while the questions and the impressions of the events were fresh in mind. This software allows for playing, stopping and rewinding recordings very easily and facilitated transcription and analysis by providing a timing tag on the transcribed document. The researcher was able to use notes taken during the interviews to record impressions during the original interviews and combine these with the transcribed documents.

The researcher used NVIVO 10 software to code transcribed interviews. Interviews were first coded chronologically in order to place events within the causal trajectory of the counter-hegemonic movement between 1997 and 2013. Having coded the data chronologically a second round of coding was conducted along themes drawn from
the research question and the questions for analysing a counter-hegemonic movement outlined by Gramsci. Examples of these themes are: the social and class content of the movement, strategies for bringing about change, the relationship between civil society and the MDC, relationships between individual organisations, and the relationship between the opposition movement and international donor states. In going through the data, new themes would arise and these would be coded under new nodes as the analysis proceeded. Finally, the NVIVO software allows for the correlation of certain codes against each other. The data in this thesis is largely discursive and therefore did not allow for as strict a correlation as questionnaire data permits. The process of coding and data analysis naturally developed into the chapter outline that follows.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2: Gramscian Historical Political Economy

The second chapter provides an elaboration of Gramscian theories of hegemony and counter-hegemony which this thesis will use as its core theoretical paradigm. In doing so the chapter traces the genealogy of the concept of hegemony in Marxian political theory prior to Gramsci to explain the political, epistemological and ontological tools which Gramsci proposes in his theory. The emphasis will be placed on these tools and how they can be used within a heuristic framework to understand the durability/hegemony of a regime such as Zanu-PF.

What is important is to understand and explain what is happening in Zimbabwe not whether or not Zimbabwe fits a specific understanding of Gramscian theory. Gramsci’s theory is useful in that it provides a useful framework that doesn’t privilege one historical driver over another but allows for us to consider multiple dynamics in a single evolving context. The thesis will certainly underline which of the various factors are judged to be dominant at any given moment. Other important theoretical considerations such as whether or not an uneven class formation produce ‘real’ organic intellectuals or if these are “ruling classes in the making” are secondary to the core purpose of this thesis. So, while theoretical debates about consent and coercion in Gramsci are considered, our analysis of why Zanu-PF has been able to maintain power is the primary consideration.
The chapter then outlines the contested interpretations of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony understood firstly as an arena of ideology and culture, and secondly as a continuum between consent and coercion. Arising from this second interpretation of Gramsci’s hegemony the chapter explains the second key Gramscian concept of the historical bloc, which is understood as the continuum between base and superstructure. This concept is fundamental to Gramsci’s method for understanding political change by combining both raw economic facts and the mode of production as the drivers of history, and the equally important role of ideology and political institutions.

The thesis will be guided by this method of analysis and will seek to understand Zimbabwean history within the theoretical framework that conceives of power as the combination of violence and consent. Furthermore, in this framework the political history of any society, Zimbabwe included, is seen as driven by the modes of production and how they aggregate class interests, as well as how these different societal aggregations are able to explain and justify their interests on the intellectual and ideological terrain. The chapter then explains the ideas of organic crisis as moments where core contradictions of the society erupt into open conflict for power. Gramsci’s strategic concepts of war of manoeuvre and war of position are then detailed. It will be shown how these strategic options of overt frontal confrontation and more tactical ideological opposition respectively are defined by Gramsci as counter-hegemonic tools.

The remainder of the thesis will seek to understand the Zimbabwean counter-hegemonic movement’s strategies within these categories. The concept of passive revolution, understood as a reversal or stalling of counter-hegemonic thrust by the hegemonic power will then be elaborated upon. This specific concept will later be used, following Raftopoulos’s observations, to explain the phase of Zimbabwean history following the 2008 elections and the formation of the government of national unity. The chapter then proceeds to outline key Gramscian concepts of organic intellectuals as the producers of ideological consent: these are the modern political party which is likened to Machiavelli’s prince, and Gramsci’s method for the analysis of counter-hegemonic movements which may help account for some of the weaknesses in Zimbabwe’s opposition capacity to bring about decisive hegemonic
change. The chapter concludes with a review of examples of Gramsci’s method in other African cases, as well as instances in which scholars have used Gramsci in relation to Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3: The construction and consolidation of Zanu-PF hegemony

The third chapter deals with the construction of Zanu-PF hegemony within the context of pre-independence and post-independence historic blocs. The chapter explains colonial historic blocs using Giovanni Arrighi’s political economy of the Rhodesian settler state as a general framework for understanding the country’s modes of production and how these generated and drove political interests along racial and class lines. The African nationalist movement and its leadership will be situated within the context of colonial settler state historical bloc. It will be shown how an educated black elite became the organic intellectuals for a nationalist movement which chose armed guerrilla warfare as the primary means for counter-hegemonic struggle. The chapter shows how this petit-bourgeois leadership was historically and racially attached to the peasantry, and how the strategy of armed struggle impacted the party’s understanding and methods of maintaining power. In keeping with the Gramscian method the chapter will seek to elaborate on the ideological inclinations of the nationalist movement. This critical discussion will touch on the internal ideological struggles within the nationalist movement while avoiding a categorical judgement on the nationalist leadership’s intentions. The chapter will trace nationalist history through the second Chimurenga until the Lancaster house agreements and the coming to power of Zanu-PF in 1980. The chapter then situates the postcolonial historical bloc in the compromise of class forces enshrined in the Lancaster House Constitution. Further, it outlines how the new governing class sought to construct its own hegemony through a base which applied corporatist practices to maintain white settler capital and the interests of international capital in Zimbabwe while also adding a social welfarist component to the state.

Chapter 4: The “Neo-liberal” Historical Bloc 1990-1997
Chapter 4 focuses on Zimbabwe’s experiment with neo-liberal economic reforms driven by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank between 1990 and 1997. The chapter considers this Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) phase as a distinct historical bloc. This phase would ultimately bring about the organic crisis historical bloc would characterise Zimbabwean politics after 2000. The chapter elaborates on the decisions to implement the Structural Adjustment Programme and its impact on the national modes of production. This period of immense economic change took place in a context of relative political freedom following the abandonment of the one-party state idea in the global context of “the end of history”. The blocs combination of economic pressures and increasing political dissent led to the coalescence of a counter-hegemonic movement combining labour, students, and an increasingly relevant organised civil society.

Having outlined the base superstructure dynamics of the ESAP bloc the chapter breaks down the various components of Zimbabwe’s opposition civil society as they coalesced to form the National Constitutional Assembly and the Movement for Democratic Change political party. This outline addresses one of Gramsci’s key questions in analysing counter-hegemonic movements: what is the social content of the mass following of the counter-hegemonic movement? This section begins with an outline of the labour movement as the core, organised, membership-based force in the opposition. The history of the labour movement in Zimbabwe, the Congress of Trade Union structures and leadership, internal dynamics and core grievances in the lead-up to the food strikes of 1997 and 1998 will be explained through interviews with leaders of the congress of trade unions during this period. The second core group to be analysed will be the student movement. Students would be the only other mass membership based group that would form a central part of the opposition in Zimbabwe after 1997. The chapter will show the differences in strategies, ideologies and interests between labour and students as this was a central theme of the data collected during interviews. The differences between labour and students would become a core cleavage point in the leadership battles of the MDC after 2008 as well as after the death of Morgan Tsvangirai in 2018. Associated with the student groups were academics and intellectuals at the nation’s tertiary education institutions. Their
individual ideological persuasions and emphases would influence segments of students, labour and the movement as a whole in often contradictory directions from the formative stages of the counter-hegemonic movement.

The chapter then analyses the roles of other core groups, which, unlike the labour unions and students, were represented mostly by individuals in leadership rather than membership-based power. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) would become central to the counter-hegemonic movement in Zimbabwe. From a space dominated by church groups such as the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, this segment would begin to draw from the student movements and by the mid-1990s became entirely dependent on western donor funding. These new NGOs and their leadership would be central to the drive for democratisation through their focus on both constitutional and electoral reform and human rights monitoring. This section of the opposition would generate important dynamics in how it related to the labour movement, its reliance on donor funding and the complications that this would cause, as well as its relatively shallow membership base. Based on interview data and reviews of other secondary data such as blog posts, newspaper articles and books on the history of Zimbabwe’s opposition, the chapter will explain the core role of these NGOs and their leadership as well as the often overlapping and interpenetration of their leadership with those of student movements, donor agencies and the main opposition political party.

The chapter then outlines other influential, though weakly represented occupations and groups in the counter-hegemonic movement. Among these are lawyers, farmers and business leaders, and the national staff of donor agencies. The chapter then concludes by returning to a chronological narrative which outlines the conjunctural roots of the opposition movement in the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly in 1997 and the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999.

**Chapter 5: The Organic Crisis Historic Bloc 2000-2008**

Chapter 5 traces the history of counter-hegemonic struggle between 2000 and 2008. This phase allows us both a chronological and thematic analysis of the interaction between the hegemonic power in the state and Zanu-PF, and the counter hegemonic
movement. This early phase of the crisis bloc was punctuated by elections in 2000, 2002, 2005 and finally 2008. Elections represent the key moments of confrontation between the ruling party and the counter-hegemonic forces. The chapter will also detail key moments that occurred between the elections and how they contributed to the balance of forces between the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces. In keeping with Gramsci’s framework of the historical bloc, the chapter will outline the broad economic realities of the period beginning with land reform policies of the early 2000s and the economic crises these precipitated.

The chapter will analyse the impact of de-industrialisation, mass unemployment and hyperinflation on political interests in the country. Superstructural elements such as the passing of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in 2002 would become central to the Zimbabwean historical bloc during this period. Additional factors include the centrality of ideological warfare between the opposing hegemonic forces around issues of democracy, land reform and the role of western powers in shaping Zimbabwe’s political future. Conjunctural moments such as Operation Murambatsvina in 2005, as well as the ‘Save Zimbabwe Campaign’ in 2007 will be outlined to establish their impact on the trajectory of the hegemonic struggle. The chapter will also use interview data to highlight the internal dynamics of the counter-hegemonic movement during this period.

The different strategies that the movement put into place and explanations for their success or failure will be outlined, as well as an analysis of the increasingly visible fractures within the movement which would lead to the MDC splitting in 2005. The chapter is informed by the Gramscian tool of the historical bloc, which seeks to understand the historical phase by elucidating economic realities and economic interests as well as the ideological debates of the period. The analysis of hegemonic power will combine the extent to which violence was used to maintain or challenge power, as well as the observable capacity for the contending hegemonic forces to generate ideological consent from the Zimbabwean population. Finally, the strategies of the counter-hegemonic movement will be analysed as they relate to the Gramscian concepts of war of position and war of manoeuvre. The elections of 2008 represented
a crucial turning point in Zimbabwe’s hegemonic history, as the evident defeat of Zanu-PF and Robert Mugabe in the combined elections resulted in a brutal campaign of violence by the ruling party against MDC supporters. The year 2008 marks the end of the first phase of hegemonic confrontation and forms a logical conclusion to the analysis of the initial phase of confrontation.

Chapter 6: Passive revolution and the resurgence of Zanu-PF hegemony 2008-2013

Chapter 6 addresses the period of the Government of National Unity between 2008 and 2013. Following the violence which accompanied the second round of the presidential elections in March 2008, a political settlement was negotiated between Zanu-PF and the two factions of the Movement for Democratic Change. The settlement, known as the Global Political Agreement (GPA), put in place a Government of National Unity (GNU) which maintained Mugabe as president and appointed Morgan Tsvangirai as prime minister. This chapter describes the period of the Government of National Unity using the Gramscian concept of passive revolution, echoing the work of Brian Raftopulous, and relies on observation and interview data collected during 2010 and 2011 during the constitution-making process of the GNU. The chapter highlights the shifting dynamics within the opposition movement as cracks began to widen between the varying ideological camps within the party and throughout opposition civil society. It will also be shown that, once in power, members of the counter-hegemonic movement would show tendencies to corruption similar to those of Zanu-PF.

The chapter concludes with an analysis of why Zanu-PF and Robert Mugabe won the 2013 elections. Theories have been proposed by Bratton (2016) and Chan and Gallagher (2017), among others, for why the MDC lost the 2013 elections, despite evident improvement in the economy during the GNU. This thesis will structure its analysis of the MDC’s loss in 2013 within the Gramscian framework. It will ask to what extent this outcome was driven either by economic or ideological factors, or the degree to which the threat of violence or the building of consent accounts for Zanu-PF victory. This victory occurred despite the fact that Zanu-PF had led the country to the disastrous economic hyperinflation of 2008 which the MDC had theoretically
changed between 2008 and 2013. A Gramscian analysis will also assist in studying the strategies of the MDC and consider the potential errors in judgement in the counter-hegemonic battle against Zanu-PF in Zimbabwe.

**Chapter 7: New counter-hegemonic arenas**

Chapter 7 will analyse events after 2013. The post-2013 period saw the rise of powerful new counter-hegemonic forces such as the Tajamuka movement which had its roots in youth and student activism, as well new forces such as Pastor Evan Mawarire’s #ThisFlag movement. Despite these movement’s effect on the dynamics of hegemony in the country Zimbabwe’s history after 2013 will be defined by the removal of Robert Mugabe from office by his own party, and its inseparable blending with the nation’s military. Chapter 8 will therefore discuss how internal dynamics within Zanu-PF led to Mugabe’s removal, beginning with the conflict between Vice-President Joyce Mujuru and Emerson Mnangagwa and then finally the conflict between Mnangagwa and the First Lady Grace Mugabe. The chapter will show how internal party rules, which date back to the Chimurenga period as outlined in Chapter 4, were instrumental in the outcome of the events of 2017. On the counter-hegemonic side, the post-2013 era will be defined by the death of Morgan Tsvangirai and the turmoil within the opposition movement. Internal struggles between ideological and class cleavages outlined in Chapter 4 left an even more divided opposition in the build-up to the country’s first post-Mugabe elections in 2018. These events allow for a useful comparison of internal dynamics within the resurgent hegemonic force in Zanu-PF and the waning counter-hegemonic movement in the MDC.

**Chapter 8: Conclusion, general findings and implications for the analysis of other durable African regimes.**

The thesis concludes with its proposed answers as to why Zanu-PF has been able to maintain hegemonic power in Zimbabwe, and why Zimbabwe’s opposition has been unable to bring about conclusive change in the country. These answers are based on
the analysis and arguments in the preceding chapters. As this is a structured, focused case study which we have defined above as ‘the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events’, the concluding chapter will seek to provide hypotheses generated from the Zimbabwean reality. These may account for a more general research problem, which is how to account for the durability of authoritarian regimes in African states of which there are multiple similar examples including Algeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso. The Gramscian approach in this thesis views the survival and durability of a regime through the lens of hegemony, with the use of power as a consent/coercion continuum. The conclusion will argue that Gramsci’s method is a useful paradigm for accounting for change and durability of such regimes.
Chapter 2

Gramsci’s Political Economy: Historical Blocs and Hegemony

This thesis seeks to account for the durability of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) regime in Zimbabwe. The party has been able to stay in power for over 39 years and, arguably, has been the country’s most important political force since the 1970’s. After coming to power at independence in 1980 Zanu-PF has faced off all opposition, including a relatively strong opposition in the Movement for Democratic Change for nearly 20 years. Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is used to analyse the relationship between the power of the Zimbabwean incumbent and how it is maintained through various applications of coercion and consent within a historical framework that emphasises questions of production and ideology. This chapter presents the theory of hegemony as elaborated by Antonio Gramsci and his successors. The theory provides a method that follows Gramsci’s historical materialism as an elaboration of Marxist political economy. The theory thus holds that the understanding of political movements and their historical context requires both an understanding of material factors arising from the mode of production as well as the ideational superstructure and political institutions which accompany the base mode of production. In order to do this the chapter traces the genealogy of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony from the work of Rosa Luxemburg, through the Marxist orthodoxy of Kautsky and Georgi Plekhanov, and finally through Lenin. The chapter situates Gramsci’s theories as they dissect the Marxist dualisms between coercion and persuasion, base and superstructure, and civil society and the state. The chapter then elaborates on the Gramscian debates on hegemony as “intellectual and moral leadership” or as a continuum between consent and coercion. This thesis will argue that while the concept of hegemony as ideological supremacy has normative significance the concept hegemony as a continuum between consent and coercion has more methodological use. As we have noted in the introduction, the answer to the question of whether Zanu-PF has held undisputed intellectual and moral leadership in Zimbabwe, is a simple “no”. However, Zanu-PF as with all similarly durable regimes in Africa, has never relied solely on coercion to maintain its power.
The chapter will outline Gramsci’s political strategic concepts of the war of position and the war of manoeuvre, and Gramsci’s idea of the political party as ‘the new prince’ in his reading of Niccolo Machiavelli’s treatise. The thesis will apply these tools to the analysis of a resilient hegemon or failed opposition movement. Gramsci provides a method for analysing opposition social movements and why they are successful and indeed unsuccessful using the 19th Century Boulangist movement in France as an illustrative case. This chapter will outline this method for analysing opposition movements as it will be applied to the Movement for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe for the remainder of this thesis. In this regard the thesis also applies the categorisation of movements as either organic or contingent in their capacity to bring about the tasks they have set for themselves. Gramsci’s hegemony was first developed to account for the durability of capitalism despite the fertile conditions for revolution, and the failure of revolutionary struggles in Italy, Germany and elsewhere to transform themselves into successful revolutions. It is equally appropriate in addressing the durability of regimes such as Zanu-PF and the dilemmas of opposition movements such as the MDC. Gramsci’s political strategic concepts will also be outlined; these include the war of position versus the war of manoeuvre, and Gramsci’s idea of the political party as ‘the new prince’ in his updated reading of Niccolo Machiavelli’s treatise. The thesis will apply these tools to the analysis of a resilient hegemon and a failed opposition movement by applying Gramsci’s method of analysing social movements as he did with the 19th Century Boulangist movement in France. In this regard the thesis also applies the categorisation of movements as either organic or contingent in their capacity to bring about the tasks they have set for themselves.

**Genealogy of the concept of hegemony**

In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau and Mouffe trace the genealogy of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony from the strategies of Rosa Luxemburg, through the Marxist orthodoxy of Kautsky and Georgi Plekhanov, and finally through Lenin.
They demonstrate how the concept has generally been used to analyse conditions which they refer to as ‘contingent interventions’, meaning periods of theoretical and strategic crisis in the expected Marxist historical development, usually characterised by a failure of the working classes to organise sufficiently against the bourgeoisie (2001, p.7). Luxemburg’s comparative analysis of conditions in Russia as opposed to those in Germany, in *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and Trade Unions*, noted that mass strikes in Germany were significantly more fragmented than those in Russia despite being more prevalent. She infers that the reason for this lay in the fact that in Germany mass strikes generally concentrated on political issues while in Russia the call for strikes had combined economic and political issues. Hence for Luxemburg this isolation and fragmentation is an ‘artificial product of the parliamentary period and bourgeois society’ (Cited in Laclau and Mouffe, 2006, p.9) in which ‘economic struggle is split into a multitude of individual struggles’ while political struggle is directed through representatives in correspondence with the bourgeois state.

Laclau and Mouffe identify another crisis in social democratic theory and strategy at the end of the 1800s and the first decade of the 1900s. The transition to ‘organised capitalism’ and the empowerment of the working classes by the trade unions and the political leadership of the Social Democratic party made ‘a general crisis of capitalism’ unlikely (p. 17). They observe the response to this ‘crisis of Marxism’ through the various approaches of the Marxist orthodoxy of Kautsky and Plekhanov, Bernstein’s revisionism and the revolutionary syndicalism of Sorel (Laclau & Mouffe, 2006, pp. 28-43). The fundamental problem is the incapacity of the economic base to ‘assure class unity in the present, while politics, the sole terrain where that present unity can be constructed, is unable convincingly to guarantee the class character of the unitary subjects’ (Laclau & Mouffe, 2006, p. 37).

Lenin represents Gramsci’s most immediate antecedent in formulating his own theory of hegemony, and the closest theoretical perspective. His theory developed while he was discussing how the proletariat should take either leadership or a hegemonic role in the struggles against Tsarist absolutism (Femia, 2010, p. 25). In this sense Gramsci’s reading of hegemony in Lenin can be equated with the dictatorship of the proletariat, and therefore a combination of dominance and consent. Femia is adamant that Gramsci is ‘decidedly un-Leninist’ and constitutes a departure from all previous Marxist theory.
in emphasising the cultural rather than the coercive (Femia, 2006, p. 25). This question poses a central dilemma to readings of Gramsci, between the concept of cultural hegemony or a combination of consent and dominance.

Certainly, Gramsci is effusive in discussing Lenin’s contribution as ‘the greatest modern theorist of the philosophy of praxis has – on the terrain of political struggle and organisation – in opposition to the various tendencies of “economism”, revalued the front of cultural struggle and constructed the doctrine of hegemony as a complement to the theory of the state-as force’ (Gramsci, 2000, p.195). Gramsci further states that this assertion of epistemological as well as the theoretical-practical principle of hegemony is Lenin’s ‘greatest theoretical contribution to the theory of praxis’ (2000, p. 192). ‘The realisation of a hegemonic apparatus, in so far as it creates a new ideological terrain, determines a reform of consciousness and methods of knowledge’ (2000, p. 192).

**Gramsci’s Hegemony**

Gramsci’s hegemony builds on the above-mentioned antecedents by addressing a similar crisis in theory and strategy: the failure of revolutionary struggles in Italy, Germany and elsewhere to transform themselves into successful revolutions (Femia, 2010; Fonseca, 2016; Laclau & Mouffe, 2000). His theory engages with the theoretical constructs and dichotomies and dualisms in Marxist theories between base and superstructure, state and civil society, and coercion and persuasion (Bobbio, 1997, 2005; Forgacs, 2000; Laclau & Mouffe, 2000; Femia, 1981; Fonseca, 2016). As a result of these overlapping dialectics, and the relational nature of his concept of hegemony, a precise location of the concept of hegemony in Gramsci’s work is still a matter of controversy. As mentioned above, the broad division in the debate is whether Gramsci perceived the concept of hegemony to refer purely to consent or rather to a combination of consent and coercion as expressed in the interplay between base and superstructure in the concept of the ‘historical bloc’.

**Hegemony as intellectual and moral leadership.**
The most popular understanding of Gramsci’s concept is the equation of hegemony with ideological and cultural dominance\(^4\). Femia emphasises this understanding and makes a clear distinction between hegemony and dominance in the following statement (1981, p. 24):

Hegemony is the predominance obtained by consent rather than force of one class or group over other classes. And whereas domination is realised essentially through the coercive machinery of the state, “intellectual and moral leadership” is objectified in, and mainly exercised through, “civil society”, the ensemble of educational, religious, and associational institutions.

Bobbio (2006) also underlines the distinction between hegemony and dominance as the correct reading of Gramsci’s theory. Further highlighting Gramsci’s emphasis on civil society as the realm of hegemonic contestation, he explains that: ‘Gramsci saw civil society as the sphere where ideological apparatuses operate and whose task it is to exercise hegemony and through hegemony to obtain consensus’ (2006, p. 29).

It is important to note that while Femia and Bobbio place the accent on ideologies and consent, neither discount Gramsci’s grounding of ideological hegemony in the economic reality of modes of production. Both point to Gramsci’s assertion that ‘if hegemony is ethico-political it must also be economic, it must have its foundation in the decisive function that the leading group exercises in the decisive nucleus of economic activity’ (Gramsci, 2000, p. 195).

\(^4\)An interesting illustration of the perception of Gramsci’s hegemony as cultural dominance is a reference to Gramsci on Fox News’ O’Reilly Factor. In a segment on ‘Who is winning the culture war?’, Bill O’Reilly and his guest, the conservative writer and presidential primary candidate Pat Buchanan, discussed a Paris Hilton advert and the effects of Gangsta Rap and surmise that ‘cultural Marxism and militant secularism are clearly winning in the United States today’. Buchanan remarks that: ‘There was a communist known as Antonio Gramsci in Italy who argued that this is the only way that Marxism is going to win. And I have to say they are sure making progress and I think they’re on the offensive… this is sort of, if you will, soft Marxism. And what it’s done is replaced Christianity. You know, a culture is a product of a cult. Western civilization is a product of Christianity. And Gramsci and the others realized they had to de-Christianize the culture. They had to change values. They had to make people think differently, and then the citadel of western civilization would collapse.” http://www.foxnews.com/story/2005/05/27/who-is-winning-culture-war.html
Hegemony as a consent-coercion continuum

This understanding of Gramsci’s hegemony places less emphasis on ideology and interprets Gramsci’s approach as an attempt to balance base and superstructure, consent and coercion, and state and civil society. Hegemony then lies at the intersection of these dichotomies and balances the contending extremes of economic determinism or ‘economism’ and an exaggerated emphasis on ideologies, ‘ideologism’.

Forgacs (2000, p. 190) explains this balance as follows:

For Gramsci: changing socio-economic circumstances do not of themselves “produce” political changes. They only set the conditions in which such changes become possible. What is crucial in bringing about these changes, are the “relations of force” obtaining at the political level, the degree of political organisation and combativity of the opposing forces, the strength of the political alliances which they manage to bind together and their level of political consciousness, of preparation of the struggle on the ideological terrain”.

In order to understanding this decidedly more methodological than strategic application of the concept, it is necessary to return to Gramsci’s reading of Marx and Engel’s historical works, *Theses on Feuerbach, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, The Civil War in France* and *Counter-Revolution in Germany*. From *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, some key points paraphrased by Gramsci are important. Firstly, the assertion that ‘It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness’ (Gramsci, 2000, p.200). Secondly, that:

> No social formation is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation. (Fonseca, 2016, p. 697).

Historical bloc: the base-superstructure continuum

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The key to understanding the consent/coercion dynamic is the concept of the ‘historical bloc’ which Gramsci appropriated from Georges Sorel’s ideas about myths (Siotis, 2018, p. 97). In the historical bloc Gramsci sees the economic base and the institutional and ideological superstructure as reciprocally and dialectically interwoven. He elaborates:

Structures and superstructure form a historical bloc. That is to say, the complex, contradictory and discordant ensemble of the superstructures is the reflection of the ensemble of the social relations of production. The accusation of theological dualism and of breaking up of the process of reality is vacuous and superficial…. it is not true that the philosophy of praxis “detaches” the structure from the superstructures when, rather, it conceives their development as intimately connected and necessarily interrelated and reciprocal (2000, p. 193).

Poulantzas’s argument for this understanding of hegemony as a heuristic continuum is convincing:

contrary to a widespread tendency; its [hegemony’s] contribution cannot be restricted to some domain of “ideology” in general, indicating the role of a ruling class, which by means of its intellectuals – ideological functionaries- succeeds in getting its own world view accepted by the whole of a society and thereby rules more through conditioned consent than domination in the strict sense of the term. If the concept of hegemony has a distinctive scientific status, it is because it allows us, when applied to the capitalist state and the classes to whose interests it corresponds, to elucidate their particular historical characteristics in their relations with a historically determinate mode of production (Poulantzas, 2008, p. 77).

Arising from Gramsci’s role as theorist and strategist, elements of his theories of strategy and his methodology of analysing movements are virtually indissociable. Additional concepts are therefore necessary for the elaboration of his overall strategic and methodological theories. These include his definition of civil society, organic crises, relations of force, the difference between the war of manoeuvre and the war of position, the concept of passive revolution, the role of intellectuals, and the political party as ‘the new prince’.

*Organic crisis and relations of force*

In Gramsci’s theory (2000, p. 201), a crisis exists when:
the incurable contradictions have come to light within the structure and that the political forces positively working to preserve the structure itself are nevertheless striving to heal these contradictions, within certain limits, and to overcome them. These incessant and persistent efforts... form the terrain of the “conjunctural”, and it is upon this terrain that the forces of opposition organise.

To qualify the application of the concept of crisis Gramsci distinguishes between organic and conjunctural movements and facts. He warns that the failure to distinguish between the two constitutes a serious methodological error as it leads to the incorrect attribution of causal factors or overestimating the causal impact of a single contributing element in a range of factors.

The difference between the organic and the conjunctural ultimately lies in the relations of forces. Gramsci again dissects the base-superstructure, consent-coercion dialectic and takes exception to ‘a vulgar liberal conception’ of the relations of forces which focuses solely on the political forces; ‘organised in the various forms of party (newspaper readerships, parliamentary and local elections, the mass organisation of parties and trade unions in the strict sense)’ (2000, p. 202). He counsels instead that the relations of forces must be distinguished on three levels or moments. The first of these relations is the relation of economic forces, the mode of accumulation and production, and the development of material forces. This aspect of economic relations is measurable using the methods of natural sciences. The second moment is the degree of ‘homogeneity, self-awareness and organisation attained by the various social groups’. The third is the relation of military forces. This last level encapsulates not only brute coercive power, but also ideological consent (2000, p. 202).

Gramsci insists that the relations of forces are determined exclusively by applied research after the fact and not as a principle of strategy (2000, p. 204).

In addition to the relation of forces bound within the nation is the role of international relations. Gramsci elaborates (2000, p. 206):

it is also necessary to take into account the fact that international relations intertwine with these internal relations of nation-states, creating new, original and historically concrete combinations. A particular ideology, for instance, born in a highly developed country, is disseminated in less developed countries, impinging on the local interplay of combinations. (Religion for example, has always been a source of such national and international ideological-
political combinations, and so too have other international organisations – Freemasonry, Rotarianism, the Jews, career diplomacy.)

**War of manoeuvre, war of position, and passive revolution**

In outlining the strategies of opposition once a crisis has commenced, Gramsci differentiates between the war of manoeuvre and the war of position, to which his theories of civil society and state are closely related. Drawing on early 20th century military terms, the war of position consists of protracted trench warfare while the war of manoeuvre (or war of movement) is a rapid frontal assault on the adversary’s base. Gramsci observes a similar relation in political movements. In the advanced states of the West, where ‘there is a proper relation between state and civil society’, he equates the superstructures of civil society with the military trench system, standing behind the ‘outer ditch of the state’ (2000, p. 229). As such ‘civil society has become a very complex structure, one which is resistant to the catastrophic irruptions caused by immediate economic factors (crises, depressions, etc.)’. In advanced capitalist societies, the dominant ideology is highly institutionalised and interwoven with the society so that a frontal attack on the state is unlikely to be effective. Hence a war of position in the trenches of civil society is necessary to bring about hegemonic change. The war of position thus requires ‘enormous sacrifices by infinite masses of people’ both in challenging and in maintaining hegemony. Gramsci defines this phase as a reciprocal siege between a ruler who has to ‘muster all political and administrative resources’, and the opposition movement (2000, p. 230). Finally, once the war of position has been won it is definitively decisive, epochal, as it were.

Gramsci adds the concept of passive revolution to the foregoing distinction. This concept refers to the coming to power of a new historical situation in which social and economic relations remain static. Passive revolution is often the outcome of a war of position by the dominant classes after a war of manoeuvre by the dominated classes. Gramsci introduces the concept as an analytical tool for understanding Italian politics – the Risorgimento, post-1815 liberal movements and fascism (Forgacs, 2000, p. 428). However, he warns against the interpretation of this concept as ‘historical defeatism’
while proposing that the concept ‘postulates as necessary a vigorous antithesis which can present intransigently all its potentialities for development’ (2000, p. 264).

An interesting methodological addition by Gramsci’s methodology is its openness to the potential for errors in calculation. By considering the potential for errors Gramsci places an emphasis not only on the agency of the political leaders of the dominant classes as well as groups seeking to assume hegemony, but also their capacity for error. Gramsci uses this as a nuance to the mechanistic application of historical materialism which assumes predetermining structure.

**Caesarism**

Gramsci’s concept of Caesarism is related to that of the passive revolution. This describes a “situation in which the balance of forces in conflict balance each other in such a way that a continuation of the conflict can only terminate in their reciprocal destruction” (Gramsci, 2000, p.269). Caesarism expresses a situation in which this “equilibrium of forces” is managed, when a by “great personality is entrusted with the task of ‘arbitration’ ” (2000, p.270). Gramsci established his concept in reference to “heroic personalities” such as Caesar, Napoleon I, Napoleon III and Cromwell. The historical contextual variance and individual complexity of each of these “heroic” personalities and indeed the fact that Gramsci himself notes that Caesarism can be expressed both progressive and regressive nor does it specifically require a single heroic personality would mean that the concept is useful as a loose description of personalised or centralised power in the context of tense political equilibrium rather than a rigid category with which to gain analytical leverage. In emphasising the usefulness of the concept Gramsci underlines that the concept of Caesarism is to be understood as a “polemical-ideological formula” and not a canon of historical interpretation (2000, p.270). The concept’s *a priori* value for our thesis would therefore be as a Gramscian descriptive categorisation of Zanu-PF and the obvious analogy that can be made with Robert Mugabe and what Ndlovu-Gatsheni et al. (2014) refer to as Mugabeism.
The notion of intellectuals has a very important role in Gramscì’s overarching theories and particularly in his understanding of hegemony. By acting as political intermediaries, intellectuals are responsible for the production of continuity and change, that is to say hegemony. As he explains (2000, p.39):

> every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. (2000, p.39)

Intellectuals arise as both functions and products, as well as interpreters, of the economic and social structure and the class it produces. The production of ‘homogeneity and awareness’ is essentially through all cultural and social activity ‘by participating in… and contributing to sustaining or modifying a moral conception of the world’. Gramsci asserts therefore that ‘all men are intellectuals’ even if they don’t fulfil the function of intellectuals.

He distinguishes between traditional and organic intellectuals. The first hold ‘a monopoly of a number of important services: religious ideology, that is the philosophy and science of the age, together with schools, education, morality, justice, charity, good works etc.’ (Gramsci, 2000, p. 302). This monopoly produces what he calls the ‘common sense’ of the age. Gramsci is careful to not present a passive relationship between intellectuals and their given class, explaining that the relationship is ‘mediated in diverse ways by the entire social fabric, by the complex of superstructures’ (Femia, 2000, p. 132). However, traditional intellectuals often maintain this conservative form of common sense, and either through direct or indirect controls they serve to reflect the perspectives of the dominant economic classes. The process of hegemonic change therefore requires capturing or shifting the perspectives of traditional intellectuals who are capable of change.

Organic intellectuals are those who arise from a specific economic stratum. In order to bring about hegemonic change, working-class intellectuals must provide
homogeneity and awareness through moral and cultural leadership. The mechanisms for this are therefore not always within the forms of traditional intellectual pursuits. Gramsci also makes the distinction between urban and rural intellectuals. The former ‘have grown up along industry and are linked to its fortunes’. Rural intellectuals, in the context and time of Gramsci’s writing, are therefore more likely to come from traditional intellectuals such as priests, teachers, doctors and members of the state local administration (2000, p. 308).

As Gramsci noted above, international ideologies propagated through associations such as Freemasonry and Rotarianism also fall into this category of intellectuals as they frame the perspectives of political leadership.

**The Modern Prince**

The key protagonist in the battle for hegemony is the political party, which Gramsci identifies as the ‘modern prince’, reading Machiavelli’s treatise on this topic as a symbol of ‘the collective will’.

In keeping with Gramsci’s combination of the cultural and the economic perspective of history, the political party must therefore be:

> the proclaimer of intellectual and moral reformation, that is to the question of religion or worldview. Which also means creating the terrain for a subsequent development of the national-popular collective will towards the realisation of a superior, total form of modern civilisation… Intellectual and moral reflection has to be linked with a programme of economic reform- indeed the programme of economic reform is precisely the concrete form in which every intellectual and moral reformation presents itself. (Gramsci, 2000, p. 243)

As a methodology for the analysis of political parties, Gramsci advises that:

> it is necessary to distinguish: their social group; their mass membership; their bureaucracy and general staff. The bureaucracy is the most dangerously hidebound and conservative force, if it ends up by constituting a compact body, which stands on its own and feels itself independent of the mass of members, the party ends up by becoming anachronistic and at moments of acute crisis it is voided of its social content and left as though suspended in mid-air. (Gramsci, 2000, p. 219)
The foregoing methodological advice will inform the analysis of Zanu-PF and the MDC political parties in their engagement in the hegemonic contestation throughout this thesis.

**Gramsci’s method for the study of opposition movements**

Gramsci explains his theory of hegemonic power by analysing a political movement during the course of its development, with specific reference to the 19th Century Boulangist movement in France. In analysing the Boulangist movement Gramsci notes that ‘economism asks the question: “who profits directly from the initiative under consideration?” and replies with a line of reasoning which is as simplistic as it is fallacious: the ones who profit directly are a certain fraction of the ruling class’ (2000, p. 216). In a warning that is particularly useful in studying opposition movements that have stalled or failed to bring about the change they sought to effect, Gramsci writes: ‘until such movements have gained power it is always possible to think that they are going to fail’ (2000, p.216), as Boulangism ultimately did.

Gramsci proposed instead the following guidelines for research into a movement (2000, p. 217):

- What is the social content of the mass following of the movement?
- What function did this mass have in the balance of forces, which is in the process of transformation, as the new movement demonstrates by its very coming into existence?
- What is the political and social significance of those demands presented by the movements’ leaders which find general assent; and to what effective needs do they correspond?
- To what extent does the means conform to the proposed end?
- The hypothesis that such a movement will necessarily be perverted and will serve quite different ends from those which the mass of its followers expected,
will be considered only in the last analysis, and will be formulated in political
not moralistic terms.

The broad questions listed above and the preceding concepts will direct the analysis
of why Zimbabwe’s opposition in the MDC has not been able to bring about a
hegemonic change in Zimbabwe.

Applications of Gramscian political economy to African political economy

In introducing the Gramscian method which this thesis will be using it is necessary to
outline some examples of Gramsci’s method in other African cases as well as the
instances in which scholars have used Gramsci in relation to Zimbabwe. Though there
is little evidence that Gramsci was concerned with Africa in his writings the his own
attempts to geographically limit his theories seem to take the form of a distinction
between the “East” where he perceived the the State as excessively dominant while
“civil society was primordial and gelatinous” and the “West” where “a proper relation
between State and civil society” existed. This strategic, rather than methodological
observation serves as an a posteriori comparison of the success of Bolshevik
revolution while in Western Europe “when the state tottered, a sturdy structure of civil
society was immediately revealed. The State was just a forward trench; behind it stood
a succession of sturdy fortresses and emplacements”. (Gramsci, 2000 p.169). Where
it is necessary to relate specifically to previous African applications of Gramscian
methods in African settings we will rely on the neo-Gramscian literature outlined
below.

Gramsci’s work has contributed significantly to the field of International Relations
where the concept of hegemony has been central to critical international political
economy. One of the principal concerns is situating African political economies within
global historical blocs, in particular the global neo-liberal hegemonic bloc which has
been in place since the end of the cold war. Worth has underlined that Gramsci’s own
concept of hegemony emphasises the bond between being forged by social classes
within a specific era or historical bloc rather than the role of individually powerful
states within the global order (2015, p.5). This thesis takes heed of Worth’s observation in trying to situate international dimensions of Zimbabwe’s internal hegemonic struggle within global hegemonic blocs. At the beginning of the third chimurenga historical bloc Zanu-PF began to self-consciously cast its internal hold over national power within a context of a global anti-imperialist struggles. This thesis will critically examine Zanu-PF’s supposed anti-colonial ideology within this context but emphasises Gramsci’s method as it relates to maintaining national power while remaining aware of the complications of situating national hegemonic blocs within a global order.

Activist and theorist Mzwanele Mayekiso’s 1996 study of township politics in Johannesburg chronicles the struggles of the Alexandra Action Committee and its incarnation after 1990 as the Alexandra Civic Organisation. He describes how the organisation’s struggle against the apartheid state was based on the organisation’s strong community base as well as the creation of global solidarity networks. Mayekiso contrasts the challenges in contesting the apartheid state through direct confrontation, as opposed to the post-apartheid state which, he acknowledges is constrained by national political pressures as well as the imperatives of transnational capital. He is also critical of the conception of civil society which masks the contending and antagonistic class interests of different associations under one umbrella. He argues for a working class civil society as ‘a far more class-conscious perspective on civil society, one that highlights those strategies and instruments of the working class that are crucial to social, political, and economic progress’ (1996, p. 12).

In discussing the application of concepts of hegemony and counter-hegemony in Africa, Rita Abrahamsen (1997) argues that the analysis of democratic movements in Africa ought to take into account the integration of African states in the global economy, and the international division of labour. She further argues that explanations of African democratisation which ignore the impact of global, economic and political conjunctures and how these shape the dynamics of domestic development, are weak. Abrahamsen’s paper takes as a point of departure Robert Cox’s neo-Gramscian assertion that ‘Theory is always for someone and for something’, and the implication that intellectual work is often directly or indirectly linked to political strategies. She
contents that discourses on democracy such as the World Bank’s technocratic ‘good governance’ terminology, are ideologically laden with concepts of the ‘good society’ as a minimal state and a free market. Finally, Abrahamsen concludes that: ‘democratisation appears to be a continuation of Africa’s passive revolution and amounts to little more than a new popular ratification of the prevailing social order’ (1997, p. 151).

The concept of hegemony has arguably been applied more to the case of Zimbabwe than any other African context. David Moore (1991) has engaged Gramscian concepts in analysing the ideological formation of the ruling class in Zimbabwe. Moore addressed the notion ‘whether or not the petit bourgeois leaders of the struggle for national liberation had the intention or were capable of transforming national liberation’ into socialism, and whether or not the leading nationalists would be able to take the mantle of organic intellectuals and achieve what Femia termed ‘minimum hegemony’. He argues that Zimbabwe’s elites opted for elitism and capitalism over populism and Marxism and argued that if the young socialists who remained in the national intelligentsia were to succeed in difficult task of dislodging the present hegemony of the ruling class they would ‘have to extricate their ideology from that of the state and its managers’ (1991, p. 495). In addition, Moore (Vambe, 2008) uses the language of Gramsci’s hegemony in analysing Zanu-PF’s quest for hegemony through the forced mass urban evictions of the 2005 Operation Murambatsvina, in which an estimated 700 000 people lost their homes and livelihoods. Moore places the events of Murambatsvina within the framework of coercion, consent and context. He contends that this operation is best understood as ‘the logical extension of the techniques of a party that has consistently failed to rule Zimbabwe through consent rather than force or its possibility’ (2008, p. 25). Moore presents the concept of hegemony as consent and argues that even leading elements within the ruling party fail to reach a position of ‘minimal hegemony’ which he defines as ‘agreements within factions of a ruling group’ (2008, p. 34). Maintaining a distinction between domination and hegemony as consent, Moore asks whether what he understands as ‘ZANU-PF’s failure to attain hegemony infringes on systemic functioning and legitimacy’, supposedly based on sufficient coercion to maintain Zanu-PF’s power. Despite arguing that Zanu-PF is not hegemonic he maintains hope for counter-hegemonic struggles, while also opening up the possibility of a more dialectical unity of hegemony (as consent-coercion) though not
quite accepting their indissociability. He further posits that the Zanu-PF slogan ‘the land is the economy and the economy is the land’ is ‘at the root of Zimbabwe’s long crisis, as until the structural conditions brought into being when capitalism arrived in Zimbabwe’s space and failed to transform it fully are solved with an acceptable and productive tenure system, hegemony will be but an unevenly articulated dream’ (2008, p. 35). More recently, Moore in an article co-authored with Zenzo Moyo and informed by empirical research (2018), studies how rural NGOs in Zimbabwe are more likely to cooperate with the state than their urban counterparts. Moore and Moyo interpret this within Gramsci’s categorisation of ‘rural intellectuals’ noted above. In another application of Gramscian theory to Zimbabwe, Raftopoulos has studied the Global Political Agreement and the Government of National Unity of 2009 as an example of passive revolution.

Cornelias Ncube’s doctoral dissertation utilises the Gramscian dialectics of hegemony and the historical bloc to study Zimbabwean civil society’s role in legitimating and contesting Zanu-PF hegemony between 2000 and 2008. Ncube notes that ‘shifting analytical focus on the repressive apparatus of the state to “cultural and leadership” (hegemony of purely ideological nurture) might underestimate some of the challenges that militate against the emancipative role of civil society in Zimbabwe’ (2012, p. 65). His study applies the concept of hegemony as a continuum of consent and coercion, as well as broadening the concept of civil society to include those intellectuals and associations which support Zanu-PF. In so doing he builds on Erin McCandless’ (2005) comparative study of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) as an opposition social movement, and the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veteran’s Association (ZNLWVA) strong relationship with the ruling party. McCandless situates these associations within the context of their particular emphasis in the dialectic between rights (NCA) vs redistribution (ZNLWVA) and the historical conflict between donors and the state, whose interests each organisation represented.

Studying the shifting relationship between the state and NGOs in Zimbabwe, Rich Dorman (2001) applied a Gramscian analysis which also operationalised the dynamic between consent and coercion and problematised the conflation of NGOs with civil society and the uncritical expectation of NGOs’ contribution to democracy. Dorman also queries the drive towards professionalisation of civil society which she identifies
as the practical result of the dominant theoretical assumptions about civil society. Writing soon after the birth of the Movement for Democratic Change, her study chronicles the shift from inclusion to the exclusion of Zimbabwean NGOs.

Though not working explicitly in the tradition of Gramsci, Blessing-Miles Tendi’s (2010) work on patriotic history is particularly informative in its treatment of the production of ideology by ‘patriotic intellectuals’ and critical intellectuals in the opposition. Tendi builds on Terence Ranger’s (2004) argument of Zanu-PF’s rule by ‘historiography’ in that the party has narrowed the national narrative into a simple distinction between patriots and traitors. While certainly not discounting the ruling party’s capacity for violence, the work contributes to understanding the material and ideological mechanisms for the production of hegemony as consent in Zimbabwe.

This dissertation will build on these contributions by pushing the boundaries chronologically as well as conceptually, introducing an explicit study of the how the mode of production produced class as the line of contestation, and how these interests have been contested through the superstructures of institutions in the state and civil society, as well in the ideological battle for consent. An additional contribution of this thesis will be the formulaic application of Gramsci’s method for analysing a social movement. At the time of writing (2018) this appears more definitively to have failed to bring about hegemonic change than in the previous decade when this work’s predecessors (referred to above) were writing.

Conclusion

The remaining chapters of this thesis seek to apply Gramsci’s methods to the case of Zanu-PF’s hegemony in Zimbabwe. Accordingly, the following chapter will apply Bobbio’s approach to political economy (base, superstructure as institutions and superstructure as ideology) to three phases of Zimbabwe’s history: firstly from colonisation to independence in 1980 (in which the Rhodesian state established the

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5 There is a rich tradition of political economy studies of Zimbabwean politics and the production of class in Zimbabwe including Arrighi 1969; Mandaza et al 1988; Stoneman & Cliffe 1999; Dansereau, 2000; and Kanyenze et al. 2010. All these will inform our understanding of the prevailing mode of production and its influence on class formations in Zimbabwe.
means of production and the dynamics that would affect the state of Zimbabwe); the second phase is the immediate post-colonial period from 1980 to 1997 (or compromise state and its creation of new class dynamics); and finally the crisis state (or failing state) from 1997 to the present. These phases will be analysed in relation to both the base (mode of production and the class forces it produces), and the superstructure in its two manifestations. These are the institutions and the prevailing ideologies through which power and counter-power seek to legitimate themselves. This analysis will establish the broad historical bloc, a combination of relations of force and superstructural power understood as political institution, or rules of the game, and ideological underpinnings. The following chapters will make reference to the other key Gramscian theoretical tools noted above including, organic crisis, the war of position and the war of manoeuvre, the modern prince, passive revolution and Caesarism where these serve to answer our research question of understanding Zanu-PF’s longevity.
Chapter 3

The construction and consolidation of Zanu-PF hegemony

This chapter outlines the construction and consolidation of hegemony by the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF). The analysis of this hegemony will serve as a point of departure for addressing the primary research problem, that is of accounting for the durability of the regime when faced with a seemingly robust opposition in the late 1990s. The chapter applies the Gramscian theoretical constructs of the historical bloc as a base/superstructure continuum, and hegemony as the continuum between consent and coercion, in order to analyse how Zanu-PF came to power through its counter-hegemonic struggle against the white settler state and how the party constructed its own hegemony in the post-independence historical bloc. The chapter thus commences with an outline of the nature of the African nationalist movement in Zimbabwe by situating the movement and its leadership in the political economy of the colonial settler state. The chapter will elaborate on how a black educated elite became the organic intellectuals for a nationalist movement which chose armed guerrilla warfare as the primary means for counter-hegemonic struggle. The chapter will seek to show how the centrality of this petit bourgeois leadership, the strategy of armed struggle and the necessity that this would entail a connection to the peasantry would impact on the party’s understanding of power as well as how power is maintained. The chapter then situates the post-colonial historical bloc within the compromise of class forces enshrined in the Lancaster House Agreement. It further outlines how the new governing class sought to construct its own hegemony through an economic base which applied corporatist practices to maintain both white settler capital and the interests of international capital in Zimbabwe while also adding a welfarist component to the state. The chapter outlines how Zanu-PF hegemony was constructed from 1980 until the organic crisis which became apparent from about 1997 onwards. The post-independence historical
bloc is divided into two phases: the transitional phase from 1980 to 1990 and the period of economic structural adjustment between 1991 and 1997 which precipitated the organic crisis and the counter-hegemonic struggle against the Zanu-PF regime. The party’s tendency towards authoritarianism was revealed in how it immediately sought to fuse itself with the state. Its intensifying intolerance of opposition in quashing rebellion in the south of the country in the Gukurahundi and the calls for a one-party state by the end of first decade of independence highlight another key Gramscian dichotomy between the state and civil society. The chapter will show Zanu-PF’s varying strategies between consent and coercion in establishing and maintaining its hegemony in the first decade of independence and an increasing reliance on coercion as dissent began to arise after the application of neo-liberal economic reforms. The chapter will seek to provide only as much economic and historical detail as is necessary to situate the hegemonic struggles in each of the above phases. These consist of the mode of production and the regime of accumulation which has defined it, dominant class interests as well as superstructural factors such as the institutions and means through which the consent of the masses has been fostered through ideological positions.

Colonial political economy

The territory between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers and its population were irrevocably dragged into statehood and capitalist modes of production with the arrival of Cecil John Rhode’s British South Africa Company’s Pioneer Column in Mashonaland in 1890. The engagement of the African peasantry with the colonial political economy was due to the need to secure labour for the mining industry, which had vastly exaggerated the mineral resources of the territory by claiming the existence of a second gold-rich Rand. The most notable example of this drive to exploit African labour was seen in the British South Africa Company’s dual interests in both commercial exploitation and colonial administration. It sought to compel Africans to enter the labour force firstly by expropriating African land and stock while encouraging the dispossessed to remain as tenants and thereby commute their labour for rent. In addition, a hut tax of 10 shillings per hut was applied in 1894, thereby
forcing adult males to spend up to three months as paid labourers (Arrighi, 1966; Pakenham, 1991, p. 498; Van Onselen, 1976, p. 94). Van Onselen surmises that the combination of slave labour, taxation, alienation from the land, and competitive white commercial agriculture led to the proletarianisation of black labour. The number of Africans in wage employment in an industry that had not existed before 1890 had exploded to 14 000 by 1911, almost entirely through coercion.

Giovanni Arrighi, in his seminal study of the political economy of Southern Rhodesia, determines the existence of five classes by the period preceding the Second World War: large-scale international capital, a white rural bourgeoisie, white wage workers, a petit bourgeoisie of white traders and a black African peasantry who had been coerced into becoming wage earners (Arrighi, 1966, p 42). The power of the white settlers in using the state to guarantee labour supply while also insulating racial economic competition would be seen most manifestly in the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. This Act and its results would ultimately reflect political economic contestation well into independence. The 1930 Act formally demarcated areas of settlement according to race, as European Areas, Native Areas, and three other categories: Undetermined, Forest Areas and Unassigned Area. The total area apportioned under Native Areas was 28.5 million acres of which 21 million constituted reserves while 7.5 million acres were apportioned to Africans who wished to purchase land to farm on an individual rather than communal basis. European Areas amounted to 49 million acres in 1930. Apart from the obviously disproportionate distribution of land the Act had specific effects on African agricultural output and competitiveness. Firstly, the Act confined Africans to poorer land resources which forced African peasants to move from shifting to continuous agriculture, which resulted in aggressive soil erosion and inevitably saw decreasing productivity. By converting those Africans who were not evicted from the land into becoming labour tenants, white farmers were able to guarantee labour supply while also reducing the marketable surplus of the peasantry as a whole. Finally, by racially dividing areas of occupation the Act effectively directed access to infrastructure away from black agriculture towards white farmers, thereby further increasing the differential in productivity (Arrighi, 1966, p. 42; Yudelman, 1964, pp. 72-73; Stoneman, 1989, p. 13). The interventionist colonial state also controlled African competitiveness through discriminatory price policies.
such as the Maize Control Act of 1931, while lack of access to credit and measures such as the Native Registration Act of 1936 restricted African hawkers to African locations (Arrighi, 1966, p. 43) The coalition of white wage workers and white bourgeoisie in maintaining the unequal competition of races was consolidated in colonial government policy under the Industrial Conciliation act of 1934. This Act explicitly excluded Africans from its definition of employees, and therefore hindered the chances of Africans to rise up the industrial ladder. It also ensured the scarcity value of white skilled workers by preventing Africans from acquiring certain skills. The terms of the Act restricted Africans from qualifying for apprenticeships or joining recognised trade unions while simultaneously curtailing the formation of African trade unions through the concept of ‘one industry, one trade union’ (Arrighi, 1966; Madhuku, 2015).

At their core, the colonial political and ideological superstructures reflected the institutionalisation and legitimation of the economic structure outlined above. Like Gramsci, Franz Fanon explains the interrelation of base and superstructure in the colonies by asserting that ‘the economic infrastructure is also a superstructure. The cause is effect’ (2004, p. 5). From the moment it conquered Mashonaland and Matabeleland the BSAC established a Native Affairs Department to handle African affairs, appointing European officials as native commissioners to oversee the social and economic lives of natives. The Native Affairs Department was primarily charged with forestalling rebellion after the First Chimurenga, and with ‘reconciling Africans to their status as hewers of wood and fetchers of water in the colonial order’ (West, 2002, p. xxiii). Ndlovu-Gatsheni notes how for the BSAC to establish colonial hegemony it had to fulfil the tasks of learning local languages and understanding indigenous cultures as well as the broader African world view over which it had to inscribe its dominance. Accordingly, the Native Affairs Departments focused on rural areas and what they observed as traditional authorities (chiefs and headmen) whose stature they sought to bolster, in opposition to a would-be urban elite or African middle class. They were inspired, certainly at first, by a belief in white racial superiority and then by the need to maintain an uncontested position. Once the economy developed and Africans acquired skills and education, the BSAC administration and its successor
colonial state created a society permeated by a caste-like division between the settler (white Rhodesians) and the indigenes (Ndebele and Shona) (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009, p. 68). The creation of separate administrative units for Africans (managed by white commissioners) was thereby institutionalised in separate agricultural agencies, separate taxes, separate medical and social facilities, and separate rights and privileges (Yudelman, 1964). Apart from the above administrative segregation the electoral franchise was ostensibly colour blind; however, the qualifications of ‘civility’ for the franchise meant that virtually all Europeans could vote while very few Africans qualified to do so. Indeed, only 60 black voters qualified for the franchise in 1923 and by 1948 only 258 black voters out of a total voter’s roll of 43 000 qualified to vote. Even this very low percentage was cause for consternation for almost the entire white population who would have preferred that no black people vote at all (West, 2002, p. 114).

The nationalist movement and African counter-hegemony

The initial colonial occupation of the country had not been without resistance. In 1896, the measures of hut taxes and forced labour as well as a plague of rinderpest struck the region, triggering a period of resistance from both Shona and Ndebele peoples in the First Chimurenga. The rebellion, which had been inspired by traditional spirit mediums, lasted from 1896 to October 1897 when the spirit mediums of Kaguvi and Nehanda were executed (Keppel-Jones, 1983; Pakenham, 1991; Van Onselen, 1976). This First Chimurenga (meaning struggle in Shona) and the mediums of Kaguvi and Nehanda would inspire a nationalist armed struggle in the Second Chimurenga between 1967 and 1979. In a Gramscian sense, by articulating the African resentment towards colonialism and its economic and political impact, the spirit mediums of Kaguvi and Nehanda were the African Zimbabwean population’s first organic

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6The BSAC Reform of 1898 made no reference to race in relation to voting rights, offering the vote ‘to all males twenty-one years of age or older who met certain qualifications, namely, personal ownership of immovable property valued at £75 (which, significantly for Africans, excluded both cattle and communally owned land), or an annual income of £50, plus the ability to write one’s name, address, and occupation in English’. 
intellectuals in the struggle against the colonial historical bloc and colonial hegemony.

After the quelling of the First Chimurenga colonial authority would remain largely unchallenged until after the Second World War. For the black labour force, urban associationalism was mostly confined to Shona and Ndebele cultural associations, sports clubs, dance societies and burial societies. These reflected the transitory nature of the urban African existence in which black workers were required to straddle their rural and urban lives (Raftopulous, 2000). Apart from these social organisations, the Southern Rhodesia Bantu Voter’s Association was formed in 1923 with the intention of securing African voters on the voter’s roll. The SRVBA was strategically conservative, seeking only limited rights for the African elite, primarily voting rights for the few Africans who qualified, and individual ownership of property. The association certainly did not harbour any counter-hegemonic ambitions (Raftopulous & Yoshikuni, 1999). The first black trade union, the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, was established in 1927; by 1931 it had grown to 5 000 members in 13 branches across the country (Raftopulous, 1995). The ICU did not possess the formal structures of a trade union nor did it ever succeed in organising a strike, as it was arguably concerned more with the status of a minority of educated Africans. Nevertheless, the ICU faced repression that included the banning of its meetings and the imprisonment of its leaders, and by 1934 it had all but disappeared (Arrighi, 1966).

Trade unionism resurfaced after the Second World War with the formation of the Reformed Industrial Commercial Workers Union (RICU) under the leadership of Charles Mzingeli. In 1946 the union successfully organised a protest against the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act which curtailed the movements of Africans in urban areas (Raftopulous, 1995, p. 84). The rise in political activity culminating in the railway strike of 1946 and a general strike in 1948 marked the coming of age of proletarian power, as the black urban population realised a decline in real wages and general living conditions (Raftopulous, 1995, p. 84; Yoshikuni, 1991). Seen through a Gramscian methodological lens the post-Second World War

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1David Lan and Terence Ranger have separately studied the moral leadership of spirit mediums in pre-colonial society as well as how this leadership mobilised military struggle in both the First Chimurenga as well as the Second Chimurenga after 1966.
period represented an organic crisis in colonial hegemony as the system’s contradictions became evident not only in Rhodesia but throughout the colonised world.

A new stage in African politics had first been evident in the formation of the Harare Youth League in August 1955. This was under the leadership of George Nyandoro, James Chikerema, Edson Sithole and Duduza Chisiza who were influenced by African nationalism in Kenya (Martin et Johnson, 1981). The most notable act of mobilisation by the Youth League was the bus boycott protesting against the rise in fares in September 1956 (Martin & Johnson, 1981; Raftopulous, 1995). In September 1957 the first country-wide nationalist movement, the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (later the ANC) was formed under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo. The formation of the ANC represented a shift in the nature and composition of African politics in Rhodesia from the more conservative and labour-based organisation of the RICU under the leadership of Charles Mzingeli to an increasingly radical national movement that had surfaced in the Harare youth league in 1956. This was led by a growing African intelligentsia which exhibited more of a national agenda and had become increasingly disenchanted with the potential for progress under the multi-racial policies of the Federation and the Todd administration (Raftopulous, 1995, p. 86). By May 1958, the party had established 39 branches across the country and had a membership of over 6,000. The ANC focused its protests on the Native Land Husbandry Act, de-stocking, and the unpopular soil-bunding or Makandiwa conservation. The ANC’s focus on these apparently rural concerns reflected the bifurcated nature of African existence between rural and urban lives, and the inevitable union of rural and urban African political concerns which would define the nature of the nationalist movement from the early 1960s.

Garfield Todd’s United Rhodesia Party lost the 1958 general election to Edgar Whitehead’s United Federal Party. This election had been perceived as a referendum

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8Nkomo had been educated in South Africa before returning to Bulawayo in 1948 to work as a welfare officer for Rhodesia Railways, where he soon became the president of the African Railway Employees Association (Ranger, 2014, p. 195). Nkomo had cut his teeth as a prominent and articulate black employee of the railways; both his employers and the Southern Rhodesian government felt he would be a compliant African representative in the 1952 conference on the formation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. He became a hero by walking out of the conference, thereby incurring the ire of the Rhodesia authorities. Nkomo was a successful trade unionist and became president of the Southern Rhodesia Trade Union Council.
on the policy of multi-racialism and ultimately put an end to black aspirations of partnership, leaving nationalism as the only available route towards eventual representation. In February 1959 a state of emergency was declared, the ANC was banned under the Unlawful Organisations Act and 307 members of the African National Congress were detained including Chikerema, Nyandoro, Hamadziripi, J Z Moyo and Sithole (Martin & Johnson, 1981, p. 66; Raftopulous, 1995, p. 90). In addition, the Law and Order Maintenance Act and the Emergency Powers Act were introduced in 1960. Both these laws would affect the nature of the counter-hegemonic struggles against the state both before and after independence.

Following the banning of the ANC, the National Democratic Party (NDP) was formed on 1 January 1960. Its formation had been driven by senior ANC detainees from within prison. The new party chose Michael Mawema, the Provincial Organising Secretary of the Railway African Workers’ Union, as President. Nkomo had been in exile for over twenty months having avoided detention in 1959 as he had been outside the country (Martin & Johnson, 1981, p. 66). It was only upon his return in October 1960 that he would be appointed as a compromise candidate after an NDP executive ballot had been split equally between Morton Malianga and Leopold Takawira. The NDP featured within its ranks a number of the intellectual elite who would become prominent in the politics of the liberation struggle. These included Herbert Chitepo, Tichafa Parirenyatwa, the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, Enoch Dumbuchena and Robert Mugabe⁹. This stage represents the rise to prominence of a class of organic intellectuals who, through their access to education, were able to articulate the concerns of the black people, both peasants and labourers.

Some scholars emphasise the entry of petit bourgeois intellectuals into nationalist politics only after white politicians had indicated the limits of the liberal project, as an indicator of their reluctance towards radical change in the country (Moore, 1991). While this class had a degree of mobility and was ultimately destined to rule the state there was no question that they were organic to both the peasantry and the urban working class, given the interconnectedness of these classes in the colonial mode of production. Virtually all these men had been raised as peasants, had attended mission

⁹Mugabe had returned permanently to Rhodesia in 1960 from Ghana where he had been employed as a teacher.
schools and gone on to tertiary education in South Africa at the University of Fort Hare. While their petit bourgeois nature was reflected in their social mobility, they were still intrinsically organic to an economic system which relied on rural labour for urban work. The realities of rural life such as the soil bunding regulations, the Land Apportionment Act and de-stocking resonated with the whole black society and not just the rural population.

What ultimately distinguished the entry of the educated young petit bourgeois elite from their predecessors was a question of counter-hegemonic strategy through military confrontation. This strategic dilemma within the nationalist movements became apparent at the federal constitutional talks held in Salisbury in January 1961. Nkomo, representing the NDP at the talks, had acquiesced to an electoral system which would have guaranteed Africans only 15% of the seats in the national legislature despite the agreement by the NDP executive to insist on parity. The decision was met with anger from the NDP executive and Nkomo was forced to retract his position on the franchise. The NDP boycotted the referendum on the 1961 proposals and as a result the party was banned on 9 December 1961. Nkomo’s capitulation at the conference as well as his earlier engagement in the federal constitutional conference and his failed attempt to run for a parliamentary seat would continue to haunt him, as nationalists constructed a mythology of bravery and cowardice around the strategic decisions to either confront or cooperate with the Rhodesian regime (Martin & Johnson, 1981; Ranger, 2009).

The Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) was formed ten days after the banning of the NDP. For Mugabe, the most significant change in approach after the formation of ZAPU in 1961 was ‘the deliberate abandonment of the methods of strikes, demonstrations and passive resistance as “official” means of struggle’ (Mugabe, 1979, p. 40). He explains that the reason for abandoning these methods was ‘the extent to which they expose thousands of defenceless supporters to wanton shooting, arrest, torture and intimidation by the racist police’. ZAPU therefore called for a new policy of resistance which consisted of extensive sabotage of white commercial interests including farms, industrial and commercial concerns using ‘any available destructive means’. The objective, Mugabe would later state, was ‘to push Britain to a constitutional conference to negotiate a settlement which would yield universal suffrage and therefore lead to majority rule’ (Mugabe, 1983, p.42). In 1962 the ZAPU
executive council made key decisions on how to achieve this objective. Firstly, the party would begin to smuggle arms into the country and train young men outside the country on how to commit acts of sabotage; and secondly, should the party be banned they would operate underground rather than regroup under a new name (Martin & Johnson, 1981, p. 69). When ZAPU was banned in 1962, Nkomo was in Zambia whereas most of the party’s leaders in Rhodesia were detained, including Takawira and Mugabe (ibid.). When Nkomo proposed the idea of forming a government in exile based in Dar es Salam and then attended the conference to end the Federation in June 1963, the other members of the ZAPU executive lost confidence in his leadership, citing his previous vacillation and reluctance to confront the settler governments.

The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland dissolved in 1964 in an atmosphere typified on one hand by the rise of African resistance stimulated by insufficient and unwelcome reforms. On the other hand, there was a reactionary shift to the right in Southern Rhodesian white politics under the Rhodesian Front who vehemently opposed the reforms of both the Federation, and the general wave of decolonisation and majority rule in Africa. The Rhodesian Front Party under the leadership of Ian Smith had come to power in 1962, aiming to maximise white settler power and prevent any hope of majority government in Rhodesia. They were also determined to attain full independence from Britain (Du Toit, 1995). The Smith regime’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) for Rhodesia was made on 11 November 1965. The Rhodesian Front Government put into place policies that maximised European political and economic power through segregation. For instance, the movement of Africans into urban areas was subjected to rigorous control though the local government areas regulations 1964, the African Urban Areas Registration Act, and the equivalent to the South African pass laws, the African Registration and Identification Act (1973). Social segregation of races within towns was established through the Municipal Amendment Act of 1967 which created separate public amenities (Du Toit, 1995). The delivery of public goods provided a very high standard of living to white Rhodesians at the expense of the black population. This was patently evident with regards to health care, education, and public service employment. In 1965, the differences between white and black wage rates were at a ratio of 10:1, the ratio of
public expenditure on education exceeded 12:1 in favour of the whites (Du Toit, 1995, p. 91; Clarke, 1975, p. 5).

The Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union (ZANU) was formed on 8 August 1963 with Ndabaningi Sithole as president, Leopold Takawira as vice-president, Robert Mugabe secretary-general and Morton Malianga as secretary for youth. Nkomo remained the president of ZAPU. The tribal cleavage that would characterise the nationalist movement began as Nkomo was Ndebele and as such had a loyal following in Bulawayo, whereas the new leadership of ZANU were all Shona. The split in the party immediately triggered violence within the nationalist movement, and Tekere recounts that Chikerema led crowds into Highfields location and attacked the houses of the new ZANU leadership including those of Mugabe, Takawira and Enos Nkala. Owing to the fighting taking place in Salisbury and Bulawayo, ZANU’s first structures were established in Gweru. Violence within the movement would become a defining trait within the movement in the 17 years of independence struggle that would follow, and this would continue into the movement’s leadership of the state.

In 1964 both ZAPU and ZANU were banned and their leaders were imprisoned. The ZANU leadership, including Ndabaningi Sithole, Robert Mugabe, Leopold Takawira, Edgar Tekere, Basoppo Moyo, Simon Muzenda and Crispin Mandizvidza were imprisoned at Whawha, while the ZAPU leadership of Joshua Nkomo, Chinamano and Madzimbamuto were detained at Gonakudzingwa prison. While imprisoned the ZANU leadership remained committed to the strategy of armed conflict. Describing the tactical approach of the organisation with which he would become synonymous for over half a century, Mugabe notes: ‘whereas the methods of pressure employed hitherto had eschewed the use of direct force upon the enemy, ZANU became the first nationalist organisation to choose armed struggle as the chief means of subduing the enemy’ (1979, p. 42).

10 The identification of ZAPU with the Ndebele was not entirely clear, as a number of prominent Shonas (including Chikerema, Nyandoro, Chinamano and Madzimbamuto) remained in ZAPU leadership. A similar identity cleavage would take place when Ndabaningi Sithole was removed from his post in ZANU. After independence his ZANU-Ndonga party would successfully garner realistic support only from Sithole’s Ndau tribe in their regional stronghold of Chipinge.
In 1964 most of the nationalist leadership were in prison and the first guerrilla recruits were sent abroad for training. ZANU’s set of five guerrillas was sent to China for six months for both military as well as ideological training. Other groups would follow these five, initially for training in Ghana, Tanzania and Egypt as well as to the Nanking Academy in Peking, China, where they received training in mass mobilisation, training, strategy and tactics. Josiah Tongogara, who was to become the commander of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), ZANU’s military wing, trained at the Nanking Academy in early 1966. Tongogara had realised from his training in China that it was vital to mobilise the masses whom guerrillas would meet (Martin & Johnson, 1981, p. 11). This strategy would be central to ZANLA’s military progress but would also explain ZANU’s approaches to maintaining hegemony after independence.

The reality of detention combined with the strategy of armed conflict would have a significant impact on the nature of the nationalist movement. Leadership of the movement drew on the black intelligentsia (educated petit bourgeoisie) and as a result of the armed struggle the movement would rely heavily on the nation’s peasantry. This accounted for why the movement became less reliant on a politicised labour movement and thus the nature of the counter-hegemonic struggle, as well as the nature of post-independence nationalist hegemony. In addition, as most of the nationalist leadership would remain in prison for a decade, the internal dynamics of the movement therefore took place in extremely close quarters and had an intimate nature as these individuals were living physically close to each other in prison. Mandaza, in interviews, points to how prison life often forced a reliance on closer clan and regional identities as even within the ZANU Shona groups, Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika and Ndaud identities became important. He infers that these tribal allegiances arose during a period of internal conflict in the party and would continue to do so even fifty years later in the ZANU succession battles of the 2010s. These prison politics would crystallise in 1968 when, after an interrogation by the Special Branch, Ndabaningi Sithole agreed to disengage ZANU from the armed struggle and work ‘constitutionally’ in exchange for

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11 This group was led by Emmerson Mnangagwa who held a central position in ZANU’s military and political wings. He was a central ZANU-PF actor after independence, becoming minister of defence and vice president in 2014. He was a key antagonist in ZANU’s succession battles after 2013 and ultimately, as Mugabe’s ouster, he became president of Zimbabwe in 2018.
his release and that of the ZANU leadership from prison. The other five members of
the ZANU executive in Connemara prison saw Sithole’s apparent decision to engage
in talks as a betrayal of their struggle and of the ZANLA recruits. As a result, Edgar
Tekere moved a motion to remove Sithole. With Morton Malianga as chair and
therefore unable to vote, Enos Nkala, Maurice Nyagumbo and Edgar Tekere voted to
remove Sithole and replace him with Mugabe, who was secretary-general of the party
and next in line after the death of the party’s vice-president Leopold Takawira. Thus,
by a vote of three to one, conducted in a prison cell, and with one abstention (Mugabe
himself), Robert Mugabe became president of ZANU and would remain so for over
half a century (Tekere, 2007).

The Second Chimurenga: armed struggle as counter-hegemonic strategy

The Smith regime’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) for Rhodesia was
made on 11 November 1965. The Rhodesian Front Government put into place policies
that maximised European political and economic power through segregation. Again,
the most outstanding area of inequality was in relation to land tenure. Under the Land
Tenure Act of 1969, 39 million hectares of land were apportioned in equal amounts
between the African and European populations. 15.6 million hectares of the European
land was allocated for farming, with the land owned privately by individuals or local
and transnational companies (Moyo, 2002, p. 83). However, land designated for
Africans remained for the most part communally owned as tribal trust lands. The fact
that the African population was at this point 4.75 million, while that of the whites was
250,000, certainly highlights the grossly inequitable nature of land distribution. This
situation caused major environmental and social repercussions as overgrazing and
over-population on land mostly deemed to be ‘totally unsuitable for farming’ meant
that white land owners were reaping far more rewards from greater tracts of land
(Clarke, 1975, p. 2). What is more, the Rhodesian state instituted highly unpopular
regulations controlling the conduct of Africans in the tribal trust lands through
regulations that controlled land use in the communal lands, enforcing tree planting measures, soil bunding and irrigation schemes. This generated further insecurity among blacks leading to resistance to land management programmes, and further calls for the return of alienated land (Du Toit, 1995; Moyo, 1995).

While the British Government outwardly opposed the UDI regime, its commitment to confronting the system was unclear. The option of military intervention by Britain at the time of UDI was largely opposed by British public opinion and the Labour Government of Harold Wilson, who perceived the use of force to end Rhodesian UDI as an attack on ‘kith and kin’. However, faced with economic sanctions, Rhodesia’s state-controlled and highly corporatist economic policy of import substitution industrialisation was introduced in order to counteract dependence on imports. The policy brought about high economic growth which buoyed the UDI regime between 1965 and 1973 (Jenkins, 1997). Given their common purpose of obstructing majority rule, South Africa’s apartheid regime also provided substantial economic support to the Rhodesian Government after UDI.

Importantly, in the years preceding UDI, the Rhodesian Front Government set up highly effective and extremely repressive state machinery against the threat of rising African nationalist resistance. This was done through the enactment of security laws by amendments to the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act (1960), Emergency Powers Amendment Act of 1967 and the Official Secrets Act (Du Toit, 1995). These laws considerably impeded the functioning of the African nationalist movements as non-violent movements. By the early 1970s both liberation parties had come to accept an armed struggle as the only effective means of defeating oppressive and intransigent elements of colonialism and racism.

The first armed confrontation between ZANLA guerrillas and Rhodesian forces took place in Sinoia (Chinoyi) on 15 March 1967. Earlier armed action by Zimbabwean nationalists included Emmerson Mnangagwe blo9wjg up of a train; in late 1964. Though the Sinoia encounter was a total defeat for ZANLA, the battle which resulted in the deaths of seven of a group of 21 guerrillas was of immense political and psychological significance for the movement. In July 1967 ZAPU’s Zimbabwe
People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), with the support of South Africa’s African National Congress, launched its first attack in Hwange (Martin et al. 1981). This battle also ended in significant losses for ZIPRA as thirty-one guerrillas were killed and another thirty wounded, while the Rhodesian forces had seven men killed and fourteen wounded. By the end of the decade most of the trained guerrillas had been either killed or captured and both nationalist movements were forced to reconsider their tactics (Martin & Johnson, 1981, p. 12). The strategy and ideological approach of each party would also be influenced by the international backing each group received. From the early 1960s ZAPU, as the most prominent nationalist movement, had received most of its support from the Soviet bloc while ZANU was backed by China. David Martin and Phyllis Johnson (1981) make the case that a defining moment for the struggle was the decision of ZAPU leadership to decline the overtures from Samora Machel’s Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) to join forces and launch an entry into Rhodesia from Tete. ZANU had not been an obvious ally of FRELIMO. In fact, ZAPU had been the more prominent of the two liberation movements. Because of its inclusion in the Soviet-supported ‘authentic’ African liberation movements which included FRELIMO, the South African ANC, the MPLA in Angola and SWAPO in Namibia, it was expected that ZAPU would join FRELIMO in Mozambique. However, once ZAPU declined to use Tete as its rear base with the support of FRELIMO, ZANLA was then free to conduct their war from Mozambique as they did from July 1970 (Martin & Johnson, 1981, p. 20).

**Ideology and the nationalist movement**

With the rise to prominence of the educated young elites, the nationalist movement began to espouse a Marxist-Leninist ideology. Much of the analysis of the nationalist movement’s superstructural attributes both as a counter-hegemonic force and then as the governing class, constitutes a hermeneutical study of the party and its leadership’s true commitment to socialism. This has largely pointed to the leadership’s lukewarm commitment to socialism (Moore, 1991; Herbst, 1990; Mandaza, 1986; Dashwood, 2000; Chung, 2006). In analysing the role of ideology in the nationalist movement and the liberation war it is important to remember Gramsci’s analytical formulation of
hegemony as the continuum between consent and coercion, as well as the observation that ideology serves both a theoretical and a strategic function. The nationalist’s devotion to socialism was arguably due to the zeitgeist of national liberation on the continent and the dominance of Marxist ideologies as the driving force behind change on the continent. Socialism certainly provided a utopian normative horizon for the post-colonial era, which inspired the Zimbabwean nationalists and their followers as much as it did virtually all anti-colonial movements. The fact that the USSR and China were among the only international actors supporting these movements also tempered the nationalist’s inclination towards either brand of socialism. The writings of Lenin and Mao, Guevara, Cabral and the inspiration of Ho Chi Minh also provided a clear, counter-hegemonic, military strategy for how to bring about change. The practical application of military strategy and the accompanying offers of arms, funding, training and forward operating bases in frontline states also made devotion to socialism (however superficial) particularly practical. This was also a result of the Western support for racist regimes in South Africa, and the blind eye turned towards the Rhodesian post-UDI white supremacists. The perception of counter-hegemony as being both military and ideological is evident in Mugabe’s characterisation of the movement’s counter-hegemonic struggle: ‘We firmly believe that power is not only political but is also military. The people’s votes and the people’s guns are inseparable twins’ (Mugabe, 1983).

Writing in the decade following independence, Mandaza was not convinced that the leadership of the nationalist movement had ever been sincerely committed to socialism (1986, p. 29). He observes instead that the movement was initially reformist in character, and subsequently evolved towards a radical nationalism that sought to overthrow white settler colonialism and thereby win independence. The difference here was an emphasis on the tactics needed to bring about majority rule rather than an ideological inclination. Mandaza continues (1986, p. 30):

it was this militancy, this belief that only through armed struggle could independence be won, that mobilised the Zimbabwean masses into the motive force of the struggle itself. In turn, it was the certainty of the demise of the colonial system which gave momentum to the struggle.

Despite this tactical preoccupation Mandaza argues that there was ‘no historical evidence to suggest, as others have been keen to extrapolate from this momentous process of the liberation struggle, that this armed struggle encompassed within it even
the idea of a socialist revolution’. Another point made by Mandaza and demonstrated by Martin and Johnson in their chronicle of the Second Chimurenga is that among the guerrillas themselves, there was less evidence of Marxist ideological fervour than of adherence to traditional and supernatural beliefs. Thus, it was the symbols of the First Chimurenga, the spirit mediums of Mbuya Nehanda and Sekuru Kaguvi, which became the inspiration for the bravery and relentless determination in the minds and hearts of the guerrillas rather than Marx, Engels or Lenin (Mandaza, 1986; Tekere, 2006, p. 78). A similar observation has been made by Ranger about Nkomo’s leadership of ZAPU as reflecting the feudal legacy of the Ndebele kingdom, with Nkomo representing a reincarnation of the Ndebele monarchs Lobengula and Mzilikazi. Ranger’s own work on the First Chimurenga, particularly his Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, as one commentator has noted, itself “helped to feed the nationalist invention of a continuous thread of anti-colonial struggle” (Brian Raftopoulos, 1999, 117), later academic critiques of his work notwithstanding. Ranger had apparently exaggerated the role of the Mwari spirit medium cult, and over-stressed its supra-ethnic or unified dimension.

**Strategy and tactics of the war**

With most of the nationalist movement’s political leadership in prison, the struggle was divided between its political and military leadership as field commanders like Josiah Tongogara established bases and began waging war against the Rhodesian military in 1967. ZANU’s military wing the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) had established itself in Mozambique in 1970, while the military wing of ZAPU, the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), formed a front in Zambia. The bifurcation of the military and political wings of the struggle would prove problematic both strategically and ideologically once the political leaders were released from prison and joined the military leadership at the front.

The armies first mobilised through political rallies known as *pungwes* run at night with ZANLA commissars politicising the peasantry. Appeals and recruitment were made referring to the resonant issues of land alienation, together with the evident inequality, racism and oppression of the white settler state, and colonialism. Spirit mediums took such as *Fact* and *Zimbabwe News* spread socialist ideology in both urban and rural African areas. Describing the daily routine of guerrillas at the Mgagao camp in
Tanzania, Martin and Johnson note that following exercises and a 16-mile run, guerrillas underwent political education every morning. This included an inculcation of ‘National Grievances’ as outlined in ZANU’s political manual *Mwenje* which had been drawn up by members of the high command. These grievances focused on ‘dealing with deprivation of land, limitations in the number of cattle a family could keep, restrictions on education and job opportunities, and the inferior African health service’ (Martin & Johnson, 1981, p. 81). Political education also focused on the writings of Marx, Lenin and Mao. These theories, particularly Maoism, were more useful in relation to strategic mass mobilisation than as broader normative political theory. Tongogara, quoted in Martin and Johnson, noted that the first cadres sent into north-eastern Zimbabwe were more political commissars than guerrilla fighters. Fay Chung notes in her memoir of the Second Chimurenga that despite his military interest in the strategic contributions of Maoism in China Tongogara ‘never made any pretensions to intellectualism and had read little of Marx and Lenin’ (Chung, 2006, p.131)

As the war escalated the peasant population were caught between guerrillas and the Rhodesian security forces. Early academic analysis of the war argued that peasant participation in the war was informed by historical memories of conquest; alienation and official agrarian interference during the 1930s, and that generalised peasant disaffection and memories shaped the liberation movement and its strategy (Ranger, 1981, p. 182). This truly was a “Second Chimurenga”. Guerrillas very often depended on the rural population for food and other resources, as well as for recruits. But resources were often taken forcibly (Mclaughlin, 1996; Sithole, 1999). In addition, ZANLA and ZIPRA coerced young men and women to join, setting up revolutionary courts to punish collaborators. The coercive aspects of guerrilla mobilisation are the subject of a key study by Norma Kriger which in particular addressed ways in which “internal conflicts within peasant communities motivated revolutionary participation”, especially conflicts along lines of gender and generation (1992, p. 240). Ranger later joined another critic of his earlier work to help write a history of the warfare and conflict in Matabeleland, in which the liberation war is projected as a struggle that
featured internecine conflict (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger, 2000, p. 8). Once an area had been liberated its inhabitants would be ‘regularly organised and politicised through political consciousness and an awareness of the party’s revolutionary goals, the correctness of the party line, the nature of antagonistic forces at play and the deviationism in the present situation in the country’ (Mugabe, 1979, p. 20). The guerrilla concept of capturing and maintaining liberated zones both in a coercive sense as well as through ideological indoctrination would become the modus operandi for Zanu-PF. It was re-employed after independence when the party was driven to defend its position against a robust opposition party. The roots of post-war coercive tactics in the liberation struggle were noted by Masipula Sithole (2000):

The liberation struggle also left a significant mark on Zimbabwe’s political culture. The commandist nature of mobilisation and politicisation under clandestine circumstances gave rise to the politics of intimidation and fear. Opponents were viewed in warlike terms, as enemies, and therefore illegitimate. The culture from the liberation struggle was intolerant and violent.

The manner in which the nationalist movement and in particular ZANLA dealt with internal rebellion is instructive of the internal schisms in relation to strategy, ideology and to a degree tribal identity. It is also a pointer as to how the movement dealt with dissent and ultimately would continue to deal with opposition after independence. The most notable instance of internal schisms within ZANU and ZANLA occurred when disaffected young ZANLA field commanders, known as the Nhari group after their leader Thomas Nhari, began a rebellion within ZANLA and kidnapped members of the ZANU leadership in Zambia. Nhari’s and his associates’ grievances stemmed from tactical differences with the ZANU command as well as Nhari’s subjection to a beating when he originally raised his objections; a humiliation for any field commander (Tendi, 2017, pp. 143-159). The rebellion was put down in 1974 by Tongogara and the leaders of the rebellion were executed by firing squad on his orders. The ensuing tribal distrust between Manyikas and Zerurus, who made up a significant proportion of Nhari rebels and ZANLA’s mostly Karanga commanders including Tongogara, has been cited as the potential motive behind the assassination of Herbert Chitepo, Chairman of ZANU’s war council.
Other versions, more conveniently, identify manipulative white Rhodesians as the prime culprits (White, 2003, 12). White’s own study examines a range of different answers to the question of who might have killed Herbert Chitepo. While she does not claim to evaluate each theory for Chitepo’s murder, her analysis suggests that factional conflict within ZANU was more complicated and more profound than the intra-elite rivalries described by John Saul (Saul, 1979, p.113). David Moore argues that the main tensions within ZANU at the time of the Chitepo killing were due to the consolidation of a new cohort of well-educated soldiers in the training camps “holding clandestine (because forbidden) seminars… on the classics of Marx, Lenin and Mao” and their impatience of an “authoritarian populist ‘old guard’ led by Tongogara” (Moore, 1991, p. 491). A second challenge to the established ZANU leadership came from the Vashandi (workers) group, in 1976-1977. Chung attributes an ideological factor to this assertion, describing the rebels as ‘a group of young Marxists who realised that their commanders were not only ignorant of, but also totally indifferent to Marxism’ (2006, p. 90). They also had complaints about predatory sexual behaviour (Parpart, 2015, p. 317). Mugabe presided over a disciplinary tribunal which ended in the Vashandi group’s imprisonment in Mozambique until 1980, by ZANU’s harsh standards relatively lenient treatment. A more general study of the operation of ZANLA’s internal disciplinary structures has identified in the guerrilla army’s internal history “a growing tendency.. to celebrate ‘the gun’ under the guise of restoring order”. In this view, “military measures” that checked internal rebellions “shaped ZANU as a political party in the following years” (Mazarire, 2011, p. 572).

This final phase of Zimbabwe’s colonial history has since 2000 been subjected to an official “patriotic” narrative broadcast on television and radio and projected in schools and in the Youth Militia camps, instituted in 2001. This is a story which privileges former combatants as the true national heroes, an assignment which followed extensive parliamentary debates during the 1990s about who should qualify for veteran benefits and state funerals (Kriger, 2006, pp. 1155-1160). It is a version in which the liberation encampments are citadels of unity: it is a history that has no space for the internal or fratricidal struggles of the kind detailed by David Moore or Masipula Sithole (1984, pp. 117-125). In this militarist saga, primarily political leaders such as Robert Mugabe himself, are “reinscribed” as military men (White, 2003, 96). In this narrative,
racial categories, as opposed to any other kind of social classification, as might be used by Marxists, for example, enjoys pride of place. As one critical reader of Zimbabwean history has noted, a central problem in Zimbabwean historiographical debates has been the issue of “relating nationalist hegemony to difference, and discourses of unity to the contradictions born out of the struggles and varying perspectives of subordinate classes” (Raftopoulos, 1999, p. 116). In this patriotic history, amongst Africans, there are patriots and sell-outs, the latter group who through the projecting of the “Second Chimurenga” as primarily a struggle for land (rather than for a range of human rights and entitlements) can also embrace modern opponents of the continuing struggle for land, that is the post 2000 land seizures, or “Third Chimurenga”. Hence, the ZANU-PF’s political opposition can be grouped in the “sell-out” camp. So for example in the militia camps, “war veterans” would insist that anyone voting for the MDC was in effect voting for “the whites” to reoccupy the country (Solidarity Peace Trust quoted in Ranger 2004: 219). In this history today’s political conflict is a continuation of the liberation war, and its youthful participants are already veterans. It was an historical narrative that drew upon the earlier work of academic historians such as Terence Ranger, but offered its insights in a condensed and vulgarised from: as Ranger himself observed “I recognised the outlines of many of my own books but boiled down in the service of ZANU/PF” (Ranger, 2004, p.218). And indeed, at least one of Zimbabwe’s patriotic historians, Aneas Chigwedere, Robert Mugabe’s Minister of Education, in his earlier publications acknowledges Ranger’s influence on his own work on pre-colonial history (Ranger, 2005: 224). The patriotic history includes other key features: the reference to it being a British colony until 1980, a characterisation that fitted in with the then current ZANU-PF demonology of Tony Blair (White, 2003, p 97)

The Lancaster House Agreement

The end of Zimbabwe’s colonial history and the framework on which the post-colonial state was established took place at the Lancaster House Conference, which opened on 12 September 1979. The Rhodesian state and the guerrillas had fought to a stalemate and negotiations were brought about through joint Anglo-American efforts by the Carter Administration and the Thatcher government. The conference was held
between 10 September and 15 December 1979, and its outcome was certainly one of compromise borne out of a military stalemate. Ibbo Mandaza, himself a ZANU delegate to the conference, argued that the outcome of the conference and the compromises the Patriotic Front made reflected ‘a result less than that which might have been expected of a national liberation movement had it won outright victory on the battlefield’ (1986). The conference established a ceasefire and a route towards elections while also enshrining a constitution that would provide a framework for the establishment of liberal democracy, but also modes of accumulation which would characterise the post-independence dispensation.

The Constitution’s Bill of Rights guaranteed freedom of speech and association. It was, however, the clauses on the ‘Freedom from the Deprivation of Property’ which would mitigate against any large-scale economic redistribution. The fact that the bill of rights could only be amended by a 100% majority in parliament for the first ten years from 1980 guaranteed white control of the economy. As such the government would be restricted from acquiring property other than on a willing buyer-willing seller basis, and compensation had to be remittable in foreign exchange. Though as Astrow (1983) notes:

the cost of buying the estimated 40-60% of European land not being fully utilized would be so high that even if a new government of Zimbabwe were committed to implementing a comprehensive land resettlement programme under the constitution it would find it well-nigh impossible to carry it out.

In addition, the Lancaster House Constitution guaranteed the independence of the civil service and the military which were crucial concerns for white settler communities. These concessions, in the form of constitutional safeguards for white settlers, were for commentators such as Mandaza and Raftopoulos (1988):

synonymous with a neo-colonial plan for Zimbabwe...the retention of white settler economic power as a safeguard for the continued efficient exploitation of material and human resources, the retention of such military machinery as would inspire the “confidence” and “maintain the high standards” of both the white settler element itself and the imperialist world as a whole.

In a Gramscian sense Zimbabwe’s post-independence history can be categorised as passive revolution in that while the governing class changed, economic relations remained to a great degree static. For Moore, despite the rhetoric of socialism and the
protracted military struggle waged by the guerrillas, the struggle for hegemony by the nationalist movement amounted to ‘the prolonged effort of the African intelligentsia to persuade local and international ruling groups that it indeed was worthy of the state – that leading nationalists were fit to act as organic intellectuals or the hegemonic organisers for capital’. This analysis is borne out to a degree in analysing ZANU hegemony in the decades following independence.

**Post-independence historical blocs**

Zanu-PF won the 1980 elections by a clear majority, securing 57 of the 80 seats open for black contestation while PF ZAPU took 20 seats. Bishop Abel Muzorewa’s UANC dropped from 51 seats in the 1979 election to 3. The UANC’s is a conclusive indicator of the extent to which the nationalists held ideological sway with the black population. Ian Smith’s Rhodesia front took all 20 seats reserved for the white minority. The Lancaster House Constitution provided for a bicameral parliamentary legislature consisting of the House of Assembly and the Senate. The House of Assembly comprised 100 members. Of these, 80 were elected on the common voter’s roll, while the remaining 20 were elected by white voters from a separate roll. The Senate was made up of 40 members: 14 elected by an electoral college consisting of the members of the house, 10 elected by members of the house from the white roll; 10 chiefs appointed by the Council of Chiefs and the remaining 6 elected by the president. The executive consisted of the prime minister and the cabinet with a president as ceremonial head of state (Du Toit, 1995). Mugabe, as prime minister, made reconciliatory overtures to the white population immediately after winning the election. In a speech at independence he called for drawing a line on the past and turning ‘swords to ploughshares’. In practical terms this reconciliatory atmosphere was reflected in a new coalition government which counted 5 PF-ZAPU ministers and 2 white ministers. The appointment as Minister for Agriculture of Denis Norman, the former leader of the Commercial Farmers Union, was of particular symbolic importance in relation to maintaining the economic structures intact. Certainly, the safeguards of white capital interests in the new Zimbabwe went beyond the symbolic appointment of ministers.

In its first major policy document published in 1981, *Growth with Equity*, the new
government indicated that its major policy objectives upon coming to power in 1980 were threefold. Firstly, consolidating state power and creating conditions of peace and national unity; secondly embarking on a vigorous resettlement, reconstruction, and rehabilitation programme; and thirdly laying down the political, economic and social bases for the transition to socialism (Dashwood, 2000). The dilemma of ‘laying down the social bases for the transition to socialism’ while maintaining growth in a system designed to protect white economic interests would prove to be the central contradiction of Zimbabwe’s post-independence political economy. This was particularly so as the sincerity of the new ruling elite had always been questionable and would be even less credible as this class transformed from a petit bourgeois intelligentsia to a state-based bourgeoisie. EA Brett characterises the first decade of independence as a corporatist policy regime created by the settler state, to which some redistributive elements were added (Brett, 2005, p. 6). Similarly, Dashwood assesses the Zanu-PF government’s approach as a combination of a nationalist development strategy that entailed state interventionist controls inherited from the colonial period, to which very strong social welfarist elements were added. This latter element implemented was through a commitment to social equity in terms of income distribution and improving the quality of life for the poor (Dashwood, 2000, p. 29).

In practical terms, the first administrative step for the new government was to place competent and trusted Africans in the bureaucracy. At the time of independence, of the 10 570 established posts in the public service, only 3 368 (32%) of these were held by black people, none of which was above the post of senior administrative officer. In addition, the white exodus was at a rate of 1 500 persons per month; and between independence and October 1981, 32 000 white citizens had departed (Mandaza, 1986, p. 48). Zimbabwe’s white population, which had peaked in 1961 at 270 000 or 5.6% of the population, shrank to about 110 000 in 1982, following the exodus of whites in the years following independence. The recruitment of Africans, mostly into lower-level positions, had begun under the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia (Muzorewa-Smith) settlement. As the public service expanded dramatically, by 1983 the number of blacks employed as civil servants had risen to 17 693. By the end of the first decade of independence, the service had grown to 95 000, the majority of whom were black (Du Toit, 1995, p. 121).
The new government set about immediately to focus on the development of the rural areas. Rural development was partly achieved through limited land redistribution and state control of prices of agricultural products. Reforms were instituted to support African farmers in the production of maize which had up until this point been the monopoly of commercial farmers. Through finance from the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) and the Zimbabwean Grain Marketing Board (GMB) commercial crops were increasingly produced in the former Tribal Trust Areas (Herbst, 1990).

The new government also set about redressing the racial inequality that had typified the Rhodesian health care system. In order to provide more equitable health facilities, the health system was decentralised, eliminating regional and ethnic biases and providing health centres to the rural population. Each province had a medical directorate with strong emphasis on primary health care. Infant mortality declined rapidly by 120 deaths per 1000 live births in 1980, to 83 within 2 years (Brett, 1999, p. 7).

Deracialisation of the education system and massive adult literacy campaigns were launched, and by the end of the 1980’s Zimbabwe’s education system was the envy of many other African countries which had long been independent. Universal free education was launched at primary level and government secondary level. Public expenditure on education was 18 million Zimbabwe Dollars a year between 1980 and 1985, despite the recession of 1982 and 1984 (Dashwood, 2000, p. 41). Secondarieschool enrolment increased from 73 000 in 1979 to 550 000 in 1985, while enrolment at the University of Zimbabwe expanded by 200% from 1 481 students in 1979 to 482 in 1985 (Brett, 1999, p. 7; Du Toit, 1995, p. 129).

Herbst asserts that the government did embark on a number of policies which it labelled socialist, such as the increase in social services, increased access to land and the installation of the minimum wage. However, these were all actions which had been put in place by previous governments to benefit the white population and therefore could not be considered as socialist per se (1990, p. 227). Indeed, it is evident that market forces, though distinctly corporatist in nature, held primacy in post-independence Zimbabwean structures. Hence just as white governments had made
policies intended to protect white constituencies – or socialism for whites as Herbst argues – so too did post-independence Zimbabwean government make policies intended to serve its supporters, albeit a significantly larger constituency. Dashwood argues that:

Even without the provisions of the constitution, it is doubtful that the new leaders would have proceeded with a truly socialist transformation. The policy of reconciliation reflected Mugabe’s recognition that, although his government aspired to root itself in the peasantry, the vitality of the productive sectors of the economy would have to be ensured if the government’s other development objectives were to be met. (Dashwood, 2000, p.21).

Changes in the configuration of class since 1980

The class compromise resulted in the petit bourgeois nationalist leadership gaining access to the state. This meant that while the state’s institutions were intended not to challenge the central interests of the agrarian and entrepreneurial elites, the black bureaucratic and political elite within the state began to transcended its petit bourgeois status through privileged access to state resources and the capacity for patronage that these produced. As a number of commentators have noted about these changes in class, the change in the economic sphere also resulted in the gradual embourgeoisement of the governing class (Dashwood, 2000; Mandaza, 1986; Astrow, 1986). Mandaza (1986, p. 51) recollects the change in the rhetoric and behaviour of the governing class: ‘as they found their class aspirations fulfilled, whatever there was of a commitment to socialist transformation became increasingly isolated as the rhetoric of a few committed leaders in a society whose appetite was so much whetted for capitalist development’.

Seen through the hermeneutical lens of the new governing class’s commitment to socialism, Zanu’s failure to implement a socialist system has been attributed to the apparently inherent contradiction of petit bourgeois commitment to class suicide once they take over the state. The argument is that the petit bourgeoisie are unlikely to install true socialism once they gain access to trappings of state power and the inevitably embourgeoisement this entails (Moore, 1991; Mandaza, 1986; Dashwood, 2000). Brett (2005) makes the general observation that corporatist systems such as Zimbabwe’s
post-independence state ‘lead directly to rent-seeking, predation and economic stagnation’. Rent-seeking and predation were certainly evident in the scandals which began to emerge by the end of the first decade of independence. These included the Willowvale Motor company scandal which implicated Zanu leadership including Ministers Dzingayi Mutumbuka, Maurice Nyagumbo and Jacob Mudenda. The outcome of the scandal probably drove Nyagumbo to suicide, though as Tekere points other Zanu-PF leaders were guilty of far more grievous corruption (2006, p. 164).

**Post-independence state superstructures**

Zimbabwe held general elections in 1985, the first simultaneous presidential and parliamentary election in 1990, parliamentary elections in 1995 and another presidential election in 1996.

Each of these instances had what were considered negligible occurrences of election violence, often targeted at the handful of opposing candidates who dared to stand against Zanu-PF. These elections were noteworthy for the relatively insignificant showing of opposition parties and candidates which were never able to garner more than 5% of the presidential vote, or 3 parliamentary seats (Forum party in 1990, and ZANU-NDONGA in 1995). An exception was the Edgar Tekere’s Zimbabwe Unity Movement which took 20% of the vote in 1990, garnering only two parliamentary seats, though with Tekere winning 1% of the residential ballot. While electoral opposition was generally weak, incidents of dissent in the country had always been dealt with a heavy hand. Most notably were the disproportionate reactions to the dissident problem in the early 1980s which resulted in the Gukurahundi massacres in Matabeleland, in the south of the country. The end of the Gukurahundi in the form of the unity accord between Zanu-PF and the Zimbabwe African People’s Union turned the country into a de facto one-party state.

Another important factor in Zimbabwe’s political culture was the continuation of the repressive powers and institutions which had characterised the Rhodesian state. The Emergency Act of 1960, which had the capacity to enact executive emergency
regulations to bypass the regular legislative process, was used over 60 times in the first four years of independence – though these regulations included city name changes and laws regarding apprenticeships as opposed to conventional emergency powers (Weitzer, 1984, p. 533). The repressive Law and Order (Maintenance) Act of 1960 which gives the police and Minister of Home Affairs arbitrary powers to control potential or suspected enemies of the state, and criminalises ordinary political activity, remained in place after independence. What is evident from the continuation of these powers is the considerable room for manoeuvre they permitted the government in interpreting societal pressures as prejudicial to national interests (Weitzer, 1984, p. 557).

Of the forces mentioned above, the destabilisation campaigns perpetrated by apartheid South Africa posed an imminent security threat to the Zimbabwean state in the decade after independence. Military raids and sabotage by former members of the Rhodesian security forces resulted in attempts on Prime Minister Mugabe’s life and the destruction of military aircraft (Weitzer, 1984, p. 537). These threats further served to raise the government’s security fears. Added to this, the continued adversarial relationship between ZANU and ZAPU was regarded as a major threat to the regime’s security within the Zimbabwean state after independence and resulted in the most evident application of official coercion. After a period of relative peace in which the coalition government was formed to include a number of ZAPU members, hostilities erupted in February 1981 when ZIPRA (ZAPU) forces attacked a ZANLA base in the suburb of Entumbane in Bulawayo. This uprising was quelled, resulting in the deaths of 300 guerrillas (Weitzer, 1984, p. 545). The antagonisms worsened after arms caches belonging to ZIPRA forces were discovered in 1982 (Du Toit, 1995; Weitzer, 1984, p.537). The ZAPU ministers, including party leader and Minister of Home Affairs Joshua Nkomo, were consequently expelled from the cabinet. In the aftermath, incidents of violent crime including armed robbery arose as an insurgency of former ZIPRA guerrillas took place in Matabeleland and the Midlands. ZAPU came under increasing suspicion and was branded a ‘subversive organisation’ by the government-associated press which claimed links between dissidents and the destabilisation campaign of the apartheid regime (Weitzer, 1984, p. 544). While the association was arguably minimal and was based on disgruntled individual party members, it was unclear whether ZAPU leadership explicitly supported the dissidents (Weitzer, 1984).
As a subversive organisation ZAPU faced official suppression, a number of ZAPU M.P.s were detained and permission for party rallies was seldom given. Nevertheless, ZAPU was never banned outright. The reluctance to ban ZAPU as a party could be explained by the popular support the party held in Matabeleland and the possibility that such an action would have resulted in the Ndebele population further consolidating under the party. As insurgency escalated, the Minister for Defence, Enos Nkala, deployed the army to the Midlands and Matabeleland. The operation known as *Gukurahundi* was carried out predominantly by the Shona Fifth Brigade army unit which had been trained by North Korean instructors since 1980. The *Gukurahundi* campaigns lasted until 1987, with widespread reports of brutality and atrocities committed by the army that affected thousands of innocent people. Information on the *Gukurahundi* campaigns is conflicting. The Zimbabwean state has denied any culpability for the events, and there has been no serious open dialogue on the issue since the signing of the Unity Accord between Zanu-PF and ZAPU (Mugabe and Nkomo) in 1987. The fate of ZAPU after independence was evidently tied to the idea of the one-party state (CCJP, 1999).

**The one-party state debate**

To some extent the new Zimbabwean state exhibited most of the characteristics of a functioning democracy as multiparty elections had been held every five years since independence. It is, however, important to note that the elections held in 1980, 1985, and 1990 were all beset by varying levels of political intolerance and intimidation of political opponents (Du Toit, 1995; Nordlund, 1995). The election-related violence in the 1980s and 1990s has often been put down to the legacy of the zero-sum political culture of the liberation struggle (Sithole, 1999, Dorman 2001, Weitzer, 1984). Despite regular multiparty elections, the debate over the formation of a one-party state dominated the first decade of independence in Zimbabwe. Shaw outlines the principal arguments put forward, mainly by Mugabe, for the one-party state. Firstly, it was argued that the one-party state corresponds closely with African customary practice which traditionally has one uncontested chief and consensual decision-making (Shaw, 1986, p. 377). The second argument held that as Zanu-PF carried an overwhelming
part of the (unopposed) popular vote, the one-party state was therefore what the majority of Zimbabweans wished (Shaw, 1986, p. 378). The third reason given was that it would have created unity among Zimbabweans and served to counter the ethnic animosities that manifested itself in the political rivalry between ZANU and ZAPU (Shaw, 1986, p. 379). Finally, it was believed that a unified national approach was required for the overall goal of development (Shaw, 1986, p. 381). The form of one-party state envisioned was only loosely defined, though Mugabe asserted that the system would be democratic, would allow for competition for seats apparently following the Tanzanian model. What is more, the question of how the one-party state was to be formed was divisive, even within the ranks of Zanu-PF. Edgar Tekere, the radical ZANU-PF leader in Manicaland, openly criticised the notion of creating a de jure one-party state and argued against disallowing opposition parties (Shaw, 1986, p. 391). His opposition to the one-party state would lead to his expulsion from Zanu-PF in 1989 and to his forming the short-lived Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) party the same year (Tekere, 2007, p. 144). These disputes notwithstanding, altering the Constitution to create a de jure one-party state would have required a unanimous decision in the parliament. This would have been unlikely given the presence of 20 white parliamentary seats until 1987, as well as the electoral presence of ZAPU in Matabeleland (Shaw, 1986; Weitzer, 1984). When the guarantees on white seats came to an end ZANU and ZAPU signed the Unity Accord thereby creating a de-facto one party state. Though ZAPU as an organisation had never been openly in support of the one-party state, Shaw emphasises the fear that such an arrangement would have been constructed without Nkomo and the rest of the ZAPU leadership, more or less ending the adversarial relationship (Shaw, 1986, p. 376). With the formation of a de facto one-party state, amendments were made to the Constitution installing a unicameral legislature and an executive presidency which was occupied by Mugabe. Joshua Nkomo was appointed vice-president, and a number of ZAPU leaders, some of whom had been jailed during the period of the insurgency, subsequently took up posts in the cabinet. For instance, Dumiso Dabengwa, a former ZIPRA commander imprisoned during the dissident period, became Minister for Home Affairs for most of the 1990s (Du Toit, 1995, p. 132).
State and civil society relations 1980-1990

With Zanu-PF purposefully fusing the state and society, lower-level local government institutions were almost indistinguishable from the ZANU party structures (Du Toit, 1995). This blurring of party and state boundaries was partly due to the anti-colonial counter-hegemonic movement in which nationalism had become a unifying social movement articulating the interests of nearly all black social movements; but it was also due to co-option and paternalism by the ruling party following independence. The relationship described above was particularly evident in state-labour relations. Labour movements were significantly fractured at independence, and labour-capital relations between 1980 and 1982 were marked by intense conflicts that resulted in numerous strikes. Differences were resolved during this period through heavy state intervention by way of statutory minimum wages, monitoring retrenchments and unfair labour practices, and the formation of workers committees (Sachikonye, 1995, p. 135). Mugabe encouraged the formation of an umbrella movement, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, in February 1981. Skalnes argues that the formation of the ZCTU was designed to counter the influence of trade unions affiliated to other parties and to undermine their attempts to merge into an independent national umbrella organisation in the United Trade Unions of Zimbabwe (UTUZ) (Skalnes, 1993, p. 423).

The government was however extremely intolerant of striking civil servants, as was demonstrated when teachers and nurses went on strike in October 1981. This action was seen by Mugabe as an ‘unjustifiable negligence of duty and disloyalty to the state’ (Nordlund, 1995, p. 142). Throughout the 1980s strikes by teachers and nurses as well as miners and railway workers were quelled under the Industrial Conciliation Act and the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, both remnants of the colonial era and the Smith Regime. Intervention by the government in the actions of the central labour union, the ZCTU, took the form of ‘benevolent paternalism’ under the guise of socialism and a government of national unity (Nordlund, 1995, p. 143).

Herbst’s observation of the ZCTU in the 1980s was that its analytical, research and organisational capabilities were poor. He also noted that the government’s control of the entire wage process undermined the unions and prevented them from developing more capable organisational structures as they had no functional mechanism for the
mobilisation of workers. Labour was strongest when there was no institutionalised procedure to set wages and when workers could pressure the government directly by taking to the streets. He continues that:

wage policy is another instance of the government’s not strengthening itself by constructing elaborate, centralised institutions to consider every aspect of public policy. The government was much more autonomous, especially in its relations with the employers, when national minimum-wage policy was being made without formal procedures by a few civil servants who considered only some- back of the envelope calculations (Herbst, 1990, p. 219).

Herbst makes a comparison of extremes in the ZCTU and Commercial Farmers Union, noting that these organisations:

... had contrasting experiences in their relationship with the government. Even though both lobbied with the government on an issue which recurred annually. The key to determining whether an interest group will be able to take advantage of an iterated process is in its organisational ability. For instance, while the CFU and the ZCTU faced exactly the same kind of issues in terms of the number of decisions to be made, the CFU had the organisational wherewithal to take advantage of the iterated process of producer price setting and to learn how to influence the government. In contrast, the ZCTU’s ability to learn was so poor that the iterated process of minimum wage setting actually weakened because its demands were constantly viewed by the government as unrealistic (Herbst, 1990, p.220).

Herbst’s analysis is interesting though it would be difficult to conclude whether it was the institution’s comparative ability to learn rather than the extent to which the government valued their interests and influence which determined how the state interacted with each group. If the difference in the manner in which the government related to the CFU and the ZCTU were a reflection of their relative importance and value, then certainly the government appears to have valued commercial interests more than those of labour. This became even more evident in the negotiations leading to the implementation of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to trace the establishment of and consolidation of Zanu-PF hegemony in post-independence Zimbabwe. In order to do this, it has been necessary to situate the nationalist movement and its principal constituting class, Zimbabwe’s
The chapter therefore began with the historical political economy of the settler state and the formation of African classes through the partial proletarianisation of a peasant population by means of taxes and forced labour. Zimbabwe’s ruling class arose out of this engagement with proletarianisation and through the limited potential for mission education in early colonisation. The chapter has traced the formation of African nationalist organisations in the decade following the end of the Second World War, and the multiple iterations of these organisations as they were banned under successive laws. The chapter also notes the entry into the political arena of specific individuals, particularly Robert Mugabe, who would become synonymous with ZANU’s construction of hegemony and indeed its defence. This will be explored in the forthcoming chapters. By the 1990s, the contradictions of the post-white settler state in which the governing class (the Zimbabwean black petit bourgeoisie) sought to balance the interests of national (white) and international capital while also fulfilling the aspirations of the working and peasant masses became increasingly difficult to manage. The outcome was that after a gradual embourgeoisement this class failed to fulfil the hopes of the working masses. Ultimately, the working class anger could only be kept in check through coercion. When protecting the interests of white capital at the expense of the peasantry and black working classes became too costly the governing class conveniently chose to vilify the white capital and land owners. This marked a predatory turn in the Zimbabwean governing class, in which they began to rely increasingly on coercion to maintain power. In relation to ZANU-PF’s balance of coercion and consent in the first decade of independence, outside the context of Gukurahundi, where violence was conducted in mostly rural areas (and however disproportionate and brutal it was), the party did not need to use coercion against large sections of the population as a means of maintaining hegemony. Indeed, the violence of Gukurahundi would not have been intended as a response to a perceived threat to ZANU-PF hegemony but rather as punitive violence. During periods of weak opposition there was no recourse to violence, and coercion instead focused on individuals who dared to oppose, as with Patrick Kombayi, Edgar Tekere, or Margaret Dongo. This violence would spread to students in their protests against the one-party state. Even in these cases the violence was punitive rather than as a response to a real perceived threat to ZANU-PFs...
hegemony. As a credible counter-hegemonic challenge began to emerge the party began to mobilise its coercive and ideological machinery to aggressively maintain its hegemony as the following chapters will show.
Chapter 4

ESAP, the Neo-liberal Historical Bloc and the roots of organic crisis

Chapter 4 focuses on the Zimbabwe’s experiment with neo-liberal economic reforms driven by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank between 1990 and 1997. The chapter considers this Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) phase as a distinct historical bloc. This phase would ultimately bring about the organic crisis historical bloc organic which would characterise Zimbabwean politics after 2000. The chapter elaborates on the decisions to implement the Structural Adjustment Programme and its impact on the national modes of production. This period of immense economic change took place in a context of relative political freedom following the abandonment of the one-party state idea in the global context of “the end of history”. The bloc’s combination of economic pressures and increasing political dissent led to the coalescence of a counter-hegemonic movement combining labour, students, and an increasingly relevant organised civil society. Having outlined the base superstructure dynamics of the ESAP bloc the chapter breaks down the various components of Zimbabwe’s opposition civil society as they coalesced to form the National Constitutional Assembly and the Movement for Democratic Change political party. This outline addresses one of Gramsci’s key questions in analysing counter-hegemonic movements: what is the social content of the mass following of the counter-hegemonic movement? This section begins with an outline of the labour movement as the core, organised, membership-based force in the opposition. The history of the labour movement in Zimbabwe, the Congress of Trade Union structures and leadership, internal dynamics and core grievances in the lead-up to the food strikes of 1997 and 1998 will be explained through interviews with leaders of the congress of trade unions during this period. The second core group to be analysed will be the student movement. Students would be the only other mass membership based group that would form a central part of the opposition in Zimbabwe after 1997. The chapter will show the differences in strategies, ideologies and interests between labour and students as this was a central theme of the data collected during interviews. The differences between labour and students would become a core cleavage point in the
leadership battles of the MDC after 2008 as well as after the death of Morgan Tsvangirai in 2018. Associated with the student groups were academics and intellectuals at the nation’s tertiary education institutions. Their individual ideological persuasions and emphases would influence segments of students, labour and the movement as a whole in often contradictory directions from the formative stages of the counter-hegemonic movement.

The chapter then analyses the roles of other core groups, which, unlike the labour unions and students, were represented mostly by individuals in leadership rather than membership-based power. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) would become central to the counter-hegemonic movement in Zimbabwe. From a space dominated by church groups such as the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, this segment would begin to draw from the student movements and by the mid-1990s became entirely dependent on western donor funding. These new NGOs and their leadership would be central to the drive for democratisation through their focus on both constitutional and electoral reform and human rights monitoring. This section of the opposition would generate important dynamics in how it related to the labour movement, its reliance on donor funding and the complications that this would cause, as well as its relatively shallow membership base. Based on interview data and reviews of other secondary data such as blog posts, newspaper articles and books on the history of Zimbabwe’s opposition, the chapter will explain the core role of these NGOs and their leadership as well as the often overlapping and interpenetration of their leadership with those of student movements, donor agencies and the main opposition political party.

The chapter then outlines other influential, though weakly represented groups in the counter-hegemonic movement. Among these are lawyers, farmers and business leaders, and the national staff of donor agencies. The chapter then concludes by returning to a chronological narrative which outlines the conjunctural roots of the opposition movement in the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly in 1997 and the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999.
Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

Despite Zanu-PF’s pledge at independence to create ‘a socialist state based on Marxist Leninist principles’ by the end of the 1980s, it was clear that transformation of the country’s economy had been far from radical. Rather, Zimbabwe’s economic policy regime continued the corporatist structure that had been introduced by the UDI government to counter the effects of sanctions in 1965. This was principally because of the entrenched protection of property rights for the first ten years after independence, contained in the Lancaster House Agreement. To a large extent this corporatist structure protected white minority economic interests, while growth and increased resources fitted with Zanu-PF’s efforts at redressing inequality under the policy of ‘growth with equity’. As previously noted, the increases in public expenditure on health and education were among a number of redistributive measures, and also meant that the interdependence between government and industry was a major factor in Zanu-PF’s political legitimacy and stability within the state. However, as the decade proceeded, it became increasingly evident that the redistributive efforts could no longer be supported by the growth in resources. The overly controlled economic model undermined long-term economic sustainability as it failed to generate sustained economic growth or to attract investment. Another major concern was unemployment, as 10 000 jobs were created per year and not the projected 14 000 per year, and the education system produced vast numbers of high school graduates who would not find employment (Brett, 2005, p. 10).

These concerns made the necessity for reform evident. However, it has been widely acknowledged that Zimbabwe was not undergoing an immediate crisis when it adopted ESAP, or at least one that required the drastic reforms of structural adjustment. Growth had averaged 4.7% in the first four years of independence despite a crippling drought in 1982, and 4% between 1985 and 1990. Nor was the country in danger of default as external debt service ratio had fallen to about 23% from about 34- 40% in the mid-80s (Andreasson, 2003, p. 385; Brett, 2005, p. 4).
The adoption of a neo-liberal approach at this point can be understood in the context in which structural adjustment programmes were being imposed by international financial institutions throughout sub-Saharan African, as a remedy to perceived political and economic crises (Dansereau, 2003, p. 174; Moyo, 2002). In Zimbabwe a shift to a more corporatist and technocratic view of the economy became apparent from around 1987. It was spearheaded by the Minister for Finance, Bernard Chidzero, though this neo-liberal shift may not have been the consensus of the ministry as a whole at the time (Andreasson, 2003, p. 394). Intense lobbying for trade liberalisation came from the powerful interest groups that represented white-dominated economic interests such as the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, the Commercial Farmers Union and the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce. They lobbied behind closed doors for trade liberalisation, a relaxation of controls on prices, wages, investment and hiring and firing (Andreasson, 2003; Skalnes, 1993; Moyo, 1993, p. 9).

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions condemned the reforms which would entail scrapping the minimum wage and the withdrawal of price regulations and welfare measures in health and education, which threatened the living standards of the working class. Reform was also criticised within the ruling party. Notably, Mugabe criticised the application of ESAP on the pressures from ‘a very powerful bourgeois group’ within Zanu-PF that championed the cause of the international financial institutions and national private capital. He argued that these interests ‘[were] opposed to the development of a socialist and egalitarian society in Zimbabwe’ (Andreasson, 2003, p. 394). However, he evidently did nothing to prevent the application of these policies. Zimbabwe’s adoption of a neo-liberal model of macro-economic management seems therefore to have been a response to pressure from internal interest groups with support from international financial institutions, the IMF and the World Bank. There was little or no consultation with the majority of the population, least of all small farmers and small businesses (Moyo, S., 2002, p. 4).

When ESAP was instituted in 1990, it was claimed that employment would rise to 100 000 new jobs per year, growth would rise to 5% year, and budget deficits would be significantly reduced (Sachikonye, 2002, p. 14). It was furthermore argued that
structural adjustment would increase the autonomy and freedom of manoeuvre for civil society in general and labour unions in particular, as collective bargaining would replace government-imposed wage settlement (Skalnes, 1993). Zimbabwe’s Structural Adjustment Programme consisted of a process of currency devaluation, major reductions in the size of the civil service and cutbacks in subsidies to parastatals companies and food subsidies, while the minimum wage was scrapped. The first stage of reform began in October 1990 with trade liberalisation, the removal of import controls, and financial-sector liberalisation which were introduced rapidly, while tax and public expenditure reform saw little progress. Zimbabwe’s government failed to reduce the budget deficit which was double the proposed target of 14% of GDP in 1994-1995 (Brett, 2005; Jenkins, 1997, p. 600). The failure to reduce the deficit resulted in the suspension of IMF support, and other donors also withheld aid until IMF and World Bank conditions were met.

While there were some positive results such as capital formation, and a rise in the percentage of exports in GDP, the benefits of ESAP were certainly limited. Growth contracted and Zimbabwe’s foreign debt rose from 45% to 75% in the first four years of ESAP (Brett, 2005, p.5). A number of industrial firms, particularly in textiles, closed in response to increased competition and high interest rates. Unemployment rose from 30-50% which translated to 26 000 jobs in the public sector and 20 000 in the private sector (Sachikonye, 1995, p. 143). The restructuring measures effectively reversed most of the social gains made in the 1980s. The impact was most evident in the cutbacks in the civil service, subsidies to parastatal companies and social services and food subsidies (Dansereau, 2003). The period of liberalisation resulted in a dramatic increase in inflation which combined with a decline of 36% in real wages between 1990 and 1996. The government of Zimbabwe itself acknowledged that by 1995 the cost of food had increased by 516%, while education, health care, and transportation costs all rose by 300% (Dansereau, 2003, p. 181).

The economic failures of ESAP had significant political and social costs for the Zanu-PF government. The cutbacks to public expenditure on education and healthcare were very unpopular, while the rise in unemployment and decline in real wages created resistance to the government as larger industrial actions began to appear in reaction to
the massive increases in the cost of living. Clashes between the state and students became commonplace as students jokingly referred to ESAP as ‘Especially Students Are Prone to Suffering’ (Nordlund, 1996, p. 162). As in the 1980s, the government viewed strikes and demonstrations as a betrayal. The increasingly heavy-handed response to strikes and demonstration during the ESAP period served only to galvanise resistance and politicise labour relations and civil society in the country.

**Roots of organic crisis and the counter-hegemonic bloc**

As the previous section has shown, civil society in the first decade and a half of independence had been largely depoliticised and fragmented. Jonah Gokova, a prominent civil society activist, explains the atmosphere of the 1990s in Zimbabwean civil society as follows:

> the students at universities were doing their own thing. The workers ZCTU were doing their own thing, women, lawyers for human rights even some elements within the churches etc. all these initiatives were seeking an engagement with the government of the day. (Gokova, 2011)

The tendency by Zimbabwe’s civil society to seek engagement with the government has been documented by Sara Rich Dorman (2001) and reflects the remnant of a period of optimism in which the government was considered to be responsive and legitimately concerned with engaging with civil society and their concerns. A notable characteristic of the early 1990s was the extent to which regular engagement and political discussions were taking place in Zimbabwean society, not only among members of civil society but also with the government. By the middle of the 1990s growing disenchantment in a context of relative political freedom of association and speech created the environment for the formation of a counter-hegemonic movement. Interviews with key informants active during this period reflect an atmosphere of freedom as well as a hunger to discuss the issues affecting the country, as people met formally and informally at venues such as the Quill Club in Harare. Indeed, in a testament to the conjunctural momentum towards constitutional reform that had begun in the 1990s, David Coltart, a lawyer who would become a pivotal figure in the
opposition party, describes in his memoirs that he made 26 speeches in 1997 to ‘churches, women’s groups, the Law society, the media, estate agents and insurance institutes on the need for constitutional reform’ (2016, p. 252). The fact that Coltart also notes that in a number of these meetings he had shared panels with senior government ministers in discussing topics which would be considered extremely sensitive, including the Gukurahundi and Public Order Security Bill, certainly reflects a high level of engagement on political issues by civil society as well as the relative freedom of engagement and dissent. In an interview for this thesis Jonah Gokova also describes this period of transition in civil society:

at that time our society was coming from a situation where it very depoliticised, so engagement on these issues was exciting. So, for a long period of time people were silent but feeling the pinch of the problems, all of a sudden, they realised that we can develop some articulation, some engagement on the way forward and I think that excited a lot of people. The excitement was coming out of the realisation of the discovery of the space that could be occupied by civil society. Space that was shut before but all of a sudden there were openings here and there, but also, we were relying on state-controlled media for a long time but the public debates became an alternative source of information. So, there was a lot of excitement about that as well the realisation that we can actually create our own alternative sources of information that we can control. Sources of information that allow and encourage feedback, immediate feedback, those are some of the reasons that got people excited about these meetings (Gokova, 2011).

The politicisation of the labour movement under the ZCTU accelerated in 1996 when public sector workers, particularly teachers, staged a walkout which escalated into a general strike as tertiary students joined in solidarity. A more precipitous economic meltdown began in 1997 following the government’s decision to pay Z$50 000 to individual liberation war veterans, which came to an estimated total of Z$4 billion; and the decision to engage in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Sachinkonye, 2002, p. 15). The growing strength and national credibility of urban civil society manifested itself in 1997 in a series of general strikes. The ZCTU, through Tsvangirai’s speeches at May Day rallies, began to articulate the linkages between the economic crisis and the problems of governance. Protests began to address issues of governance and the economy and to decry the pronounced authoritarianism of the government. Even in these early stages the increase in politicisation of labour and other sections of civil society was not without repercussions. In December 1997
Morgan Tsvangirai was attacked after protesting against the war veteran’s levy. In March 1998 the ZCTU’s regional offices in Bulawayo were set on fire following the national strike in March 1998 (Dorman, 2001; Matibenga, 2011). The government began to accuse the ZCTU of ‘playing politics’ after the series of strikes in 1998. At that year’s Zanu-PF congress in Masvingo, the challenge was laid down: ‘aiwa vakomana musavanda neTrade Union, vanoda kuforma party formaiyi tibhakerane!’ (don’t hide behind the Trade Union. Form a political party and let’s box!) (allafrica.com).

**Constitutional reform**

The freedom to discuss these issues noted above also coincided with a keen interest by a section of the population who were young recent graduates. Some of them had spent time at universities in the west and were concerned and frustrated by the seeming de-politicisation of the country. The criticisms against the Lancaster House Agreement had emanated to some degree from within Zanu-PF, as outspoken Member of the Politburo and Minister of Justice Edson Zvobgo had cited the Independence Constitution as an obstacle to the achievement of the country’s goals in development and democracy. Pockets of concerned individuals began to convene to discuss issues relating to governance and specifically to the Constitution. Like Coltart above, the civil society activist Jonah Gokova points to this conjunctural convergence on the constitution:

> We were beginning to express dissatisfaction with the way the then government was behaving. It was very clear that for us to begin to find a way forward we had to find a way to come together and we had to confront the regime from a common united platform. Specifically dealing with the question of the constitution but in that, we realised that in addressing issues to do with the need for a new constitution we were also dealing directly with issues of opening of the democratic space, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech and all the other freedoms. (Gokova, 2011)

The National Constitutional Assembly arose in 1996 as the convergence of a number of common pre-occupations by individuals who were interested in issues of
governance. While there are a number of varying accounts of the origins of the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly, all interviews highlight the centrality of Deprose Muchena, Tawanda Mutasa and Brian Kagoro. These young men were recent university graduates and had passed through the International Socialist Organisation and Students Representative Council at the University of Zimbabwe, which were by then rites of passage for aspiring intellectuals and national leaders. Muchena and Mutasa had been working for the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, which at the time had been largely apolitical though concerned with the impact of government policy on the society as a whole. Gokova interprets the influence of Mutasa, Muchena and Kagoro as that of young and ambitious operators ‘who managed to understand the weaknesses of the churches and to take advantage of them to get them to take advantage of themselves’ (Gokova, 2011).

He elaborates:

…the church was also never an initiator, and it didn’t want to be antagonistic. So, they found a way of relating this idea to the church leaders and got them to support it because they saw it as something that was not antagonistic. But as time went on the church discovered that the NCA was becoming antagonistic to the state. In fact, that’s the reason that they gave when they (the Zimbabwe Council of Churches) withdrew, they said you are too confrontational.

Lovemore Madhuku, a legal scholar and eventually the longstanding chairperson of the NCA who was employed by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, recounts the formation of the NCA as follows:

The first formal meeting of these people that then formed the NCA which was on 20 May 1997 was in the board room at the offices of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung at number 6 Ross Avenue. It was attended by about eleven people: Tsvangirai was there; Tawanda Mutasa, Chimhini from Zimrights at the time, Mike Auret from the CCJP. We were actually recognising people who were at different organisations, you had the CCJP, you had ZIMRIGHTS, you had the ZCTU, there was someone from the Students Union (Learnmore Jongwe), I don’t know whether they came on that first day but they had been recognised. Then there were individuals that were identified as experts because it’s going to be a constitutional thing. People like (Professor Welshman) Ncube, (Tendai) Biti, Brian Kagoro, Priscilla Misihairambwi didn’t attend the foundational meeting…they were brought in as experts later. (Madhuku, 2011)
It is clear that the NCA’s role as the nucleus of the new counter-hegemonic force originated from this group. When the Movement for Democratic Change was formed as a political party two years later all those in attendance at the formation of the NCA meeting would be central players. What is interesting is the difference in their respective roles, as Tsvangirai, Biti, Auret, Misihairambwi and Ncube would be part of the party’s leadership. All of the above except for Tsvangirai would eventually become MDC Members of Parliament in 2000. However, the young initiators of the meeting, Mutasah, Muchena and Kagoro, would not take overt leadership roles in the party. Instead they went into careers within the sphere of international donors and would gain reputations as behind-the-scenes king-makers in the party.

The NCA’s foundational meeting was essentially a grouping of active individuals; however, the ‘Assembly’ and the movement that it spurred have always self-consciously referred to their representation of ‘constituencies’. Thus, despite the fact that the ZCTU was really the only membership-based organisation with a representative at the meeting, reference is often made to the ‘churches, human rights NGOs, labour, women’s groups, and youth groups’ rather than Muchena and Auret, Chimhini, Tsvangirai, Misihairambwi and Jongwe, as was the case. These dynamics will be elaborated upon in the following chapter.

It is evident that Morgan Tsvangirai’s selection as the NCA’s first chairperson was central to its strategy for a broader appeal. As Gwiyo points out from his perspective as a labour leader, the NCA was an ‘elite institution (which) then decided to create relevance by co-opting in Morgan Tsvangirai’ (Gwiyo, 2011). Gwisayi is more blunt, arguing that Tsvangirai was selected as chairperson ‘to hoodwink the masses that such a body represented them’ (quoted in Dorman, 2000).

The seed funding for the NCA was provided by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) between 1997 and 1998. This was eventually supplemented by Oxfam, HIVOS, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, and the embassies of Denmark, the Netherlands,

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12This tendency to refer to individuals as representative s of a wider constituency is evident in virtually all the literature and all my interviews on Zimbabwe’s civil society and opposition. Even more critical interviewees like Lovemore Madhuku, Munyaradzi Gwisayi, and Timothy Kondo refer to individuals in collective terms.
Canada, Australia and Sweden (Dorman, 2000). The above indicates the extent to which opposition in Zimbabwe was inextricably linked with donor funding from its inception. The following sections departs from the chronological structure of this chapter to address one of Gramsci’s key questions in analysing counter-hegemonic movements: what is the social content of the mass following of the counter-hegemonic movement?

Social Content of the Movement.

Labour Unions

As mentioned in the previous chapter, for most of the first decade of independence the relationship between the Zanu-PF government and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions had been cooperative. This period of cooperation had seen the government backing the ZCTU over the alternative umbrella body, the United Trade Unions of Zimbabwe (UTUZ) (Skalnes, 1993, p.423). The consolidation of the disparate unions in a single national congress had arguably served to counteract the influence of trade unions affiliated to other parties, particularly the UANC, and to undermine potential opposition (Kondo, 2011). In an interview with the author of this thesis Timothy Kondo, a trade unionist and researcher at the Labour Economic and Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe (LEDRIX) explained the dynamics of the labour movement at independence:

Because the Smith regime considered trade unions to be the trouble makers, most trade unions were unregistered and operated underground. Most of them affiliated to Zanu-PF and the militant trade unionists. So, come 1980, these unions now come to the surface. In 1978 black trade unions that existed in this country were less than 20, but by end of 1980 when we inaugurated ZCTU in February 1981, 52 unions formed ZCTU. These were the unregistered trade unions, and the political trade unions aligned more to ZANU, took the ZCTU leadership… [with] Makwarimba as president, coming from an unregistered commercial workers trade union against the registered trade union which had been made up of mostly UANC members. Albert Mugabe coming from an unregistered transportion workers trade union, against a registered trade union led by people like Makanda and Manomano who were associated with the UANC.
Kondo and other trade unionists from the period have underlined the experience of close cooperation between the ZCTU and Zanu-PF, citing trade union slogans such as ‘ZCTU and ZANU are one’ (Matibenga, 2011). The period of cooperation between the labour unions and the government had been significant in repealing the Industrial Conciliation Act and passing the Labour Relations Act in 1985. As Lucia Matibenga, a long-term trade unionist and eventual MDC MP, noted in an interview: ‘I can tell you that the greatest achievement of that collaboration was in 1985: the promulgation of the Labour Act of 1985, which was very pro-worker and for us we celebrated our collaboration with the government in achieving that labour act’ (Matibenga, 2011).

The law represented ‘a comprehensive code of regulations relating to employment, remuneration, collective bargaining, the settlement of disputes, the registration and certification of trade unions and employers’ organisations’ (Sachikonye, 1989, p. 259). The law defined the fundamental rights of workers as well as unfair labour practices, safeguarding worker’s rights to fair labour standards in relation to minimum wages, maximum daily work hours and occupational health and safety (Sachikonye, 1989, p. 259; Matibenga, 2011).

However, by 1988 the relationship between labour and government began to sour. This was initially after the government had published the Emergency Powers Acts following a spate of strikes by the affiliate unions for the National Railways and the Post and Telecommunications Corporation. The Emergency Powers Act, a remnant of the Smith regime, empowered the President ‘to make such regulations as appear to him to be necessary or expedient for, among other things, the maintenance of essential services’ (Emergency Powers Act, 1989). In essence, the law permitted the management of parastatals such as the Post and Telecommunications Corporation and the National Railways of Zimbabwe to suspend working rules and summarily dismiss or suspend any worker who took part in or encouraged other workers to engage in strikes, thereby stripping workers of all collective bargaining rights. As the ZCTU’s newly appointed Secretary-General, Morgan Tsvangirai lamented, the new law nationalised labour as a commodity while ‘severely curtailing the power of labour to struggle for its improvement’. He continued that: ‘it must be recognised that the working class has been marginalised both politically and economically by both capital
and the state’ (Tsvangirai, 1990, p. 31). The relationship between the labour unions and the government would be irreparably damaged as negotiations around the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme collapsed as the results of the programme affected the living conditions of workers. The fact that the ZCTU were left out of these discussions led to a confrontation between the unions and the government which culminated in clashes. The public-sector workers strike in 1996 had been followed by several instances of industrial action in 1997. Workers emphasised rapidly deteriorating economic conditions as well as the government’s increasing reluctance to confront the reality of this deterioration through dialogue with organised labour (Saunders, 2001, p. 148).

From its formation, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions has assembled 25 affiliate trade unions composed largely of blue-collar workers. Apart from the Zimbabwe Banks and Allied Union Workers Union, the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, the Zimbabwe Educational Scientific, Social & Cultural Workers’ Union (ZESSCWU) and the National Engineering Workers Union, the majority of ZCTU affiliates represent blue-collar workers. Lucia Matibenga was former president of the largest affiliate of the ZCTU, the Commercial Workers Union, and later became an MDC MP. She noted that: ‘the Commercial Workers Union is a union of very poorly paid and lowly qualified people. If you were to go on strike and you are working in a shop all the shop owner does is to stand on the street and get someone to replace you’ (Matibenga, 2011).

The Labour Law (2003) together with its previous incarnation in the 1985 Labour Relations Act, prevents workers deemed ‘managerial employees’13 from joining worker’s committees or unions. This would produce difficulties in coalition formation as well the lines of fragmentation along class which typified the opposition movement and had its mark on the movement that arose from 1997 onwards. In 1990, membership of labour unions stood at 200 000 (Dashwood, 2000, p. 89). However, by the end of the decade union membership had increased with the Zimbabwe Post and

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13 According to the Labour Law (1985) ‘Managerial employee’ means an employee who by virtue of his contract of employment or of his seniority in an organisation, may be required or permitted to hire, transfer, promote, suspend, lay off, dismiss, reward, discipline or adjudge the grievances of other employees.
Telecommunications Union (ZPTWU) expanding by 25% from 7 600 to 10 500; the Commercial Workers Union enlarging by over 600% from 3 000 workers to 20 000, while the Zimbabwe Banks and Allied Workers Union grew from 1 200 to 3 800 (Saunders, 2001; Sachikonye, 1989). The considerable growth in membership and institutional structures of trade unions can be attributed to the recruitment successes of organising secretaries’ departments (Gwiyo, 2011). The impact of organising secretaries and recruitment was notable given the decline in membership of other unions which had been affected by the collapse of their specific sectors as a result of ESAP. This was particularly true of the clothing and textiles unions which saw their combined membership drop from 51 000 in 1990 to 32 000 in 1999 (Saunders, 2001, p. 95). While union membership consisted mainly of urban industrial workers, union structures were also present in rural areas in the form of the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union which had 150 000 members prior to the land reform programme in 2000; the Zimbabwe Tobacco Industrial Workers Union, as well as branches of the Commercial Workers Union and Urban Councils Workers Union in small towns.

The ZCTU’s administrative structure is made up of eight departments: the department of health and social welfare, the department of information, the legal department, the department of organising women and gender, the education and training department, an informal economy department and a parliamentary affairs and advocacy department. The education and training department, the organising department and the advocacy department would ultimately have the most significant impact on the counter-hegemonic movement. These departments clustered those union members who self-consciously constituted the ‘left of the union’ due to both their specific training in Marxist political economy and also their roles in the education department (Gwiyo, 2011; Kondo, 2011). In the late 1980s and the early 1990s the education department, under the leadership of Andrew Ganya, Trust Ngirande, Ignatius Makonese, Gift Chibatwa Mushayabasa and Collen Gwiyo had produced and disseminated a book entitled Learn to struggle and struggle to learn, as well as handbooks on collective bargaining, legislation, organising techniques and grievance handling (Gwiyo, 2011).
The role of worker-educators became more central as the ZCTU became the core of the counter-hegemonic movement. Certainly, as Gwiyo notes, in ‘all the six regions the first group that led to the establishment of ZCTU regional structures are the same activist[s] who became the first chairpersons of the Movement for Democratic Change’ and that ‘in one way or the other, three quarters of those that were active at mobilising for the formation of the party had undergone our education programmes’ (Gwiyo, 2011). By the early 1990s the ZCTU was conducting legal training for labour union leadership. This was done with the support of academics from the University of Zimbabwe including Lovemore Madhuku and Munyaradzi Gwisayi and funded by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation. These trainings cascaded throughout the structures of the affiliate unions and reached a large number of individual members. Tabitha Khumalo noted that the legal training received in the union turned all the union members into ‘bush lawyers’ with competence in a number of social mobilisation skills which would be useful in the counter-hegemonic movement. Khumalo (2011) explains how the various training courses within the ZCTU equipped leadership with legal, social, cultural and political skills which were key to their engagement as political leaders in the opposition:

In the labour movement you are trained to be a lawyer. In some quarters we are called "bush lawyers" but the advantage is you are taught the nitty gritty of the law and how to translate it into a case and go and defend that case and win. Three quarters of the time trade unionists won their cases because we were specialising in the law itself and the problem on the ground that we were facing on a daily basis. Economic literacy is one of our training programmes within the labour movement. Where you understand the basics of economics which when you then translate to the so-called economist you come up with a blue print which is more volatile than the blue print of an economist.

She continues:

On the political arena, we deal with bread-and-butter issues which are politics, which sometimes I don’t understand when we are told that trade unions should not involve themselves in politics, because the moment I don’t have a living wage – that’s politics. The moment I don’t get a plate of food, that’s politics, the moment I go to the hospital and don’t get drugs that’s politics, the moment my child doesn’t go to school, that’s politics and those are the issues that we deal with as a labour movement. And on the cultural front, we have a women's advisory council where we deal with women's issues. The issue of our periods... come 1999 we ran out of sanitary towels; culturally it’s taboo to talk about my vagina, but at the same time I'm being told I have the right to be a woman,
Khumalo’s description of the intellectual role of leadership in the trade union movement corresponds with Gramsci’s definition of organic intellectuals. In addition to this ‘organic’ role, the ZCTU also adopted a more traditional approach to research through its Research and Advocacy Department. In 1995 the ZCTU’s Research and Advocacy Department produced the report entitled ‘Beyond ESAP: a framework for a long-term development strategy in Zimbabwe beyond the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme’. This ‘Beyond ESAP’ document tacitly accepted the necessity for structural adjustment. It was initially a platform to facilitate discussions with the state and industry on the implementation of international financial institutions’ reforms to cushion their impact on the working class, rather than have them abandoned entirely (Kondo, 2011; Bond, 2001). As the previous chapter has shown, ‘Beyond ESAP’ and the ‘Raw Data’ reports became the first steps in transforming the ZCTU ‘from a largely vociferous organisation that no one seemed to listen to, into a viable political force to be reckoned with’ (Alexander, 2001, p. 387). ‘Beyond ESAP’ and the mass actions that followed represented a consolidation of strategy rather than a shift in ideology, demonstrating the ZCTU leadership’s attempts to openly challenge the regime and offer an alternative policy.

Morgan Tsvangirai’s role as leader of the ZCTU during this transition towards broader political engagements is critical, not only as he became the leader of the movement but also because he embodied the cross-cutting nature of the movement. While he had risen through the ranks of the labour movement, he had also been a member of a number of the other CSOs in the country including ZIMRIGHTS and the National Constitutional Assembly. His personal membership of these last two made him the bridge between the labour movement and the human rights and governance NGOs that would together form the opposition party. Tsvangirai’s personal approach to the leadership, in which he built relationships with other sectors of civil society, was probably instrumental in the direction the ZCTU took towards the formation of the NCA and the MDC. Kondo described Tsvangirai’s personality and his ability to build broader coalitions as follows:
he is a person who can relate to almost everybody. He has very good public relations, that’s why you could get the employers the farmers the workers, and everybody on board. It’s his skill. He has a very powerful skill of good public relations. But sometimes good public relations compromise decisiveness and that seems to be the problem in the party (Kondo 2011).

Tsvangirai’s personal membership of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation put him in regular contact with members of the country’s growing liberal democratic civil society and would certainly have influenced his politics. When the idea arose to form the National Constitutional Assembly, Tsvangirai’s role as secretary-general meant that once the ZCTU had approved its membership in the NCA, he would then represent the unions. As an ‘organic intellectual’ in the ZCTU and its membership structures, Tsvangirai was the ideal candidate for leadership of the National Constitutional Assembly. By virtue of being the largest organised mass movement in the country, the labour movement and its secretary- general’s connection to other segments of the growing counter-hegemonic movement became the central vehicle for organised opposition.

Jacob Mafume, a student activist who would eventually work for the crisis in Zimbabwe coalition, and as a national advisor for the US Agency for International Development, certainly sees Tsvangirai’s ascension to leadership as organic rather than as a cynical strategy by elite groups:

you had the intellectuals and the academics, identifying a pulling force in Morgan Tsvangirai within workers. They stary gravitating towards him identifying a figure and isolating and convincing him to create a political party.

Mafume (2011) however notes that even at the earliest stages there were indications of the sectional cleavages that would plague the party:

With him (Tsvangirai) at the apex, the rest of the leadership you can trace their roots in academia and students. So even up to now he has got after him, there is Khupe when you go to the secretary general, to the other position you will then find that a lot of those guys were then student leaders, Tendai Biti, Nelson Chamisa, Judah Jongwe, Douglas Mwonzora, even before then Priscilla
Misihairambwi, these were all academics who sort of combined with the workers to be able to create this thing.

As this section has shown, labour formed the single largest organised section of civil society. The labour movement was composed largely of the urban population, with the Industrial Workers Union forming the largest body in the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. In Gramscian terms labour union leadership was therefore organic to the country’s urban and rural mining and commercial farming working class. Through active engagement with global trade unionism, particularly during the period of the 1980s, the Union’s leadership made use of skills and training from both the Soviet Union and social democratic states which played the role of organic intellectuals, as Khumalo’s interview (cited above) has shown. It was Morgan Tsvangirai’s leadership which allowed the ZCTU to broaden its leadership by his forming personal relationships with other segments of civil society, particularly students, university lecturers and professionalised NGO managers.

**Traditional intellectuals**

When the crisis of the late 1990s began, the second level counter-hegemonic bloc (apart from the trade unions) were those whom Gramsci would define as traditional intellectuals. As shown in Chapter 3, through their ‘monopoly of a number of important services: religious ideology, that is the philosophy and science of the age, together with schools, education, morality, justice, charity, good works’ (Gramsci, 2000, p. 301), traditional intellectuals produce the ‘common sense’ of the age. In Gramsci’s assessment of Europe in the early 20th century, traditional intellectuals often maintain this conservative position; however, Zimbabwe’s academics have tended to be relatively independent and critical of power. Zimbabwe’s intellectuals were traditionally clustered around the University of Zimbabwe either as academics or as students who would then move into other sectors of the multifaceted counter-hegemonic movement as academics, lawyers, journalists and the church organisations. Equally, they frequently became employees and activists in the NGO sphere as well as in the national staff for donors who funded the NGOs. From the moment of independence in 1980 the University of Zimbabwe has been a bastion of socialist
scholarship. The departments of history and political science had worked largely in the school of Marxist political economy, often analysing the country’s progress in terms of the achievement of socialist goals, as was the case in Mandaza’s (1986) *Zimbabwe: Political Economy of Transition*. The university had included among its part-time and full-time staff prominent Marxist scholars such as Tandon, Nabudere and Shivji. They had all engaged vigorously in the Dar es Salaam debates on the nature of the African state, as mentioned in the literature review chapter. Mandaza has remained one of Zimbabwe’s most visible public intellectuals, having been the owner/editor of the country’s largest private newspaper in the 1990s and also through his Southern Africa Political Economy Series (SAPES) Trust think-tank. This institute has continued to hold policy dialogues which are able to bring together members of the opposition as well as representatives and supporters of the ruling party. Mandaza’s personal history in the liberation struggle, his presence at the negotiations at Lancaster House and his role as the first permanent secretary of the Ministry of Manpower Development place him in the unique position of being able to criticise Zanu-PF from relative proximity and with a degree of license not often afforded to other critics. Mandaza’s position as a prominent intellectual in Zimbabwe is clearly evident in an exchange between Stephen Chan and Morgan Tsvangirai in which Tsvangirai cites Mandaza in particular as representing Zimbabwe’s traditional intellectuals. Tsvangirai however accuses Mandaza of being an apologist for Zanu-PF through his and other traditional intellectuals’ overemphasis (in Tsvangirai’s assessment) on the historical injustices of colonialism.

Among the intellectuals who had formed an organic relationship with the trade unions were Renee Lowenson, Kempton Makamure and Shadrack Gutto. These were often cited by labour unions as being ‘the elite of the left’ (in interviews with Kondo, Kanyenze and Gwiyo). Makamure and Gutto in particular had been involved in articulating a socialist ideology and incorporating it with the interests of the trade union movement through engagement and discussion with the union structures. Shadrack Gutto, an exile from Kenya and a professor in the Law Department at the University of Zimbabwe, had supported student protests against the curtailing of academic freedom in 1988 and was threatened with deportation and ultimately forced to leave the country. Kempton Makamure was detained for four weeks for criticising
the implementation of ESAP in a radio interview in 1992. Together with former Zanu-PF MP Margaret Dongo, Makamure would eventually form a short-lived political party, the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats, to compete in the 2000 elections.

Another important public intellectual who took the role of critiquing the state, Brian Raftopulous, would go on to play a central opposition role in forming NGOs which openly criticised the rising authoritarianism in the country. Along with Lloyd Sachikonye, Raftopulous edited two volumes on the labour movement in Zimbabwe. The first *Keep on Knocking: A History of the Labour Movement in Zimbabwe* covered the history of Zimbabwean labour between 1900 and 1997 while the second, *Striking Back*, covered the labour movement in the post-colonial state between 1980 and 2000. These books were funded by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and included chapters by national and international academics who played the role of traditional intellectuals in Zimbabwean civil society. Among these were Patrick Bond, Patrick Yeros, Blair Rutherford, Yash Tandon and Suzanne Dansereau.

There were certainly some academics who did not fit the Marxist mould in Zimbabwean universities. Prior to his engagement in Zanu-PF politics Jonathan Moyo had been a vocal liberal critic of the centralisation of power in the executive presidency in the one-party state debate. John Makumbe, a professor of political science at the University of Zimbabwe, was another vitriolic critic of the regime. Makumbe lent his intellectual support to the MDC and stood as an MP for the party in 2000 though he did not manage to secure a seat. He had also been involved with counter-hegemonic NGOs and civil society, having been the chairman of Transparency International Zimbabwe and the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition. Also among these liberal public intellectuals, Welshman Ncube had been a law lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe and had therefore represented academic and intellectual influence in the opposition movement. Ncube, more than any other actor, would embody the schism between workers and intellectuals that took place in the opposition movement in 2005 and split it into two factions, one led by Morgan Tsvangirai and the other by Welshman Ncube.

It is important to note that a sizeable proportion of Zimbabwe’s intellectuals supported Zanu-PF. Once Zimbabwe entered the phase of organic crisis following 1997, these
academics who would come to represent what Norma Kriger and Terence Ranger have termed patriotic history. The following chapter will outline some of the positions of this patriotic history and its main proponents such as Mararike, Chivaura, and Mahoso14 in analysing the ideological contestation of Zimbabwe’s hegemony after 2000.

**Students**

In addition to the faculty at the University of Zimbabwe, students from the country’s tertiary institutions would become a central plank of the opposition movement. Among the leading student activists in the mid-1980s were Briggs Zano who would become president of the Law Society and Tinoziva Bere who would chair the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights and the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network. Among the most prominent member of the movement would be Tendai Biti who would become vice-president of the MDC and finance minister under the Government of National Unity. Gwisayi cites Biti as ‘the leading red tie in the student's movement’. Gwisayi attributes the foundations to the movement that he and Arthur Mutambara inherited and ‘picked up the baton in the sense of openly resisting the state in a manner that had not been done before’ to Biti (Gwisayi, 2011). Arthur Mutambara’s leadership of the University of Zimbabwe’s Student Representative Council between 1988 and 1989 saw a more assertive and politically engaged organisation as it militated more vociferously against the one-party state. Mutambara would go on to pursue his PhD in robotics at Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar, only returning to Zimbabwe in 2005 to lead the new faction of the MDC. Mutambara was unable to win a parliamentary seat in Zengeza (a small constituency in Harare) though he went on to become a signatory to the Global Political Agreement and held the post of deputy prime minister throughout the Government of National Unity.

Students in Zimbabwe in the first decades of independence could be classed as traditional intellectuals as well as being organic to the working classes, in that they often came from working class families and were training for careers that would define

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14 Blessing Miles Tendi’s *Making History in Mugabe’s Zimbabwe* is a comprehensive treatment of intellectuals who were proponents of this patriotic history, including Mahoso, Chivaura and Mararike.
them as traditional intellectuals. Hopewell Gumbo’s story of his entry into student politics and his motives for engagement is as enlightening as it is representative of the trajectories of student leadership:

My orientation in reading at University was with the society for Modern Scientific Thought which ultimately was the International Socialist Organisation. So they had study circles, reading hard politics and engaged in a lot of political activities which I would say linked up with the labour movement because I know that after lectures and during weekends I would go for newspaper sales for the ISO paper and we would also develop leaflets that we would circulate about common issues on campus.

I had my own perception of issues and I found that the ISO was an interesting group to link up with. For one I had written a story about the oppression of workers in Triangle sugar estates after a strike and it was published in the ISO newspaper. There was a strike in Triangle Ltd and they burned down some sugar cane fields and I said the struggle must continue and it must be linked up with the whole nation and solidarity with the workers of Triangle. That was the area I grew up in and I hated to see the kind of oppression that I continued to see (Gumbo, 2011).

Gumbo’s story highlights the importance of the International Socialist Organisation as an ideological school for most of the student leadership in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Munyaradzi Gwisayi, a former student activist, lawyer and long-time leader of the International Socialist Organisation, explains the centrality of the ISO to the formation of the ideological consciousness of students (Gwisayi, 2011):

What is interesting about the response at the UZ is its class character in its conscious dimensions. Leading figures in that movement would have been very left-inclined students who viewed themselves as Marxists and they would have been under the heavy influence of Marxian academics notably Kempton Makamure and Shadrack Gutto. A number of key student activists throughout the late 1980s until the mid-1990s were members of the ISO.

Zelig (2011) has also referred to the fact that prominent student leaders like Arthur Mutambara, Brian Kagoro and Tinoziva Bere had all come through the membership of the ISO. Jacob Mafume, another former student activist described this shifting identity as follows:
If you trace some of these guys who are in the MDC people like Mwonzora, Jameson Timba. They were students at that time who had been members of ZUM. So you will find that they were proud that they were contra to Zanu-PF and pro-workers. There were socialist trappings, most of the student leaders at one point or the other joined the International Socialist Organisation led by Munyaradzi Gwisai, and tried to find explanation in a view that because Zanu-PF had betrayed the socialist struggle it had become a lumpen party and therefore was no longer a liberator but an oppressor (Mafume, 2011).

It is notable that due to the country’s economic structure at the time, the relationship between the interests of labour and students would evaporate once students graduated (Gwiyo, 2001). As noted above, the relationship between students and labour had not been particularly strong until the formation of the NCA and ultimately the MDC. This was certainly true once students left university and joined the workforce as managers as a result of the definition of ‘managerial staff’ noted above. Nevertheless, there had been some connections between students and workers. Tsvangirai’s arrest in 1989 in support of student protests against the one-party state was one such moment of unity.

The mid-1990s saw the formation of the Zimbabwe National Student’s Union which combined the student’s representative councils of the country’s tertiary education institutions. At that time these included only the University of Zimbabwe, the newly-opened National University of Science and Technology in Bulawayo and the Polytechnic Colleges in Harare and Bulawayo. This period coincided with the growth in opposition sentiment throughout the country’s civil society. Opposition grew towards to the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme and government brutality which students experienced during brutal police crackdowns on student protests. The first leadership of this ZINASU consisted of actors who would become key youth figures in the NCA and the MDC. As leader of the UZ SRC, Learnmore Jongwe was instrumental in the revival of the national students’ mother body (ZINASU). In March 1997 Jongwe was elected as national president of the ZINASU executive which also included Daniel Molokele as the vice president, Charlton Hwende as secretary-general and Job Sikhala as information and publicity secretary. Learnmore Jongwe was the most prominent of these activists and served as ZINASU president from 1997 to 1999. During the 1998 food riots, Jongwe led countrywide student protests against the rising cost of living in Zimbabwe. This charismatic law student joined the MDC immediately.
after the National Working Peoples convention and would become one of the party’s first members of parliament. Takura Zhangazha, Jongwe’s deputy in ZINASU, was seconded to the National Constitutional Assembly as a strategic choice to have the leadership of the students’ union covering both flanks of the opposition movement, that is on the civil society and the political fronts. Job Sikhala would also become a prominent youth leader in the MDC and eventually became an MP for the St Mary’s constituency in Harare.

Once the cohort of students who had been present at the formation of the MDC and NCA had set out a path, subsequent generations of students sought to follow the same trajectory. Being a student leader became a clear route to a professional position in civil society, donor organisations or indeed as a leader within the opposition party. By the first decade of the 2000s the economic crisis had reduced the employment prospects for students in the private sector and had also narrowed career options for student leaders in the civil service; thus, a career in politics or in an NGO would become their best employment option.

Takura Zhangazha, a founding deputy president ZINASU and a member of the NCA board, describes the vital experience that student leadership provided:

we learned how to write minutes after a meeting, we learned how to read statutory instruments and how to report back to our national executives, and how to report to our student's unions via a general meeting. We learned how to formally put things down on paper and write to the ministry, try and go to court and do a court petition etc, that sort of stuff. We learned how to deal with exclusion from campuses, suspension, how to cope, survival tactics and strategies. (Zhangazha, 2011)

Regarding their approach to collective action, student politics was characterised by a degree of boldness in the face of authority but also with violence towards internal opponents. The radical phase of student politics under Mutambara, Biti and Gwisayi had also created the phenomenon of the UBA, the University Bachelor Association, which referred to the heavy-drinking, macho student culture (Zelig 2006). Zelig

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15 Jongwe’s rise would end in tragedy as he would commit suicide under police custody for having murdered his wife in July 2002
(2006) and Hodgkinson (2013) have documented this self-proclaimed ‘hooliganism’ on the part of students who, in the early 1990s would not shy away from violence against public property in their protests. This capacity for violence would often turn on opposing factions in student movements. The phenomenon of the UBA would take different forms such as the ‘hardcore activist’ and the ‘Revolutionary Command Council’. The ‘Revolutionary Command Council’ was a moniker for a group of particularly resolute student activists known for attacking police during student riots at the university. Among these were Nixon Nykadzino and McDonald Lewanika, Joy Mabenge and Itai Zimunya. These and other members of the RCC would become leaders in the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, a civil society movement that became a prominent opponent to the government. This connection of students also stood at the intersection of the cross-pollination between the MDC, professionalised civil society and the donors. Jacob Mafume, in an interview in 2011, provides this insight into the Revolutionary Command Council:

Well it was something that the students had, it was sort of like a wing of activists within the collective group of activists. It was a response to the oppression of the system at that time. You needed to have invisible enforcers, people who understood the broad objective of what you were trying to do. Be able to mobilise toward that action because you can’t just call a demonstration then go and say to people ‘we are going to demonstrate tomorrow, then go back and sit down’. So, if somebody talks about the Arab uprisings, the press, the leaders of the uprising want to give you the impression that there was an awakening and people went into the streets at this particular point in time. no, it’s not an accident. You had to have people who you sit with weeks or months before any action. So these were people who were very active, brave is mild, reckless who ran towards danger.

Asked about the trajectories of those who were in the Revolutionary Command Council, Mafume adds:

What happened is that most of us who became student leaders, you would start being in the revolutionary command council. For you to get elected you were not going to come from nowhere. What would happen is that among yourselves you would recognise a person who would make it as a leader, who is both brave and presentable enough but also charismatic to attract the following of the broader students. So what you would see is that people like Takura (Zhangazha), like myself like Mao (Nixon Nyikadzino). Mao who was actually the chairman of the RCC, went into the leadership. Gabriel Shumba, Job Sikhala, so most of the student MPs and the guys who are leading
civil society now were part of that active student core. You were sort of underground, if you looked at this period, the oppression is too much, we need to give back as good as we are getting, we need to throw stones, we need to burn something, we need to do something like that, you would then be able to call upon that network and say ‘look comrades, tomorrow we are going to do this’ and it would be done.

Some interviewees related the prevalence of violence in internal campaigns for student leadership, as members of civil society organisations (now comrades) would openly recall how they had attacked each other, in some instances recounting examples of grave violence in students’ union elections at the University of Zimbabwe (Katema, 2011; Bere, 2011). This recourse to violence may have transferred to their activities within the opposition movement. The violence endemic in student union politics was particularly evident in 2010 when the Zimbabwe National Student’s Union split into two factions; one was led by Clever Bere, the previous incumbent who had sought to extend his term as ZINASU president and the other by Joshua Chinyerere (2011) who had been voted in at a national congress. The split union gathered divergent support from different sectors of civil society. At the time civil society was divided over whether or not to support or oppose the constitution-making process; in this case the NCA, which supported Bere, was opposed to what it saw as a politician-driven political process. Interviewed in 2011, Chinyere highlighted the omnipresence of violent student politics but also how the country’s economic crisis had affected the capacity for student activists to engage in political activities, as well as the greater risks of repression which made street protests less feasible. Chinyere also noted the fact that the ultimate goal of student leadership would have been to seek political office, and the source of the conflict in student union politics was seeking political patronage and positions within the MDC, and at the time what was anticipated as cabinet positions in a would-be MDC government.

**Lawyers**

Another segment in the leadership of the mass movement is the lawyers who formed a cross-section of other segments of the movement. Virtually all lawyers had been educated at the University of Zimbabwe and would therefore have been involved in
student activism. They often started in the International Socialist Organisation, then cut their political teeth in the student representative councils or in the Zimbabwe National Students Union after its establishment in 1999. After leaving university lawyers would often remain involved in the political discussions that were taking place in the late 1990s, as well as through their professional engagements. Hence individuals such Brian Kagoro who had been prominent law students would be critical actors in the Zimbabwe Council of Churches as the primary drivers of the formation of the NCA and the MDC. Another ways in which lawyers engaged in the counter-hegemonic movement was to defend activists in court while working for private firms or the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. Individuals such as Paul Themba Nyathi would have played an important role in the formation of the NCA and civil society organisations. Gwisayi from the ISO was a lawyer trained in the United States at Columbia University as were Madhuku and Kagoro. David Coltart, a lawyer who would become an MDC MP for Bulawayo South, had represented the families of victims of the Gukurahundi massacres.

Among the key student leaders who joined the opposition party, Learnmore Jongwe, Thoko Matshe, Tendai Biti, Priscilla Misihairambwi and Jessie Majome had all been law students. The heavy representation of lawyers in the movement certainly had an impact on the issues the movement prioritised as well as the route the movement chose to confront power. The focus on constitutional reform through the NCA and afterwards reflects this legalistic emphasis. The MDC’s constant legal battles with the government made legal training a useful tool as the party was regularly under attack from the government while also using the courts as an arena for contesting government arbitrariness and heavy-handedness. The fact that Nelson Chamisa went on to study for a law degree while serving in the cabinet of the Government of National Unity may reflect the perceived importance of a legal education for counter-hegemonic leadership. The intellectual and symbolic role of lawyers was evidently important to Morgan Tsvangirai, who emphasised in an interview with Stephen Chan in 2005 that the MDC had eight lawyers among its MPs (Chan, 2005).

**Professionalised NGO leadership and activists**
The period following the introduction of ESAP in 1990 coincided with the burgeoning of national non-governmental organisations in Zimbabwe. The sprouting of NGOs in Zimbabwe was in response to a growing national awareness of the concepts of human rights and parallel to the international aspirations of civil society as a counterweight to authoritarian government as outlined in the literature review.

Certainly some organisations such as the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace had played an important role documenting cases of human rights abuses since before independence. The CCJP played a central role in bringing to light the atrocities in Matabeleland during the Gukurahundi period in the early 1980s. Apart from the CCJP, associational life in Zimbabwe had largely steered clear of political controversy, let alone opposition politics. The CCJP, however, had had a history of activism against the Rhodesian state and had built quite strong connections with the nationalist movement. Its reporting on the Matabeland atrocities gave this organisation a degree of objectivity that Zanu-PF could not easily deny. Leaders in the CCJP included Mike Auret, who became an MDC MP once the party was formed and contested its first elections in 2000.

By the early 1990s International organisations such as Transparency International also began to have chapters in Zimbabwe. This organisation attracted luminaries into their leadership such as Professor John Makumbe, who had become a notable liberal democratic critic of the Zimbabwean government and would stand as an MDC candidate in the 2000 elections.

The first prominent donor funded NGO in Zimbabwe was the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, ZIMRIGHTS. This organisation was formed in 1992 with the purpose of ensuring that the Zimbabwean citizens were informed about human rights would have the tools to defend these. The organisation was led from its inception by Dr Reginald Matchaba Hove who came to be a central actor in the formation of a number of other key human rights and observation organisations and contained in its advisory board the former Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, Sir Garfield Todd, former chief justice Enoch Dumbutshena, the prominent author Chenjerai Hove, Morgan Tsvangirai, the secretary general of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions.
(Dorman, 2004). The organisation estimated that it had a membership of 14000 in 1996. However, ZIMRIGHTS was among the first organisations to receive donor funding for its activities. The introduction of donor funding definitively resulted in the organisation’s transformation into a professionalisation and erosion of its membership base. ZIMRIGHTS came into direct conflict with the government on numerous occasions in the 1990s as it conducted research into the Gukurahundi, supported strikes by nurses and doctors in 1997 and criticised the heavy-handedness of the police in response to food riots in 1997. Dorman (2001) notes that while ZIMRIGHTS certainly came under attack from the state and may have been infiltrated by agents from the Central Intelligence Organisation “it suffered more grievously from internal, personalized conflicts arising from the blurred distinction between members and staff” as well as from a series of incidents of financial mismanagement which led to the organisation’s abandonment by donors and collapse in 2000. While the organisation would be resuscitated in the mid 2000s it would never have the same level of prominence. Importantly key leadership of ZIMRIGHTS in the 1990s reflected the trajectories which NGO leadership would take as Reginald Matchaba-Hove would occupy the chairmanship of a number of boards of NGOs including the Zimbabwe Election Support Network before being employed by the donors Open Society International and the National Endowment for Democracy. The organisation’s Executive Director between 1995 and 1999, David Chimhini would become a founder Member of the MDC and Member of Parliament for Mutasa North despite his exit from the organisation in a cloud of suspicion over financial mismanagement (Dorman, 2004)

Out of ZIRIGHTS a number of other professionalised governance and Human Rights NGOs sprouted and came to constitute Zimbabwe’s NGO civil society space. These include the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association and the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition. These organisations were also often opposed to the government and as such came to be a training ground for the country’s would-be opposition. The increase in potential funding had a commensurate influence on the formation of NGOs that dealt with a range of democratisation and human rights issues.
A notable factor about the donor funded NGO space is the narrowness of the organisation’s membership. It is important to note that as donor funding increased, and freedom of expression in Zimbabwe’s societal space was shrinking, the membership organisations in Zimbabwe decreased as the number of NGOs that respond to donor-driven priorities grew. A notable trait of these organisations is the fact that a very narrow space of individuals comprises their leadership. Often the board of an organisation is made up of the executive directors of the handful of other organisations in the country. Hence in effect the leadership of organisations draws from a very small pool of organisations, few of which can actually claim to have a membership beyond the staff that work for them. Writing in 2003, Trudy Stevenson, a former member of the Harare Residents Association and then an MDC member of Parliament, ascribed the weakness in civil society to its politicisation and partisanship in a polarised environment. She noted then:

This politicisation of civil society does not go unnoticed, nor is it likely to strengthen civil society. Indeed, it is already causing disaffection. More seriously, it has become such a widespread incestuous relationship that instead of civil society organising itself more widely, its organised members are actually dwindling, since the same person holds positions in several organisations at the same time! Furthermore, someone will chair one organisation one year and then move to another a year or so later, round and round the circuit. Board leadership incest has certainly become a worse problem since then as a few leaders sit on the boards of directors for numerous civil society organizations (theindependent.co.zw, May 30, 2003).

In an interview in 2011 Jonah Gokova, who had been a prominent civil society activist since the 1990s, described his own affiliation to multiple civil society organisations. These included his directorship of the Ecumenical Support Services, his previous membership of the National Constitutional Assembly, the Harare Resident's Association for which he was deputy chair, the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development and Padare/Enkundhleni Men's Forum on Gender, all while serving as the chairman of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, the Popular Education Centre, and being on the Board of Trustees of the Women's Action Group. Gokova is in this sense no outlier. The incestuous nature of Zimbabwean CSO boards means in reality that there are only a handful of actors in the space constituting civil society. Gokova attributes this overlapping of leadership to the difficult environment and to a question
of strategy.

I [Gokova] think it’s to do with the environment in which we are living and working. It’s a demanding environment. It’s a struggle for democracy that requires a multifaceted approach. So sometimes an individual ends up getting involved in different, it’s a question of strategy. That you need that multi-faceted approach so that your intervention is not just coming from one corner, but from different corners. It’s also to do largely with a hostile environment where you expect some of these engagements to be blocked. So if two organisations are shut down at least you still have one or two others that are still ongoing. So it was largely a question of strategy.

There is no question that leadership in Zimbabwe’s civil society comes with tremendous personal risk. Among the leaders of the country’s most prominent democritisation and human rights organisations from the early 2000s were women like Jestina Mukoko, who has led the Zimbabwe Peace Project since 2000, Irene Petras and Beatrice Mtetwa of the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, and Rindai Chifunde Vava at the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, all of whom have shown considerable courage in performing their roles. Mukoko in particular underwent brutal treatment when she was kidnapped by the Central Intelligence Organisation during the period between the two rounds of the 2008 elections. Apart from individual women, women’s’ organisations in Zimbabwe have always played an important role in opposing the government. For example, Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) has become notorious for its annual Valentine’s Day protest against the lack of democracy in a country which has invariably ended in the arrests of their leaders Jenny Williams and Mahlangu.

Donor requirements might best account for the structures of a number of the country’s new NGOs. They were generally formed in keeping with structures that allowed for greater accountability to donors; these included a board, an executive director and a number of staff. The respect for democratic values in these organisations was probably a combination of accord with donor requirements as much as an innate democracy within the associational sphere, as de Tocqueville or any of his descendants may have imagined. There is no question that the NGO sphere offers an attractive career path for Zimbabweans. This was the case in the 1990s when the effects of ESAP were first
felt and both the private and public sector were beginning to wither. By the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, when hyperinflation and unemployment had become rampant, the option of being paid in foreign currency certainly made a number of people working in civil society comparatively wealthy. There were also some notable cases of corruption and mismanagement of funds within these organisations, such as the collapse of the Transparency International board as well as that of the ZIMRIGHTS in 1999 and Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition in 2014.

**Donors**

While international donors do not qualify as part of the movement’s mass base, the opposition movement in Zimbabwe has been almost entirely dependent on international donor funding and support throughout its existence. Indeed, a number of the organisations have arisen as much out of demand from donors as from a home-grown impetus to fill a need. This was often as a result of changing patterns of international engagement, as the spread of human rights monitoring organisations and election observation organisations would not necessarily have been domestic. An example of this dynamic between donors and national NGOs is the formation of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network in 2000. This organisation arose when Rindai Chipfunde-Vava, then a programme officer at ZIMRIGHTS, became aware of the field of citizen election observation after a trip to Malawi in 2000. In informal discussions with donor representatives Chipfunde-Vava put together a proposal to form the Zimbabwe Election Support Network in anticipation of the 2000 parliamentary elections. The need for a national observation group had become particularly evident after the violence and farm invasions which had followed the rejection of the constitutional draft in the February 2000 referendum. Vava notes how eager donors were as the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Sweden all rushed to fund the new organisation.

The fact that the drive for new organisations or for new areas of activities came in response to donors is also reflected in the overlap of organisations with the same objectives. This competition for donor funding has produced the older coalition of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network and the Zimbabwe Election Resource Centre.
Similarly, the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition arose out of a need to fund a different organisation from the National Constitutional Assembly as relationships with donors began to suffer. There are also separate organisations dealing with questions of human rights and media monitoring, and the market is often saturated with competition over donor resources. This dependence on often-limited donor resources explains the NGO space in Zimbabwe. With limited opportunities for advancement in the opposition movement and civil society, individuals would often form their own organisations. This split by a form of mitosis is similar to the division of a living cell, in that an organisation might form in relation to a new need, but more often in relation to disgruntlement within an organisation or donor requests. Thus, staff from an existing organisation would form a new organisation with a board composed of executive directors or staff from other organisations in the same space.

The vicissitudes of NGOs in Zimbabwe depended largely on their relationship with international donors. Where donors were no longer impressed with an organisation’s leadership the leadership would have to change or the organisation would collapse. Ibbo Mandaza cites his refusal to join the MDC as a reason why his institute stopped receiving support from the donors (Mandaza interviews, 2011, 2017). A similar relationship occurred with the NCA following the formation of the MDC, as Madhuku cites in an interview in 2011. The CEO of the National Association of NGOs, Cephas Zinhumwe, also gave examples of explicit threats of funding cuts from donors where his approach diverged from their expectations. Where threats are not explicit, there is the implication that should an organisation fall foul of the donor, funding would be cut or a rival organisation would be funded to conduct similar governance and democratisation activities. An example of this is the competition in election observation organisations. Initially the Zimbabwe Election Support Network had been formed in the run-up to the 2000 elections and had been the country’s most prominent citizen observation network. The organisation’s executive director Rindai Chipfunde-Vava, has cited pressure from donors to use more condemnatory language in the organisation’s observer reports on elections in 2005 and in 2013. She underlined her organisation’s resistance to using more critical language as the reason for donor support being redirected to rival election NGOs such as the Zimbabwe Election Resource Centre.
Donors also hired staff members who were visible leaders in civil society. Arguably the first such example of a key Zimbabwean civil society leader moving into the donor sphere was when ZIMRIGHTS founder Reginald Matchaba Hove went to work for the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington DC. This transition has become commonplace, with prominent and talented student leaders moving from student leadership up the ladder into positions with international organisations such as the Open Society Foundation (as was the case with Deprose Muchena, Itai Zimunya, Washington Katema and Otto Saki). When one individual left an NGO his or her successor would follow, shifting up from the previous organisation in the chain.

Collen Gwiyo (2011) emphasises the importance of this network and how it was perceived by MDC representatives:

When Tawanda Mutasah left USAID, he went to OSISA. Then Deprose [Muchena] went to USAID, and then when Deprose left USAID to join Tawanda Mutasah, Jacob Mafume then joined USAID. When Jacob left USAID, was it Itai [Zimunya] or the one who was at ZLHR, Otto [Saki] is there, Katema is there. So it is very clear to say the pool for recruitment is from the student activists you can see the chain yourself and that would obviously have an influence because the ordinary person who was a general secretary at ZCTU while Zimunya was finishing his studies and at the same time was a member of ZINASU, if you put them side by side, the trade unionist would actually be funded by the student, which then means [the boy] now has more of an opportunity of getting elected. The table has turned the people in the union had the resources in 2000 to campaign.

The relationship between local donor staff and the NGOs they funded has not been without controversy as questions of favouritism bordering on patronage and corruption often arise (www.zimbabweonlinenews.com)

Certainly, dependence on donor funding might indicate the necessity to serve the interests of the funding nation. The funding of governance, democratisation and human rights support internationally is not unique to Zimbabwe, though the system of donor support for governance is not without controversy, as mentioned in the literature review. International donor support for democratisation in Zimbabwe, particularly by the United Kingdom and the United States, left the democratisation movement open
to the accusation, particularly from Mugabe, of NGOs working in governance being puppets of the west. These accusations, however cynical, nevertheless stuck as is evident in the chapter on the means to the proposed ends. The UK’s position on land reform in Zimbabwe as well as the nature of international aid policy on questions of development and the route towards development meant that all organisations, certainly any organisation that sought donor funding, would have to adopt a neo-liberal stance in as much as this related to economic policy. This has often been cited as the reason for the way the MDC presented itself as a third-way party as opposed to a distinctly labour movement.

Farmers and Businessmen

Finally, it is important to include farmers and business leaders in the analysis of the counter-hegemonic movement. This is not because of their numerical presence but for the influence they have or are perceived to have in the trajectory and policies of the opposition. Two particular actors, Roy Bennet and Eddie Cross, represent these interests and would be controversial as much for their class backgrounds as for their race in the Zimbabwean context. Roy Bennet had been a commercial farmer in Chimanimani and had served as the Chairman of the Commercial Farmers Union. Given the looming land reform policy and the fact that the government had gazetted farms for seizure and resettlement in 1997, representation by farmers against this policy had driven farmers into political action. Other white commercial farmers would become more politically engaged following the appropriation of white-owned farms between 2000 and 2002. These included Iain Kay, who would become an MP for the MDC from 2000 onwards, and Ben Freeth who would launch a campaign against the government which included bringing a case against the Zimbabwean Government to the SADC Tribunal. Eddie Cross had been chief executive of the Dairy Board and the Cold Storage Commission and vice president of the Zimbabwe Confederation of Industries before joining the MDC and becoming the party’s secretary for economics in 2000. The fact that Bennet and Cross would become the MDC’s key spokespeople on farming and economic issues certainly diminished the party’s claims of being a worker’s party. The fact that the MDC’s policy became deeply intertwined with white
commercial farmers and business people would leave the party vulnerable to being cast as sell-outs in the revolutionary rhetoric of Zanu-PF, as the ruling party sought to discredit the opposition movement as puppets dancing to the tune of white and international interests.

*The National Working People’s Convention: towards forming a party*

Parallel to the formation of the NCA, the Research and Advocacy Department of the ZCTU under the leadership of Timothy Kondo had in June of 1996 begun conducting public outreach meetings. This was done in conjunction with the Organisation for Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) in all the country’s provinces’, as a follow up to the *Beyond ESAP* document. Kondo explains the root of the ‘Worker Driven’ and ‘People-Centred’ Development Process for Zimbabwe, which ran between 1996 and February 2000 and culminated in the ‘Raw Data’ report which traces the genesis of the MDC as follows:

our weakness was that even if we are lobbying and influencing and engaging, we are not guided by some policy guidelines of where we are going. Here (in the Raw Data interviews) we were creating possibility within the trade union of forming a political party because we could not have done it before without policy guidelines. I was employed to lobby government. So we tried to engage them with a questionnaire for every MP, we put in their pigeon holes then followed with appointments; one to one, and I managed to speak to eight of them, the rest were all avoiding.

Then this has failed to work, in 1997 we started local pre-convention, consultation process questionnaire. That’s where we went out to the civic society. We are trying to engage these people over these ideas. The idea here was to now formulate a broader voice, and we were arguing that maybe government is managing to ignore us because we are only talking as ZCTU.

Kondo continues:
If government had responded favourably to these initiatives of ZCTU that 1997 food riot would not have occurred, even the formation of the MDC may not have occurred. The agenda not of Morgan and a few individuals but of the masses of people and civic society organisations was to call the attention of government to address issues that were problematic, and we believed they have the capacity to address these problems if they are willing and then they did not show willingness to engage with the ZCTU. What people were looking for was a government that is accountable, transparent, and gives them space and government in itself failed, they cannot blame anybody for this development yekuzoformerwa a mass party (of having a mass party formed against them). They have no one to blame other than themselves. They didn’t want to listen.  

Following the public outreach meetings across the country the ZCTU’s process culminated in a meeting to be held in Harare. Between 26 and 28 February 1999 over 400 individuals representing 40 organisations met at the National Working People’s Convention held at the women’s bureau in Harare. This was to ‘seriously discuss the current social, economic, and political environment that the civil society in Zimbabwe finds itself in’ (ZCTU, 2000). The participants to the convention discussed an ‘Agenda for Action’ in relation to the economy and the labour market, education, health and social security as well as the country’s political system and governance. The declaration on the third day of the convention noted:

that the inability to implement any meaningful steps to redress these basic economic and social problems emanates from a crisis of governance within the nation. This crisis expresses itself as a failure of government to observe the separation of powers between the executive legislature and judiciary, to obey basic rules of accountability and transparency to respect human rights and decentralise power in ways that enable meaningful participation of people in public institutions. (ZCTU, 2000)

The declaration concluded with the statement that ‘the convention thus resolved to take these issues to the people across the country, to mobilise them towards the working people’s agenda, and to implement a vigorous and democratic political movement for change’ (ibid.).

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16Interestingly, while Kondo was central to the formation of the MDC he emphasises that he never became a card-carrying member and that because of his liberation war experience he would always consider himself a member of ZANU: ‘Look, comrade. I don’t know how many times I can emphasize that I am ZANU myself and I cannot leave my party and I expect my fellow comrades to bury me when I die’.  


The movement described in the declaration was inaugurated exactly a year after the end of the NWPC as the Movement for Democratic Change, at an inaugural congress attended by over 3,000 people. The MDC’s manifesto adopted at the inaugural congress concluded with a call to action to change the country’s political culture within ‘the next five years’. The means to this change were spelled out as being ‘in our wise use of our vote and in our participating in the programmes that will improve our lives’.

**Conclusion**

Chapter 4 focuses on the Zimbabwe’s experiment with neo-liberal economic reforms driven by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank between 1990 and 1997. The chapter considers this Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) phase as a distinct historical bloc. This phase would ultimately bring about the organic crisis historical bloc which would characterise Zimbabwean politics after 2000. The chapter elaborates on the decisions to implement the Structural Adjustment Programme and its impact on the national modes of production. This period of immense economic change took place in a context of relative political freedom following the abandonment of the one-party state idea in the global context of “the end of history”. The blocs combination of economic pressures and increasing political dissent led to the coalescence of a counter-hegemonic movement combining labour, students, and an increasingly relevant organised civil society.

Having outlined the base superstructure dynamics of the ESAP bloc the chapter breaks down the various components of Zimbabwe’s opposition civil society as they coalesced to form the National Constitutional Assembly and the Movement for Democratic Change political party. This outline addresses one of Gramsci’s key questions in analysing counter-hegemonic movements: what is the social content of the mass following of the counter-hegemonic movement? This section begins with an outline of the labour movement as the core, organised, membership-based force in the opposition. The history of the labour movement in Zimbabwe, the Congress of Trade Union structures and leadership, internal dynamics and core grievances in the lead-up to the food strikes of 1997 and 1998 will be explained through interviews with leaders of the congress of trade unions during this period. The second core group to be
analysed will be the student movement. Students would be the only other mass membership based group that would form a central part of the opposition in Zimbabwe after 1997. The chapter will show the differences in strategies, ideologies and interests between labour and students as this was a central theme of the data collected during interviews. The differences between labour and students would become a core cleavage point in the leadership battles of the MDC after 2008 as well as after the death of Morgan Tsvangirai in 2018. Associated with the student groups were academics and intellectuals at the nation’s tertiary education institutions. Their individual ideological persuasions and emphases would influence segments of students, labour and the movement as a whole in often contradictory directions from the formative stages of the counter-hegemonic movement.

The chapter then analyses the roles of other core groups, which, unlike the labour unions and students, were represented mostly by individuals in leadership rather than membership-based power. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) would become central to the counter-hegemonic movement in Zimbabwe. From a space dominated by church groups such as the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, this segment would begin to draw from the student movements and by the mid-1990s became entirely dependent on western donor funding. These new NGOs and their leadership would be central to the drive for democratisation through their focus on both constitutional and electoral reform and human rights monitoring. This section of the opposition would generate important dynamics in how it related to the labour movement, its reliance on donor funding and the complications that this would cause, as well as its relatively shallow membership base. Based on interview data and reviews of other secondary data such as blog posts, newspaper articles and books on the history of Zimbabwe’s opposition, the chapter will explain the core role of these NGOs and their leadership as well as the often overlapping and interpenetration of their leadership with those of student movements, donor agencies and the main opposition political party.

The chapter then outlines other influential, though weakly represented groups in the counter-hegemonic movement. Among these are lawyers, farmers and business leaders, and the national staff of donor agencies. The chapter concludes by returning to a chronological narrative which outlines the conjunctural roots of the opposition
movement in the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly in 1997 and the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999.
Chapter 5

Counter-hegemonic confrontation 2000-2008

From the time that the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (the MDC) was formed, the counter-hegemonic movement consisted of two overlapping sectors, counter-hegemonic civil society and this political party. The political party sought to bring about change overtly by winning elections and thereby changing the rules of the game. Civil society on the other hand sought to bring about changes in the rules through advocating for reforms or holding actors accountable for not following the rules. The actions, strategies and sometimes the individuals in political parties and counter-hegemonic civil society have often overlapped in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, both these elements (that is, the counter-hegemonic movement in the political party and counter-hegemonic civil society) were caught in the dilemma of electoral authoritarianism which has been underlined in the introduction to this thesis. This was particularly the case with the political party because in order to change the rules they needed to gain adequate power; however, without a change of rules or the means to ensure that Zanu-PF abided by the rules they were unlikely to gain power. The chapter therefore outlines the methods by which both the political party and counter-hegemonic civil society sought to bring about hegemonic change. These methods include participation in elections, advocacy for electoral reform, protests and stay-aways as well as technical activities such as election observation and cataloguing human rights violations. Having established the social content of the movement’s leadership in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses primarily on Gramsci’s concepts of hegemony and strategies for counter-hegemony in the war of position and the war of manoeuvre, as noted in chapter 3. The distinction between these two strategies draws from Gramsci’s analysis of the approach to successful counter-hegemonic opposition. The war of position constitutes an indirect confrontation with the hegemonic force that takes place in the arena of civil society. It is therefore primarily an ideological and superstructural conflict. The war of manoeuvre, or the frontal attack, takes place in the arena of the state. This is where the counter-hegemonic force seeks to assume state power, whether through a coercive struggle to remove the hegemonic power or through other mechanisms and routes – which
elections would ostensibly be in a democracy. The chapter will analyse the MDC’s war of manoeuvre through its attempts to gain power through the ballot box, assessing the MDC’s strategies for electoral victory in a context of violence, and in an institutional setting built to maintain the prevailing political authority. The chapter outlines how the opposing civil society in Zimbabwe used a combination of civil and ideological tools and weapons to overcome Zanu-PF hegemony in the space of civil society, which is understood here not only as the organised space of associations, but also the arena for ideological and hegemonic contestation that lies outside of the realm of the state. The chapter sheds light on how the frontal attack on Zanu-PF hegemony in the state triggered a reaction from the authorities that was of both a coercive and ideological nature. The chapter also deals with the potential weaknesses in the movement’s war of position. The reasons for this weakness in the ideological realm stem not so much from the movement’s inaccurate reading of the priority areas and ability to make a convincing argument to the polity as a whole, but rather their neglect of key areas of economic redistribution such as land reform. In assessing the counter-hegemonic movement’s strategy we will apply Gramsci’s framework for the analysis of ‘relations of forces’ which must be distinguished on three levels or moments. The first of these relations is that of economic forces, the mode of accumulation and production, and the development of material forces. The second moment is the degree of ‘homogeneity, self-awareness and organisation attained by the various social groups’. The third is the relation of military forces. This last moment encapsulates not only brute coercive power, but also ideological consent (2000, p. 202).

Organic crisis and counter-hegemonic contestation

As we concluded in chapter 3, in Gramscian terms the end of the first two decades of independence had been characterised by policies of state corporatism in which the petit bourgeois nationalist leadership that had come to power through armed struggle had compromised with the dominant economic interests of white capital. In the second decade of independence the governing class, which had undergone significant embourgeoisement, had then applied disastrous liberalisation policies that resulted in de-industrialisation, decreases in living wages and increased unemployment. The
superstructure, understood as both the political institutions of the state and its ideological frameworks, had undergone a period of hegemonic stability and euphoria in early independence. However, the hegemonic leadership of the nationalist and increasingly state-dependent bourgeoisie had been stretched to breaking point as the party began to exhibit signs of corruption. It also made unpopular attempts at creating a one-party state while demonstrating increasing brutality towards the opposition. By 1998 the beginnings of an organic crisis began to reach a crescendo as counter-hegemonic forces coalesced around the National Constitutional Assembly and the Movement for Democratic Change.

The period immediately following the formation of the NCA and the MDC afforded the new movement several important conjunctural opportunities while also posing some key challenges. The first of these conjunctural moments was when, faced with pressure from the National Constitutional Assembly as well as its own grievances over achieving its agenda with the Lancaster House Constitution, Zanu-PF had formed the Zimbabwe Constitutional Commission in 1999. The Commission was composed of 400 prominent Zimbabweans chaired by Supreme Court Justice Chidyausiku and directed by Professor Jonathan Moyo, then a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. The commission was tasked with conducting public outreach on the key constitutional issues and creating a draft to be voted on by referendum in early 2000. In addition, the country’s parliamentary elections were set for June of the same year.

The first strategic dilemma for the counter-hegemonic force was therefore whether or not to participate in the Zimbabwe Constitutional Commission Process. The NCA resolved that it would not participate in the Constitutional Commission’s outreach and tried to discourage NCA members from participating as constitutional commissioners. The NCA’s main criticism of the Zimbabwe Constitutional Commission process was that the Commission of Enquiries Act, which established the ZCC, gave the president powers to intervene in the process, to alter the commission’s findings and ultimately to dissolve the commission at his discretion. The NCA was also opposed to the composition of the commission which would in theory be dominated by ruling party members, half of whom would be members of parliament.
However, despite the NCA’s opposition a number of high-profile individuals who had previously been associated with the NCA did choose to become commissioners. Among these key individuals were law lecturer Ben Hlatshwayo and prominent critical journalist Lupi Mushayakarara (Dorman, 2000; McCandless, 2003). The dilemma of coordinating a coherent counter-hegemonic strategy was most evident in the relationship between the ZCTU and the broader movement. Collen Gwiyo underlines the decision by the ZCTU general council to participate in the constitutional commission:

Morgan [Tsvangirai] had great difficulty in convincing the general council (of the ZCTU) not to participate in the Constitutional Commission and the resolution there was; we don’t care whether they will cheat us or not; what we are interested in is let’s have the draft constitution. So, we said, let’s have that draft, people should get in to groups, let’s make our input from the preamble to the last page. We said this is what we are going to submit to the Constitutional Commission.

Gwiyo elaborates on the efforts by the NCA to convince the ZCTU to abstain from the Constitutional Commission process by recounting that Brian Kagoro flew to the ZCTU general congress in Matopos to sway the position of the general council. ‘I think when Morgan [Tsvangirai] realised that it’s not going to work because we were already suspicious to say no, you as NCA, we are cousins but you cannot tell the general council what to do’ (Gwiyo, 2011).

As a result, two ZCTU representatives (Tapuwa Mashakada and Ignatius Makonese) would become commissioners in the ZCC process (Gwiyo, 2011; Dorman, 2000). This initial incoherence reflects the fact that the counter-hegemonic movement was never, even at these early stages, a monolith. It also indicates that Tsvangirai’s membership of the NCA and ultimately the MDC were not an organic part of the entire trade union movement, but rather a personal connection in which he stood at the intersection of both these associations.

*Zimbabwe Constitutional Commission: draft process and content*
The Commission conducted public meetings across the country and gathered both oral and written contributions to the constitution. Commissioners were aggregated into 100 teams and the four-member teams were deployed to hold meetings in allocated wards throughout the country wards (Hatchard, 2001))\(^1\). After the collection of data, ten provincial reports were circulated to the plenary, a process shown on television and listened to on national radio. A drafting committee then prepared and submitted a draft to the president who had the choice of accepting the report, amending it or rejecting it. As the NCA had proposed, the final draft was to be put to the people through a referendum, and if accepted would be made into law.

However, it became evident that the NCA’s concern about the process being hijacked by the executive would indeed be well founded. As observers of this process both McCandless (2003) and Dorman (2000) recount the perceived divergence between what some commissioners felt had been the overwhelming opinion of most of the participants of the meetings, and the Zanu-PF representatives on the Commission. The process of drafting therefore generated a great deal of internal conflict as the president used the powers of the Commission of Inquiry Act to amend the draft. This was particularly in areas relating to limitations on the powers of the executive and separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches, proportional representation, the concurrent holding of parliamentary and presidential elections as well as the appointment of the attorney general (Coltart, 2016; Dorman, 2000; McCandless, 2003). In theory, the new constitution would have made at least one key reform in that it would have placed term limits on the office of the president, notwithstanding the fact that the presidential terms would only have been counted from the promulgation of the new constitution.

While the Constitutional Commission went about its public outreach and drafting process, the NCA began its counter process of public outreach and campaigning against the ZCC draft. Lucia Matibenga, a trade union activist who was among the ZCTU leadership that formed the NCA, discussed the NCA public outreach and No campaign in an interview in 2011:

\(^{1}\)This researcher attended one such meeting in November 1999 at the Bulaw ayo Sun Hotel. The meeting degenerated into chaos and was eventually cancelled as the chairman of the Constitutional Commission, Jonathan Moyo, was shouted down by the audience which included a sizeable number of members of a new party, ZAPU 2000.
I found the leadership in the constitutional movement were very motivating. Lovemore Madhuku, Brian Kagoro, you know those are very educated men, but I will tell you when we were campaigning for the No vote in 99 towards 2000. We spent Christmas time in the bush with Brian Kagoro, Lovemore Madhuku campaigning in my province in the midlands province from Gokwe to Mberengwa with those two guys, shouting on loud hailers "ten reasons why we should go out and vote no" and so on. We found them very down to earth and I know here in the labour movement we then had a term for them: "Progressive Intellectuals". That’s what really brought this whole activism in this. It was like now bringing a new culture to Zimbabweans where they realised that there were really people who were out there pushing for things to happen.

The referendum was interpreted by many voters as a referendum on the rule of Robert Mugabe and Zanu-PF, and the fledgling opposition party formed only four months prior to the referendum sought to capitalise on the discontent. The No campaign won the February 2000 vote by 55%. The No vote in the 2000 constitutional referendum marked the return of mass violence as a mode to achieving the ends of Zanu-PF in elections as immediately after the rejection of the constitution, mobs of Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans and Zanu-PF supporters began the farm invasions of 2000.

*Workers Party Ndizvo! Yes, to the Workers Party!*

In addition to the strategic question of whether to engage in the Constitutional Commission process or to oppose it, the counter-hegemonic movement faced a more fundamental dilemma: would the MDC be a worker's party? Given the centrality of the ZCTU in convening the NWPC and following the resolution of the National Working People's Convention ‘to mobilise towards the working people’s agenda, and to implement a vigorous and democratic political movement for change’, it was logical to expect the party about to be formed to have a labour focus (ZCTU, 2000).

There was however evidence that Tsvangirai in particular envisioned a more expansive focus which included more of the other sections of the counter-hegemonic movement, as outlined in the previous chapter.
The International Socialist Organisation’s *Socialist Worker* newspaper for May and June of 1999 led with the headline ‘Worker’s Party Ndizvo’ which translates to ‘Yes, to the worker’s party’. Articles in these editions argued for why the ZCTU must form a worker’s party and a political movement. A political movement, the paper argues means [that]:

Everyone is included, such as the business people and the middle classes from the NGO’s. In such a party the ZCTU will have a minority bloc vote while the rest of the leadership would be filled by representatives of the middle classes just like with the executive of the National Constitutional Assembly executive committee where there is only one workers’ leader in a committee of 19; Morgan Tsvangirai.

Such a movement is one that is supported by the middle-class intellectuals who attended the convention. It is also favoured by the local bosses, international NGOs and western embassies – especially Germany, USA, UK and Scandinavia, who now affect to support the workers and the ZCTU. ‘What friends - who do not want peasants to be given land and insist that our country follow ESAP’ (*Socialist Worker*, May-June2000).

Munyaradzi Gwisayi indicates that hostility to the concept of a purely workers party was evident even at the NWPC as the International Socialist Organisation was officially blocked from participating:

So now with the NWPC it’s a situation where Tsvangirai has been to move with the base, which is the ZCTU which has demonstrated its power. We are specifically and explicitly excluded as the ISO. We are the only civic society which was rejected from attending officially because we are a nuisance, and we obviously were going against what Tsvangirai was trying to achieve. So, we got in our comrades with a bundle of leaflets which said reject the formation of an MMD kind of party, build a workers’ party. We were outside with a socialist worker and leaflets, it was done at Hillside, so they put guards there to stop us from going there, but they couldn’t stop us from being on the road. So, myself and other comrades like Tafadzwa stood outside and Hopewell [Gumbo] and company distributed our leaflet clandestinely inside. (Gwisayi, 2011)

When the MDC was launched in September 1999 to a crowd of 15 000 people at Rufaro stadium, the party announced a provisional National Executive Council which included Tsvangirai and Gibson Sibanda, the ZCTU’s secretary general. For the rest
it was stacked with middle class intellectuals, NGO leadership, and business people. Adrienne Le Bas’s 2011 analysis of the formation of the party points to the fact that 12 of the 34 interim National Executive Council posts were occupied by labour leadership. The majority of posts were held by other (middle class) leaders of civil society ostensibly because of their skills and expertise and the constituencies they brought along. Among these were individuals who had built relationships with the ZCTU (or possibly just Morgan Tsvangirai) through the civil society struggles of the 1990s. Among these were lawyers such David Coltart, Paul Thamba-Nyathi, Tendai Biti and Learnmore Jongwe. These last two had been student leaders and attracted a constituency of engaged young students from tertiary institutions. Another expert was Eddie Cross, appointed as the party’s spokesperson for economic affairs. As the vice president of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, Cross could hardly have been viewed as an ally of the workers. The inclusion of industrialists like Cross and commercial farmers like Roy Bennet, Elliot Pfebve and Iain Kay was downplayed by some, including Gibson Sibanda, as a question of resources, implying that the MDC was using these white industrialists and farmers for their money. Quoted by Peter Alexander in 2000 Sibanda argued: ‘What is wrong with us accepting donations from well-wishers who see the same view as us? The real issue is whether they make any meaningful decisions in the MDC — the answer is “no”.

Sibanda’s assertion is not necessarily borne out by the MDC’s proposed policies or the statements of their leadership, as the MDC’s economic policies were certainly in step with the priorities of the IMF and certainly not in contradiction to the interests of national capital.

One possible justification for this broad approach would have been that the MDC was not the product of labour alone but was the result of a combination of multiple sectors of civil society, as Tsvangirai would have argued. This does not hold up to scrutiny, as the fact that the NWPC was convened by the ZCTU after a year of research, indeed the fact that the resolution of the MDC, the party’s first minutes and manifesto are compiled in a report by the ZCTU for its donor, the Fredrich Ebert Stiftung, probably indicates the real drivers for decisions in the formation of the party. They also give credence to the idea that the party was using ZCTU structures to establish what
Gwisayi saw as a ‘Blairite’ party. In interviews, Collen Gwiyo, Tabitha Khumalo and Lucia Matibenga all echoed the observation that labour leaders were side-lined at the expense of opportunist business people, academics and lawyers whose interests and ideology were in line with those of capital in Zimbabwe.

Another possible reason for this seemingly incongruous accommodation was that the MDC was confident that the party would win the majority of seats in the parliamentary elections. Leaked US embassy cables from before the 2000 election noted that the MDC were bullish about garnering more than 80 seats in parliament (Wikileaks, 2008). Hypothetically, the accommodation of conflicting interests was based on the expectation that access to power would be easy and that there would be enough to go around once Zanu-PF were out or sufficiently weakened. As such any possible reservations over having to deal with even the most unlikely of allies may have been repressed.

While leadership of the party may have become more middle class, the party’s mobilisation structures were indistinguishable from those of the ZCTU. As Le Bas highlights and as interviews with Gwiyo and Matibenga have corroborated, trade union district committees were central in the recruitment of branch members and the organisation of rallies with some selling MDC membership cards from their desks (2011). Gwiyo emphasises that in ‘all the six regions in one way or the other, the first group that led to the establishment of ZCTU regional structures are the same activists who became the first chairpersons of the Movement for Democratic Change’ and that ‘in one way or the other, three quarters of those that were active at mobilising for the formation of the party had undergone our education programmes’ (Gwiyo, 2011).

**June 2000 parliamentary elections**

The formal process of candidate selection by the MDC took place at the provincial level through strategic consensus rather than an open primary. While contention over candidacy never boiled over into public conflict, competition reflected the cleavages within the counter-hegemonic movement and the outcomes may also reflect the party’s priorities in candidacy selection (Le Bas, 2011).
Gwisayi recounts the contention around Harare Central seat and how he eventually ran for a seat in the working-class suburb of Highfields instead:

We build the MDC here in city centre, in places like High Fields, Glenview and Glen Norah, we're big players there as the ISO and I run as a candidate in the primaries. I was going to stand in Harare central, because we had built the structures of the MDC in Harare central as the ISO, completely; the structures were loyal to us. So, I got a call from comrades and they say you have to come back because the local Harare MDC is saying you can’t stand in Harare central. I urgently rescheduled my flight18 then we had a meeting with the Harare MDC leadership. And they said comrade Gwisayi, we want you to move to Highfields. And we said no, we have been campaigning in the MDC for a long time saying you must not allow people who don’t live in your suburb to become MPs. I don’t live in Highfields. I live in town, in my flat.

So, the ZCTU say we have decided that we can’t defend you adequately in Harare central, it’s the suburb of the rich, it’s a suburb of the middle classes, we would rather take you to Highfields, where we can defend you. That is class consciousness my friend. This is the consequence of two or three years of constant work between a small revolutionary organisation with sections of the working class, and it was the correct argument and that’s how I went into Highfields and won that thing.

The MDC would eventually run candidates in all 120 constituencies. The party provided the following description of their backgrounds: six involved in agriculture (including farmers), eight in executive positions in companies, seven self-employed, nine in the transport industry, nine in technical fields, one ordained minister, one environmentalist, two employed by NGOs, three in the medical professions, eight working for government in legal and administrative fields, five lawyers, nine academics, 19 educators, 18 in other professions, and 16 trade unionists.

In the three months between the referendum and the June parliamentary elections incidents of violence increased as Zanu-PF mobilised in a manner it had never had to do in period of weak opposition. In the months between February and June 37 people, mostly MDC supporters, had been murdered, 2 466 were injured and 27 people were raped; 617 people were abducted and a further 10 000 people internally displaced

18 Gwisayi’s flight from New York where he had been studying at Columbia University
Apart from the violence, opposition parties accused the Boundary Delimitation Commission of gerrymandering the constituency boundaries in favour of Zanu-PF citing incorporation of parts of a number of rural constituencies into urban ones. This was allegedly so as to dilute the opposition vote, which is stronger in the urban centres. They also pointed to the fact that Harare and Bulawayo, which were both likely to vote for the new opposition, each lost a seat while the rural province of Mashonaland East gained an extra seat (Commonwealth EOM report, 2000).

Zanu-PF would gain 62 parliamentary seats in the June 2000 elections while the MDC won 57 seats and ZANU Ndonga won 1 seat. Bearing in mind that Mugabe had the power to appoint an additional 30 members of parliament Zanu-PF was able to secure a reasonably large majority. The outcome was nevertheless a shock for the ruling party whose dominance had been largely unthreatened for the previous 20 years. Certainly, the MDC attracted overwhelming support in urban middle-class constituencies such as Harare East, Harare South and Bulawayo South. The majority of people in the Harare and Bulawayo provinces live in working-class constituencies, and here the MDC vote ranged between 70 to 86 per cent of the total (Alexander, 2000). Predictably, Zanu-PF won most of the vote in rural areas which made up 69% of the national population according to the 1992 census. This was particularly the case in the three Mashonaland provinces. However, reflecting the long-standing resentment in Matabeleland provinces, the MDC won all but two seats, securing between 35% and 86% support (Alexander, 2000). The MDC brought a number of contentious seats to court though found no recourse, potentially due to an increasingly biased judiciary.

Of the 57 MDC candidates who were elected as MPs, only 12 were trade unionists (including Sibanda, now the MDC parliamentary leader). Lucia Matibenga, who lost a rural race in Shurugwi, links the decision to have Morgan Tsvangirai run for a rural seat in his home of Buhera rather than in Harare to strategic miscalculation about MDC appeal in rural areas.

There was nobody wanting to stand in rural areas. Actually, for me the obvious constituency was Gweru urban but because we had vowed we were going to put candidates in all the 120 constituencies, Tsvangirai instead of running in Harare went home, even myself I went home,
you also find people like ChimaniKire Gift they went home. Also, people like Mudzengerere, all the big trade unionists we went to our rural homes to give room to those of us who didn’t have links anywhere. So, I opted for Shurugwi because then we would put one guy in Gweru urban who came from elsewhere and not from the Midlands. I think we the Trade Unionists were naive. We really thought that we could win. We really thought that these sacrifices needed to be made to go and stand in a rural constituency where you know you have no vehicle. I had no vehicle of my own then but I sought to campaign in that vast constituency and simply said I am going there. We were not in it for personal gain, we really looked at the global picture. ‘Is our organisation going to challenge ZANU-PF in every constituency? Is our Organisation going to be represented in the whole country so that ZANU will not think that we are just an urban areas party?’ (Matibenga, 2011).

Matibenga cites Tsvangirai’s absence from parliament throughout his tenure in the struggle as a weakness and potential fracturing point within the party as division would occur between the party’s members of parliament and those outside parliament.

**Fast track land reform programme**

The elections signalled the inception of a situation in which, to use Gramscian phraseology, an “equilibrium of forces” had been reached. In such a scenario, Gramsci has noted, power can become increasingly personalised, as “a great personality is entrusted with the task of arbitration” (Gramsci, 2000, p. 270). In the Zimbabwean setting “arbitration” would hardly be conciliatory. Essentially, to rebuild its political support against emerging counter-hegeemonic forces, leadership would have to exercise its power in an increasingly extra-institutional manner. The conditions developing in Zimbabwe at this conjuncture constituted a recipe for the expression of Caesarism. The increasing exercise of Caesarist predisposition within the regime was especially evident in the progress of land reform.

Land reform had been precipitated by pressure from within Zanu-PF, by the war veterans and landless peasants from about 1996. Sporadic invasions of commercial farms had been taking place across the country since the mid-1990s showing the heightening impatience with the rate of land reform in the country. The sporadic farm invasions had culminated in June 1998 the Svosve peasants in Marondera and Wedza...
invaded large commercial farms, including property owned by prominent Zanu-PF leaders.

In November 1997 the government gazetted a list of 1,471 commercial farms designated for acquisition and resettlement. The list would be shortened to 846 once those owned by black people, the sole properties of land owners, and those that could prove their developmental and social impact were removed (Moyo, 1999). The gazetting of these properties could have been interpreted as a gambit to force the British Government to negotiate over compensation for land appropriation. The British Government had already provided £44 million pounds during the 1980s (Laurie, 2013). British contributions then effectively ended partly because by the end of the decade the Zimbabweans had appeared to have lost interest (Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman, 2000). In 1997, a new Labour government in 1997 began to more assertively renege on commitments made at Lancaster House in 1979. In a letter to the Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Kumbirai Kangai, the new British Minister for Overseas Development declared:

I should make it clear that we do not accept that Britain has a special responsibility to meet the costs of Land Purchase in Zimbabwe. We are a new government from diverse backgrounds without links to former colonial interests. My own origins are Irish, and as you know, we are colonised not colonisers (Quoted in Kanyenze, 2011, p. 91).

Short’s letter enraged the Zimbabwean government and would come to symbolise the break-down in negotiations between the UK and Zimbabwe around the issue of land reform. In November 1999 clauses which would have legislated for the appropriation of land without compensation were added to the constitutional draft. When the draft was rejected in February 2000, invasions of white-owned farms led by war veterans began to take place across the country. The invasions after February 2000 were orchestrated by Chenjerai Hunzvi, the chairman of the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association, with the collusion of the Zanu-PF and the government. In an interview, Mandaza argues that the farm invasions were in fact ordered by Mugabe in

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19 The United Kingdom’s Africa All Party Parliamentary Group (AAPPG) undertook an evaluation of the commitments made at Lancaster House in 2009. It showed that “while no specific sums were agreed at Lancaster House, the Patriotic Front harboured expectations that the British and American governments would support land redistribution.” According to the AAPPG: “What they had received was assurances from the British and American governments that funds would be committed to assist with land reform. Land resettlement could only occur through the willing buyer – willing seller scheme, which Britain had pledged to
a rage over the white farmers’ role in rejecting the Constitution. Mugabe would state in an interview with the ZBC’s Reuben Barwe:

For them to have banded together to a man in opposition to government, to have gone much farther in mobilising their labour forces on the farms, to support the one position opposed to government, has exposed them as not our friends, but our enemies. Our present state of mind is - you are now our enemies, because you have behaved as enemies of Zimbabwe and we are full of anger. (in Coltart, 2016, p. 279)

Note how the language of the interview, with its conflation of individual selfhood (“our present state of mind”) with national interest is very much within the verbal idiom of Caesarism.

With government support the farm invasions became a key mechanism to breaking MDC support in the farming areas, as the country’s 200 farm labourers represented a significant voting threat to Zanu-PF in the rural areas. The invasions would from this point be framed as the Third Chimurenga. The framing of the Third Chimurenga would be a powerful hegemonic tool in that it tied elements of coercion, including farm invasions and election related violence, within the ideological legitimacy of liberation struggle. In terms of the base-superstructure continuum the Third Chimurenga framed white-owned property as a public resource to which patriots were therefore entitled. Norma Kriger explains that the definition of patriots served this hegemonic purpose:

Patriots included not only the liberation war veterans who spearheaded the land occupations but also the youth militia whom the ruling party began to mobilise in late 2001 ahead of the presidential election. The ruling party referred to these youths as “war veterans” in recognition of their contribution to what it labelled the “Third Chimurenga”— the fight for the land. ZANU-PF thus linked its violence after 2000 to earlier episodes of violent resistance— the First Chimurenga in the late 19th century and the Second Chimurenga, the liberation war. Emphasising a shared history of racism, colonialism and imperialism, the ruling party also appealed to pan-African sentiment.

In June 2000, having secured a majority in parliament sufficient to alter the constitution and with the 2000 ZCC draft rejected in the referendum, Zanu-PF then set
about implementing the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. The constitution of
Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 16 of 2000) Act (no. 5 of 2000), and amendments to the
Land Acquisition Act (No. 15 of 2000) gave the state the right to compulsorily acquire
land compensating only for improvements.

The structural economic and political changes which resulted from the Fast Track
Land Reform Programme would forever alter Zimbabwe’s political economy,
changing the patterns of land tenure and class structures that had obtained from before
independence. In structural terms the Fast Track Land Reform Programme would
decimate Zimbabwe’s white commercial farming class and the formal rural working
class as 200 000 commercial farm workers (more than 50% of workers in the sector)
lost their jobs in the first wave of the FTLR programme (Sachikonye, 2003).

The combination of the economic and human rights issues resulting from the 2000
elections, land invasions, fast track land reform policies, and attacks on the judiciary
solicited a forceful reaction from the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States.
The United States Congress passed the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic
Recovery Act in 2001 citing in its statement of policy that ‘It is the policy of the United
States to support the people of Zimbabwe in their struggle to effect peaceful,
democratic change, achieve broad-based and equitable economic growth, and restore
the rule of law.’ The United States was joined by the United Kingdom and the
European Union which imposed targeted sanctions on 163 Zanu-PF officials and 31
government-related companies.

The fact that the MDC had lobbied western governments for sanctions led to Mugabe
and Zanu-PF leadership accusing the MDC of ‘treason and treachery for appealing to
a foreign power to remove the Government by force’. These statements would become
the refrain of the arguments which would define Zanu-PF’s ideological position for
the next two decades.

Patriotic history as hegemonic ideological superstructure

What in Gramscian terms can be understood as the post-2000 historical bloc’s
hegemonic ideological superstructures corresponds directly with what Terence Ranger has termed ‘patriotic history’. As Blessing Miles (2010) emphasises, patriotic history asserts the centrality of Zimbabwe’s radical revolutionary tradition and is premised on four themes: land, race, a dichotomy between ‘sell outs’ and ‘patriots’; and the rejection of Western interference based on what are perceived as Western ideals such as human rights. It is specifically the connection between land tenure, a material reality, and the superstructure of Zimbabwean state and political institutions and the ideological superstructures of Zanu-PF hegemony.

From 2000 onwards Zanu-PF, with Mugabe as the party’s chief public intellectual and increasingly Caesarist-type authority, implemented patriotic history. This was done by making full use of the institutional weaponry of state-controlled broadcast and print media as well as laws such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, which shrank the available space for critical coverage in the independent media. The use of these institutional tools to manage the ideological content to which citizens had access was coupled with the constant threat of violence, as the country’s main independent newspaper the Daily News was bombed in January 2001 and banned in 2002. In order to further shrink the ideological counter-hegemonic space the Zimbabwean Government expelled western media outlets reporting from Zimbabwe. Jonathan Moyo, now recast as the country’s new Minister for Information and chief propagandist, justified the decision as follows:

We believe that information is a strategic issue which is critical in maintaining a country’s sovereignty and you cannot claim to be sovereign if you do not own the means of disseminating information [...] This is why we removed CNN from ZBC when we came in, in the year 2000 and we will never have it again as long as we are still around. We want to use the media to put across our national views and not those of the United States or Britain or the Voice of America. We wish to put across our views as the Voice of Zimbabwe. (the Herald online, 8 April 2004)

Tendi describes a ‘blitzkrieg of Patriotic History’ from 2000 onwards as the state-run ZBC repetitively broadcast liberation war documentaries that presented Zanu-PF ‘as the sole deliverer of independence, justified the land seizures as a means to redressing a colonial inheritance of racially-biased land distribution, highlighted colonial atrocities, and wrote out personalities and historical events inimical to Zanu-PF’s quest
to maintain political power’ (Tendi, 2010, p. 4-5). At the same time the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation’s Radio and Television channels moved to a majority local content, possibly out of an inability to pay for royalties. As a consequence, a great deal of the content on the radio became patriotic history-type jingles such as *rambai makashinga* (stay strong), an undeniably catchy tune which was written by Jonathan Moyo himself presenting Zimbabwean hardship as the result of western sanctions. In his discussions with Stephen Chan, Tsvangirai noted this particular weakness on the counter-hegemonic side (Chan, 2005). Interestingly, musicians in Zimbabwe had hardly ever used their music to oppose the government. Only the country’s most established and most famous musicians could openly criticise. Oliver Mutukudzi could make music that questioned Zanu-PF and Mugabe through songs like *Bvuma Wasakara* (admit you’re old) and *Murimi Munhu* (the farmer is a human being).

In practice this manufacturing of ideological consent took the form of speeches by Mugabe which with increasing regularity focused on issues of land, race, patriotism and western hypocrisy. Some of these issues were simply distilled into Zanu-PF slogans including ‘The Land is the Economy; the Economy is the Land’ and the memetic repetition of Mugabe’s catchphrases such as ‘Zimbabwe will never be a colony again’. Mugabe’s speeches regular speeches at national commemorations such as Independence Day and Defence Forces Day as well as his annual speech at the United Nations General Assembly began to be the most evident examples of Mugabe’s broadcasting of ideological dogma. State funerals which always provided a captive audience of Western diplomats became a preferred occasion for Mugabe’s railing against the West and traitors as the definition of national heroes was loosened to more regularly provide the president with the pulpit at the National Heroes Acre.

The rhetoric in relation to opposition became cast yet again in terms of Chimurenga or armed struggle, the term first applied to the uprisings against British colonial rule in the late 1800’s and subsequently to the liberation war beginning in 1960. Zanu-PF’s conception of the Third Chimurenga corresponds with the Gramscian concept of the hegemonic historical bloc, in that the base was encapsulated in the fast-track land reform process. The ruling party enforced its hegemony through a coercive machinery while the ideological narrative was cast in the vein of struggle against a western-backed opposition intent on selling the country back to white people. Reflecting the
conceptual overlap between modes of production and ideology on the one hand, and the consent coercion continuum on the other, David Moore proposed that ‘until the structural conditions brought into being when capitalism arrived in Zimbabwe’s space and failed to transform it fully are solved with an acceptable and productive tenure system, hegemony will be but an unevenly articulated dream’ (2008, p. 35).

2002 presidential elections

By the build-up to the 2002 presidential elections the mechanisms and methods for intimidation and violence established in the 2000 parliamentary elections had become standard. Certainly, the stakes of the presidential elections were much higher. The charismatic power of Robert Mugabe and his centrality to the rule of his party meant that his loss would have translated to a collapse in the party’s hegemony.

The elections were deemed ‘not credible’ by observation missions from the Commonwealth, the SADC Parliamentary Forum, observers from the Norwegian Embassy and the citizen observation group the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (Kettaneh, 2008). As was the case in the 2000 election, areas of contention centred around the legal framework, voter registration, impartial application of the law and the use of violence by political parties as well as state security agents.

The key legal instrument that threatened to affect these elections was the attempts to pass the General Laws Amendment Act (GLAA) which was intended to amend the Electoral Act with respect to allowing the registrar-general to modify the voters’ roll. The Supreme Court of Zimbabwe ruled that the GLAA was unconstitutional; however, some elements of the nullified law were later promulgated by the minister of justice, legal and parliamentary affairs in a statutory instrument of the Electoral Act a month before the election (ZESN, 2002).

Observers noted that of the three election management bodies (the Electoral Supervisory Commission, the Registrar General and the Elections Directorate) none carried out their functions in a transparent and accountable way, either publishing information late or not at all. The foregoing resulted in confusion and uncertainty on the part of the public (Commonwealth Observer Group 2002, Norwegian Embassy
2002). The South African Government Observation Mission noted that ‘the Registrar-General enjoyed the discretion to remove or add names to the Voters’ Roll without informing the affected persons’. The Zimbabwe Election Support Network observed that in addition to the lack of transparency in voter registration deadlines, the legal wrangles which ensued during the pre-election period resulted in a number of voters being disenfranchised for lack of knowledge of updated information on the whole electoral process.

Further, and more crucial than the technical issues noted above, was the systematic violence and intimidation applied by Zanu-PF and the state security forces. Members of the National Youth Service or ‘Green Bombers’ became the main militia of the ruling party. Some territories in the country, particularly Mashonaland East and Mashonaland Central, effectively became no-go areas for opposition campaigning. In the rural districts of Masvingo and Manicaland, the level of intimidation displaced MDC supporters who sought refuge in urban areas (ZESN, 2002). The headquarters of the MDC in Harare were stoned by Zanu-PF supporters and by April of 2002 at least 19 MDC supporters had been killed in political violence in the months preceding the election. A cumulative toll of 107 documented cases of politically-motivated killings had taken place between 2000 and 2002 (AFP). The police and other security forces took no action to investigate reported cases of violence and intimidation, especially against known or suspected supporters of the MDC and in fact continued to be very heavy-handed against the opposition.

The simmering tensions between the Zimbabwean government and the governments of the EU and in particular the government of the United Kingdom, intensified following the expulsion of the head of the EU election mission to Zimbabwe. The EU responded by imposing targeted sanctions against Mugabe and 19 other members of his administration.

The official results of the 2002 presidential elections were announced as Mugabe having garnered 52% of the vote while Tsvangirai of the MDC had won 46% of the vote, with three candidates, Wilson Khumbula, Shakespeare Maya and Paul Siwela each receiving less than 1% of the vote (Khampepe, 2002).
2005 elections

Prior to the elections held on 31 March 2005, the government instituted reforms to the management of elections. These were the establishment of an independent Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to replace the three election management bodies, the Electoral Supervisory Council, the Directorate of Elections and the Registrar General. The latter, however, maintained the management of the voter’s roll and voter registration. An electoral disputes court was also established. These institutions were put in place only two months before the elections, resulting in the election being managed yet again by the patently partisan institutions noted above.

The 2005 elections also saw the rejection of accreditation for election observer missions from a number of important institutions which included the Carter Center, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, The Commonwealth, the European Union, the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa and the governments of the USA, Australia and Japan. One consortium which received accreditation was made up of South African civil society organisations including the South African Council of Churches, the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference, SANGOCO, IDASA, the Centre for Policy Studies and the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. This mission noted that politically motivated violence had diminished rapidly in the run up to the election, a fact which is quite common to instances of election related violence globally. The observation mission inferred that this confirmed that ‘it is possible to “turn it off” and it is not merely a factor of internecine community strife or party-political intolerance’ (Zimbabwe Observer Mission Report, 2005, p.5). While the week leading up to the election was peaceful, reports were made of widespread threats to those perceived to have voted for the MDC, and sporadic violence erupted in the weeks following the elections. David Coltart notes that a likely reason for the decline in the use of violence was that in the context of a regional drought and the collapse in commercial farming it was just as easy to use the threat of starvation as open coercion (Coltart, 2016, Interview with UN OCHA director 2018).

The parliamentary elections of 2005 resulted in Zanu-PF garnering 78 seats while the MDC won 42 seats, or 39% of the available seats. Under the Constitution the president
would appoint an additional 30 non-constituency members of parliament, of which 10 would be traditional leaders elected by the Electoral College of Chiefs.

*Murambatsvina*

Although the 2005 elections themselves were conducted in a largely peaceful atmosphere, on 19 May 2005 the national government-appointed Harare Commission announced ‘a programme to enforce bylaws to stop all forms of illegal activity’, warning the people in the Greater Harare area that persons who had erected illegal structures should demolish them by 20 June 2005. Dubbed Murambatsvina, the Shona world for a whirlwind which also means ‘reject the rubbish’, the operation was ostensibly an urban clean-up operation which resulted in the destruction of informal settlements and unlicensed premises and shacks in the urban centres. On 25 May, a month before its own announced deadline, the government began a mass eviction and the destruction of dwellings took place in Harare, Bulawayo and urban centres. The military style operation targeted vendors’ markets, flea markets, other informal market premises and ‘illegal’ housing structures. The UN reported that twenty thousand vendors countrywide were reported to have been arrested within a week of the operation. The UN report of the operation estimated that 700,000 people in cities across the country had lost their homes or their livelihoods or both. The report concluded that ‘although a case for crime against humanity under Article 7 of the Rome Statute might be difficult to sustain, the Government of Zimbabwe clearly caused large sections of its population serious suffering’ (Tibajuka, 2005).

The effects and motives of Murambatsvina notwithstanding, by 2005 the general standard of living had continued to deteriorate since 2000. In 1990 Zimbabwean life expectancy had been calculated at 61 but by 2005 it stood at 37, as over 1.6 million Zimbabweans under the age of 50 were estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS, with over 761,000 children who had lost one or both parents to the epidemic (UNDP, 2005). Rural poverty calculated by the UNDP had increased by 14% between 1995 and 2003.
to 71% in 2003, while urban poverty sat at 61% in 2003 (UNDP, 2005, p. 5). An IMF mission to Zimbabwe in 2005 had indicated that the economy would decline by a further 7% that year and that it was likely that inflation, which stood at 140%, would continue to rise (Tibaijuka, 2005).

This collapse in urban living standards as well as the forced displacement that Murambatsvina brought about translated to the destruction of both formal and informal social structures of the urban working class. Murambatsvina revealed the degree of brutality with which Zanu-PF was willing to act in order to maintain its hegemony, as well as the impunity the system would afford them. Murambatsvina also clearly showed that the targets were the urban working poor and informal sector. The episode also reflected the extent to which Zanu-PF’s strategies in its hegemonic maintenance were largely dependent on coercion rather than consent, and the use of the state’s legal machinery (however supra-legally) and coercive branches in being able to do so. David Moore, who views hegemony as the degree to which consent can be generated and as distinct from dominance (rather than as a consent-coercion continuum as this thesis does), notes that Zanu-PF ‘held very little in the way of hegemony (consent) and slipped into dominance’ (in Vambe (ed.), 2008, p. 34). Moore observes that the naked dominance employed during Murambatsvina (as with other previous episodes of violence) showed that in Zanu-PF was filling an intellectual vacuum with violence.

**MDC split over Senate**

2005 saw the re-introduction of the Senate, the upper house of parliament. The official justification for this was the necessity for greater accountability and oversight, though it was more likely that Zanu-PF were widening the goalposts for patronage after the opposition had begun to occupy some of the seats in the lower house. The adoption of a bi-cameral system, however, triggered a split of the opposition MDC into two factions; those led by Professor Welshman Ncube who ostensibly supported the idea
of running for Senate, and those opposed to competing for upper house seats, led by Morgan Tsvangirai.

Collen Gwiyo, a ZCTU leader and MDC MP argues that disagreement over fielding candidates for the Senate was a ruse disguising issues arising from the class cleavages within the party:

The introduction of the Senate in 2005 happened before the MDC congress where the structures had been manipulated so that Morgan would lose an election. The introduction of the Senate and the split pre-empted the possible loss. Capital had a part to play in the split as sections of international capital are of the view that Morgan played his part and they want someone else. (Gwiyo, 2011)

Takura Zhangazha echoes the class cleavage argument as the reason for the split:

I think it’s more of an attitude of the educated versus the uneducated, knowledgeable versus not knowledgeable and disdain for popular democracy. Which is one of the big problems in this country. People think you get a degree and it’s amazing that our politics is always going back to how many degrees you have and how many certificates you can produce most of the time. (Zhangazha, 2011)

While Gwiyo blames the split on pressure from capital and middle-class elements in the party, the outcome did not produce two homogenous groups with labour on one side and the middle classes and capital on the other. Former labour leaders including Gibson Sibanda, Gift Chimanikire, and Blessing Chebundo crossed to the Ncube camp. Also, some intellectuals stayed with Tsvangirai, including Tendai Biti and Nelson Chamisa; though Gwiyo argues that these two had also planned on leaving and only returned back to the Tsvangirai fold after strategically judging it to be the stronger of the two:

…it was Job Sikhala and some others who said that it wouldn’t work that Welshman be president and that it would be worth looking for someone else more attractive to the mass base, because Welshman doesn’t have a history of a mass base. Chamisa had almost also gone but Chamisa and Tendai Biti jumped back in. Because when they were gone it was Morgan, Mashakada, and Mai Matibenga and then Chamisa. Those are the ones who worked tirelessly for the party up to the holding of the congress. (Gwiyo, 2011)
In addition to the class cleavage there was no question that a critical perception issue would arise regarding Welshman Ncube’s leadership. It was unlikely that he would ever be a viable presidential candidate given the significance of tribe in driving political identities in Zimbabwe. MDC Ncube faction would eventually seek to resolve this issue by appointing former student leader Arthur Mutambara as its leader in February 2006.

**Opposition disunity and the Save Zimbabwe Campaign**

Zimbabwe’s opposition remained fractured after the 2005 elections. Indeed, the conflict between the MDC factions had erupted into violence on a number of occasions in 2006. One of the most evident examples of violence between these factions was when Trudy Stephenson, MDC Mutambara-faction MP for Harare South and seven other MDC-Mutambara members were attacked by members of the Tsvangirai faction. They accused a well-known youth activist Tonderai Ndira of having instigated the attack. No charges were laid against Ndira or any others, supposedly due to a lack of evidence.

The fractured opposition did manage to come together in 2006 to organise a protest movement that created an umbrella for the various political parties and the civil society organisations in a single concerted effort against the government. As with the formation of the NCA in 1998, it was deemed prudent to couch the movement within the churches, on the assumption that this might circumvent the reaction of security forces and the Public Order Security Act (POSA) and would elicit a less brutal reaction from the government.

Jonah Gokova (2011), the director of the Ecumenical Support Services explains the Save Zimbabwe Campaign as a tenuous unification:

The Save Zimbabwe campaign came about because we realised that at that time we needed to create a unifying platform from which we can engage ZANU-PF. We wanted to create a platform that would involve everyone and be clear that we were engaged in a struggle and this struggle was lacking that united front. The NCA was a united front but for a specific issue which is the constitution. The crisis coalition was a united front but again with a specific area...
Ndira was eventually murdered by Zanu-PF militia during the political violence of 2008 of interest. Broadly we were saying now is the time to increase our political pressure, so we needed all civil society organisations all the political parties to come together for that purpose. It served its purpose. It was a campaign, it was not going to be a long-lasting campaign, it needed clear time frame. Though we did not agree, we did not determine the end. I think we left it to the political dynamics and when we got to the end we decided the campaign had served its purpose.

On March 11 2017 the leaders of the two MDC factions joined civil society activists for a prayer meeting in the Highfields suburb of Harare and Tsvangirai, Tendai Biti, Lovemore Madhuku and fifty other civic society members were arrested and tortured.

Save Zimbabwe was another reflection of the disproportionate balance of coercion between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces. In the aftermath of the March 11 rally, the photographs of Tsvangirai, Madhuku and others who had been badly beaten became the symbol of Zanu-PF brutality.

Takura Zhangazha provides a critical analysis of the Save Zimbabwe Campaign:

The truth is people came together not necessarily out of conviction. The Save Zimbabwe campaign in part was the politics of default. The interactions were not organic, you have comrades that were beaten up together in March 2007 and they ignore each other straight away. And it basically indicates to you that they never planned together, and some of these things were done primarily with commitment but not necessarily for the long term. They were done for the short term and for individuated political interests, because the NCA leadership was there, was beaten up, the main MDC leadership was beaten up, the MDC then - M was also assaulted or arrested, a whole host of other civil society activists from crisis coalition, from the youth movements arrested you know disappeared for a week, two weeks came out, bandages, press conferences were held. Two weeks later the MDC-T went on its own to meet the SADC leadership and no feedback; and as time went on civil society then decided to hold a stakeholder’s conference in Bulawayo, in August/September of 2007 and the [civil society was saying] the MDC had come up, had been talking with ZANU and had talked with civil society individually. They never came back to the whole Save Zimbabwe structure proper.

One clear outcome of the Save Zimbabwe campaign was that it drove the Southern African Development Community to intervene in the Zimbabwean crisis. The community called an extraordinary summit on 28 March 2007 in Dar es Salaam,
Tanzania and appointed South African President Thabo Mbeki as its mediator in Zimbabwe. Following the violence of March 2007, the MDC had threatened to boycott the 2008 elections unless electoral reforms were put in place. A deadline was set for Mbeki to report to the regional economic community by the end of June 2007. The negotiations, led by South African Minister of Foreign Affairs Sidney Mufamadi, resulted in the introduction of the two-round electoral system and the framework for the Global Political Agreement and a transitional constitution which came to be known as the Kariba Draft. The negotiations paved the way to elections in 2008 which would represent a crucial turning point in the balance between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces in the country.

2008 Elections

By 2008 Zimbabwe’s economic and humanitarian crises had reached catastrophic proportions, formal employment stood at less than 20%, and more than a quarter of the country’s 12 million people had emigrated, most of them to South Africa. Inflation had risen from 1 593% per year in early 2007 and had reached over 8000% in 2008. In 2006 the World Health Organisation calculated that Zimbabwe’s life expectancy was the lowest in the world at 34 for women and 37 for men. To individual citizens these realities meant food shortages, queuing outside banks for entire days to have access to a currency that was rapidly losing value as notes began to take on hundreds of trillion-dollar denominations. As a result of hyperinflation, the bus fare to go to work was more than an income on a given day. Hospitals lacked drugs and provisions normally taken for granted such as blood for transfusions. The economic nightmare would ultimately define the run-up to the 2008 elections.

The period before Zimbabwe’s 2008 general election had been largely peaceful. Certainly, in comparison with the elections of 2005, the lack of incidence prior to as well as on polling days was notable. The combined or harmonised parliamentary and presidential elections were held on the 29 March 2008. The mediation of President Thabo Mbeki had been successful in moderating tensions between Zanu-PF and the
MDC, while confidence-building measures such as the posting of election results outside polling stations had gone a long way in assuaging suspicions of fraud as parliamentary poll results were presented.

However, the announcement of the results of the parliamentary election would trigger a wave of violence that surpassed all the previous elections and force an intervention by the regional economic community. For the first time in the history of Zimbabwe, Zanu-PF lost its majority in parliament, garnering 99 seats of 210 in the House of Assembly, while the Morgan Tsvangirai-led formation of the MDC had 100 seats and the faction led by Arthur Mutambara gained 10 seats. In the Senate elections, which had been reintroduced in November 2005, Zanu-PF won 30 of the 60 contested seats while the MDC-T and MDC-M received 24 and 6 seats respectively. Delays in announcing the results of the presidential polls sent the first indication of the tensions that were to ensue. The presidential poll had three major candidates; President Robert Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai and Simba Makoni, who stood in his newly formed Mavambo Kusile Dawn party. In all, the delay in announcing the results of the first round of the presidential election was more than a month, only being made on 2 May 2008.

Overall incidences of violence were concentrated in provinces that remained strongholds of Zanu-PF, mainly Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West. It would be reasonable to infer that these attacks were reprisals for those who had campaigned for or were seen to support the MDC parties. As with all elections since 2000, the violence was largely one-sided. Data on the political violence compiled by the Zimbabwe Peace Project and Sokwanele, two human rights NGOs in Zimbabwe found that of 2 168 incidents of violence recorded between 29 March and September 2008, 1 473 incidents had been perpetrated by Zanu-PF youth militia, 451 ZANU supporters and 262 by war veterans. Most attacks were perpetrated by combinations of the above groups. It is also significant that hundreds of incidents were committed by the National Army as well as the different branches of the Police and Central Intelligence Organisation. In a disturbing catalogue of violations, it was

reported that 257 people had been tortured, 17 people burned, 222 abducted and over a thousand attacked with weapons (ZESN, 2008; Zimbabwe Peace Project, 2008).

One particularly brutal episode during the violence of 2008 was the kidnap and torture of Jestina Mukoko and other members of staff from the Zimbabwe Peace Project. Mukoko’s torture may have been retributive, as brutality does not necessarily need to have a logical purpose. It may also be an indicator that Zanu-PF and the state security branches were fearful that the data which Mukoko and her organisation had been able to accumulate would be used to bring charges at the International Criminal Court, bearing in mind the charges brought against Kenyan political leaders in the aftermath of election-related violence in 2007.

**Conclusion: relations of force 2000-2008**

This chapter has addressed the first phase of open contestation in Zimbabwe between the hegemonic power in the form of the Zanu-PF governing class and the counter-hegemonic force which was a broad coalition of labour, sections of the middle class and some representatives of national white industry and farming. In concluding it would be necessary to summarise this period within the conceptual bounds of Gramsci’s balance of forces. As was outlined in Chapter 3 the relations of forces must be distinguished on three levels or moments. The first of these relations is the relation of economic forces, the mode of accumulation and production, and the development of material forces. The second moment is the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness and organisation attained by the various social groups. The third is the relation of military forces. This last moment encapsulates not only brute coercive power, but also ideological consent (2000, p. 202).

**Mode of accumulation and production**

The political economy of Zimbabwe after 2000 is the political economy of a state in crisis as the formal economy collapsed. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme effectively put an end to the existence of a white land-owning class in the country.
This class was replaced by a new black land-owning class under the A1 and A2 structures of the FTLRP. The latter are essentially high-ranking military officials and Zanu-PF loyalists creating a state-based bureaucratic bourgeoisie. By 2008 the number of beneficiaries in this class would be approximately 16 000. The class of A1 farmers who each received plots of approximately 12 acres comprised about 145 000 individuals. Given that neither of these classes holds title deeds to the plots they occupied they are entirely beholden to the whims of Zanu-PF leadership and could have their 99-year leases revoked with little notice.

Apart from the land grab in the land reform programme, the governing class essentially became a kleptocratic class using access to the state to buttress their predatory accumulation. This class capitalised on the collapse of the economy to further enrich themselves. Where access to foreign currency, mines and agriculture was entirely dependent on access to the state these individuals were able to leverage their access to great profit as shortages of commodities such as fuel and food led to the governing class monopolising supply chains. Targeted international sanctions may have affected the governing class’s ability to externalise funds to Europe or the United States but did not prevent a collapse into a more blatant kleptocracy or ‘predatory accumulation’.

The urban working class became a dispersed urban poor, reliant on informal trading for their economic existence. Labour structures would be severely weakened. Membership in the ZCTU declined from 1.7 million in 1998 to 700 000 in 2007 and to 350 000 in 2011 (Kanyenze, 2011). The effects of Murambatsvina would exacerbate this as the work force moved towards an informal basis.

**Homogeneity, self- awareness and organisation**

Throughout this period Zanu-PF’s notorious party discipline had been able to maintain the hegemon’s structural and organisational integrity. The party had consolidated its structures in 2000 following its loss in the constitutional referendum and called on old allies in the National Liberation War Veterans. With new organisational strength from charismatic young leaders such as Border Gezi who were able to drum up a degree of organisational self-awareness coupled with an increased capacity for violence against the new opposition.
While the centre was able to hold within Zanu-PF, internal rifts were never far below the surface. Intrigue within the party was revealed with the 2004 Tsholotsho plot in which Emmerson Mnangagwa, Jacob Mudenda and Jonathan Moyo were apparently exposed as planning a coup to place Mnangagwa, then speaker of parliament, as vice president and therefore in direct line of the presidency. Other camps were forming with Joice Mujuru (then vice president) appearing to be the most likely candidate in line with the support of her estranged husband General Solomon Mujuru. Zanu-PF’s internal disciplinary force held the plot in check.

The fact that the MDC was a broad coalition meant there would always be the potential for fractures. By 2005 the MDC had begun to fracture, apparently due to principles of strategy. However, the split took a regional (ethnic) and to some degrees class nature as Sibanda, a labour leader, joined his fellow Ndebele intellectual Ncube to form their own faction of the MDC. The lack of coherent strategy in the counter-hegemonic movement was also triggered by competition for donor funding, as the opportunity to secure a significant salary when other opportunities for employment are diminished becomes an important motivational factor in engaging in the counter-hegemonic struggle. There was also the additional pull of access to power in engaging in the counter-hegemonic movement. This shift to politics also weakened civil society and labour as prominent leaders were leaving the labour movement and civil society to join the other sections of the movement in the MDC, as well as towards well-paid jobs in the donor agencies.

**Military forces, coercive power, ideological consent**

Given that the party and state had been fused since independence, Zanu-PF used coercive power and both legal and institutional superstructures to maintain its hegemony. The police, army, and Central Intelligence Organisation provided overwhelming coercive power to Zanu-PF which was supplemented by the war veterans during the land invasion and election periods.

For its part, the MDC continued to focus its counter-hegemonic strategy on elections. Bearing in mind the Zanu-PF’s overwhelming capacity for coercion and its ability to compromise legal and electoral institutions, and by 2008 its ability to ignore the results
of the election and refuse to leave power, the strategy of gaining power through elections was ultimately proving ineffective.

Apart from the institutional and coercive capacity of Zanu-PF the party also used its ideological weaponry in the form of patriotic history on a largely captive audience. There is no question that notwithstanding Mugabe’s and Zanu-PF’s attraction based on fear of coercion or ever-diminishing sources of patronage, the party’s ideological positions within the framework of patriotic history and the Third Chimurenga were convincing to a great number of Zimbabweans. The extent to which patriotic history was convincing to a large section of Zimbabwe can be interpreted as that part of Zanu-PF’s hegemony which supplemented the coercion inflicted on sections of the population, and the patronage doled out to others. Mugabe and his intellectuals had compelling arguments blaming the West, white farmers and the opposition as their puppets. The resonance of these must wholly account for why citizens in urban areas who despite the evidence of their personal economic hardships, despite having their pensions obliterated or losing their jobs, would continue to vote for the party. Given that the majority of Zimbabweans only consumed media from sources owned by the government and managed by Zanu-PF propagandists, it is no surprise that such people do exist, and in no small numbers. By 2008 Zanu-PF’s production of patriotic ideology had become increasingly crude and caricatural, a Caesarist narrative in which great personalities predominated. All national news and the state-owned press began to refer to Mugabe as ‘His Excellency The President and First Secretary of ZANU-PF, Commander in Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces Cde. Robert Gabriel Mugabe’, or ‘Our Vanguard leader’.

By 2008 the balance of forces in Zimbabwe between hegemony and counter-hegemony had reached a stalemate: violence could no longer maintain Zanu-PF’s grip on power, as the results of the party’s policies had crippled the economy and all consent mechanisms were beginning to ring hollow. The trajectory of hegemony in Zimbabwe from 2008 would be determined by the MDC’s strategic decision to enter into the Government of National Unity. The following chapter will analyse the period of the Government of National Unity as a period of ‘Passive Revolution’ in the Gramscian sense, as a tactical compromise made by the hegemonic power with the intention of reconsolidating its control over the historical bloc. Based on the outcome
of the 2013 election in which Zanu-PF again won a majority in parliament, and Robert Mugabe seemingly won a majority in the presidential election, the chapter argues that the MDC strategy within the Government of National Unity was a strategic miscalculation. The chapter will thus seek to understand why the counter-hegemonic movement began to weaken at the very moment it gained a degree of access to the state.
Chapter 6

Passive revolution and the resurgence of Zanu-PF hegemony

This chapter addresses the period of the Government on National Unity between 2008 and 2013. After the violence which accompanied the second round of the presidential elections in March 2008, a political settlement was negotiated between Zanu-PF and the two factions of the Movement for Democratic Change. The settlement known as the Global Political Agreement put in place a Government of National Unity which maintained Mugabe as president and appointed Morgan Tsvangirai as prime minister.

The chapter uses the Gramscian concept of passive revolution in discussing the period from 2008 to 2013, echoing Brian Raftopulous’ assessment (2010). As noted in Chapter 3, Gramsci’s passive revolution refers to the coming to power of a new historical situation in which the social and economic relations remain static. Passive revolution is often the outcome of a war of position by the dominant classes after a war of manoeuvre by the dominated classes. It is important to reiterate that passive revolution should not be interpreted as a concept as historical defeatism. Instead, Gramsci proposes that the concept ‘postulates, as necessary a vigorous antithesis which can present intransigently all its potentialities for development’ (2000, p. 264). That is to say, even in situations of passive revolution the potential for a counter-hegemonic offensive remains. This chapter interprets the MDC’s decision to enter into a Government of National Unity with Zanu-PF in 2008 as falling into the realm of a war of manoeuvre. MDC’s failure to capitalise on this apparent foothold in state power is explained by the movement’s weaknesses in both its ideological and its tactical power-political approaches.

The chapter uses observation and interview data collected during 2010 and 2011 during the constitution-making process of the GNU. The chapter highlights the shifting dynamics within the opposition movement as cracks began to widen between the varying ideological camps within the party and throughout opposition civil society. It will also be shown that once in power, members of the counter-hegemonic movement would show similar tendencies to the corruption of Zanu-PF.
The chapter concludes with an analysis of why Zanu-PF and Robert Mugabe won the 2013 elections. Various theories have been proposed by Bratton (2017) and Chan and Gallaher (2017), among others, for why the MDC lost the 2013 elections despite the evident improvement in the economy during the GNU. This thesis will structure its analysis of the MDC’s loss in 2013 within the Gramscian framework. It will interrogate the extent to which this outcome was driven by economic or ideological factors, as well as the degree to which both the threat of violence, cheating and consent building account for Zanu-PF victory. This is despite apparent evidence that Zanu-PF had led the country to the disastrous economic hyperinflation of 2008, and that the MDC had theoretically changed this between 2008 and 2013. Gramscian analysis will also support a study of MDC strategies and allow for potential strategic errors in judgement in the counter-hegemonic battle against Zanu-PF in Zimbabwe.

**The Global Political Agreement**

The government’s brutal reaction to the March 2007 Save Zimbabwe prayer rally compelled the Southern African Development Community to intervene. The engagement by Thabo Mbeki as SADC’s appointed negotiator led to secret meetings in late 2007 in Kariba, in the north of Zimbabwe. The Kariba negotiations had initially sought to avoid potentially violent elections in 2008 by making concessions to the MDC, including appointing Tsvangirai as vice president (Mufamadi, 2015). The Kariba negotiations did not result in political settlement nor in avoiding elections in 2008. When the elections degenerated into violence and it became clear that Zanu-PF – or at least the military – had no intention of relinquishing power, a negotiated political settlement became the only possible route to avoid further bloodshed. Following the example of Kenya following that country’s violent elections in 2007, the negotiations in Zimbabwe produced the Global Political Agreement which was signed in September 2008. The preamble to the agreement acknowledged the ‘recent challenges that we have faced as a country and the multiple threats to the wellbeing of our people and, therefore, determined to resolve these permanently’, and committed the parties to agree ‘to putting an end to the polarisation, divisions, conflict and intolerance that has characterised Zimbabwean politics and society in recent times’.
The agreement committed the parties to ending the multiple democratic, economic and human rights crises, through the formation of a Government of National of Unity. However, as Matyszak and Reeler have argued, apart from detailing the technicalities of how the government would be structured and composed, most of the 25 articles of the GPA were mere bombast or held only political relevance, while only a limited number of articles held legal traction (2011). In the midst of all the bombast and political irrelevance, reference was made to ‘justice, fairness, openness, tolerance’ and ‘respect for democratic values’; however, the traces of ‘patriotic history’ were never too far. The agreement made reference to ‘Land Question [being] the core of the contestation in Zimbabwe’, ‘patriotism’ and ‘loyalty to Zimbabwe’, and the ‘acknowledgement of the sacrifices made by thousands of Zimbabwe’s gallant sons and daughters in the fight against colonialism and racial discrimination and determined to accept, cherish and recognise the significance of the Liberation Struggle as the foundation of our sovereign independence, freedoms and human rights’.

**Structure of the GNU**

The GNU would be headed by Mugabe as president and Tsvangirai as prime minister. In order to maintain the ethnic representation agreed upon between ZANU and ZAPU in the unity accord, two vice presidents were maintained. Two deputy prime ministers would be nominated by each MDC faction, with Thokozani Khupe appointed by Tsvangirai’s faction while Arthur Mutambara, who was signatory to the agreement, would be his party’s designated deputy prime minister. The cabinet would be composed of 31 ministers (15 nominated by Zanu-PF, 13 by the MDC-T and 3 by the MDC-M) and 15 deputy ministers.

While the president would chair cabinet and the prime minister would chair the council of ministers, the agreement was particularly vague about the exact exercise of executive power. When the ministries were allocated Zanu-PF had crucially managed to maintain its control over both the ministry of defence and the ministry of justice, legal and parliamentary affairs, while the ministry of home affairs would be shared by co-ministers from Zanu-PF and the MDC-T. More importantly, Emmerson Mnangagwa would be minister of defence, while Patrick Chinamasa would be minister
of justice. Maintaining its grip on these key ministries meant that Mugabe would oversee the powerful National Security Council without any oversight from Tsvangirai or the MDC.

Of the MDC’s 15 ministerial posts, the finance portfolio, which was taken by Tendai Biti, would prove to be the most important of the MDC’s cabinet positions, given the dire economic situation in 2008. Underlining the transition in the MDC’s class character once it came to power was the fact that, apart from Tsvangirai and Khupe as prime minister and deputy prime minister respectively, none of the party’s 15 cabinet ministers were previous trade unionists. The MDC nominated Roy Bennet as its deputy minister for agriculture, though he would never be sworn in as he was harassed throughout the period of the GNU in a series of trumped-up charges. Despite their majority in parliament, the MDC failed to successfully negotiate the allocation of ministries in the GNU due to Zanu-PF’s continued control of the state’s security structures, which were responsible for much of the post-poll violence. The reasons for the MDC’s compromises are a result of Zanu-PF’s intransigence as much as MDC naivety.

Highlighting the latter, Takura Zhangazha argues that MDC leaders were mesmerised by their approaching access to power:

The MDC leaders were getting that close to regional power and they were a bit naive. They forgot the politics. When you negotiate with anyone the politics [it] is not only in the boardroom it also remains with your stakeholders and they were in parts overawed at the rate at which things had occurred; and they were bitter and they thought they were closer to power.

(Zhangazha, 2011)

**The GNU: maintaining a tenuous coalition**

The Government of National Unity came into effect on 11 February 2009. From its inception the GNU would be plagued by issues on which the negotiating parties had delayed reaching an agreement. Among the most important of these outstanding issues, from the MDC point of view, were Mugabe’s re-appointment of Gideon Gono as Reserve Bank governor and Johannes Tomana as attorney-general, as well as the appointment of the country’s ten provincial governors. Gono had overseen the
unbridled printing of currency which had caused devastating hyperinflation, while Tomana had built a reputation as a prosecutor by tormenting opposition activists. In addition, the MDC continued to press for Roy Bennet to be sworn in as its nominee for the position of deputy minister of agriculture. For their part, Zanu-PF’s outstanding issues centred on revoking sanctions and ending pirate radio broadcasts into the country, two issues over which the MDC ultimately had little control.

These outstanding issues would continue to haunt the GNU throughout its tenure while also reflecting the extent of Zanu-PF bad faith in the agreement. This bad faith would manifest itself throughout the tenure of the GNU, as MDC members of parliament and ministers would be routinely harassed. Harassment included the arrests of Tendai Biti on multiple occasions (in 2009, 2011 and 2013), as well as the arrest of Welshman Ncube and other MDC-N members in 2011. Apart from the ongoing persecution of MDC MPs and leadership, the state continued to repress the activities of civil society in the country. During the events of the Arab Spring in 2011, members of the International Socialist Organisation screened a documentary analysing the protests in Tahrir Square. Forty-five members of the Organisation, including Munyaradzi Gwisayi and Hopewell Gumbo, were arrested and charged with treason. The offices of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, the Zimbabwe Peace Project, and the General Agricultural Plantation Workers Union were also raided multiple times during the GNU.

There were some official efforts at peace building and reconciliation, including the Zimbabwe National Healing and National Reconciliation Commission. National healing and reconciliation, with specific reference to 2008, had also been hindered by the terms of the Global Political Agreement. It was decided that the ambit of the Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation would include victims of the war of independence, the previously unrecognised Matabeleland conflict of the 1980s as well as other cases of election violence since 2000. While they were no less important, focusing on these conflicts at this in the aftermath of the 2008 violence might have appeared as a cynical attempt to dilute the relevance more recent brutalities. ‘I want to urge all of you to note that the process of reconciliation is national. It does not seek to ferret out supposed criminals for punishment but calls all of us to avoid the deadly snare of political conflict.’ (Mugabe, quoted on cnn.com, 9 August 2010)
For the most part, efforts at peace-building in Zimbabwe during the GNU were undertaken by NGOs, often in cooperation with the international NGOs and donor agencies upon which Zimbabwean civil society is almost totally reliant. The tasks of uncovering the truth through activities such as publicising and lobbying, was carried out entirely by NGOs in Zimbabwe, at considerable risk to those who exposed the human rights abuses of 2008 and afterwards. Prominent NGOs such as the Zimbabwe Peace Project took the task of reconciling communities affected by election violence through workshops and indabas. At the same time the Zimbabwe Election Support Network continued to monitor areas which were prone to violent outbreaks, noting cases of human rights abuses and general political violence. They also reported that throughout 2011 Zanu-PF members had been denying food and donations of agricultural implements to MDC (ZESN, 2011).

**Economic recovery**

Apart from introducing a degree of political stability the GNU’s primary task was to restore the collapsed economy. GPA under Article 31(a):

> the parties agree to give priority to the restoration of economic stability and growth in Zimbabwe. The Government will lead the process of developing and implementing an economic recovery strategy and plan. To that end, the Parties are committed to working together on a full and comprehensive economic programme to resuscitate Zimbabwe’s economy which will urgently address the issue of production, food security, poverty and unemployment and the challenges of high inflation, interest rates and the exchange rate.

In January 2009 Patrick Chinamasa, as outgoing minister for finance, had announced the adoption of a multi-currency regime meaning the abandonment of the Zimbabwe dollar and permission granted by the government to use a number of foreign currencies, particularly the US dollar, the South African rand and the Botswana pula. The GNU’s Short Term Economic Recovery Programme (STERP) was presented by the new minister of finance, Tendai Biti, in March 2009, a month after the inauguration of the GNU. STERP outlined the multi-currency policy and designated the South African rand as the reference currency, citing ‘the future intention of SADC to adopt a common currency, which inevitably will have to be based on the rand given the
dominance of the South African economy in SADC’, and South Africa’s proximity and role as Zimbabwe’s leading trading partner (STERP, 2009). Without any formal agreements and despite the reasoning provided in the STERP, Zimbabwe’s dollarisation happened by default; less a policy shift as much as it was an admission of reality. As Biti acknowledged in his first midterm budget review, ‘since February this year, the Zimbabwe dollar is no longer a currency that the public and any trader will accept. Our national currency has, thus, become moribund’ (Noko, 2011).

Dollarisation immediately arrested the almost incalculable hyperinflation. In the first quarter of 2009 the negative GDP growth rate rose to 3.7% from 14.4% at the end of 2008, with the agricultural sector posting gains of 24.3% in productivity (Biti, 2009). Despite these positive developments dollarisation brought new complications. The adoption of the US dollar negatively affected the country’s beleaguered industrial sector as Zimbabwe ironically became a high-cost economy and industry could no longer compete with South African imports, due to the disparity between the rand and the dollar (Chakravati, 2015). During the early years of the GNU, low confidence in the financial institutions of the country based on the experience of the early 2000s meant that foreign currency transactions were largely maintained outside the financial system (Noko, 2011). Dollarisation brought about stability and regularity to the Zimbabwean economic base, which then allowed Zanu-PF’s control of access to the means of production in order to leverage its hegemony over the base and ultimately over the post-2008 historical bloc.

*Diamonds introduce a new structural factor*

In 2006 significant deposits of alluvial diamonds were discovered in the Chiadzwa chieftainship of Marange district in Manicaland. The legal title for the Chiadzwa claim had been held from April 2006 by African Consolidated Resources plc, ‘a British registered company led by mostly white Zimbabwean Nationals’. However, the company would have its control over the fields wrested through political manoeuvres by the overlapping elite state, security and administrative interests (Saunders et al. 2016, p. 21). The discovery of fields which could easily be exploited by hand digging and panning precipitated a diamond rush in the district, attracting thousands of
informal miners who saw an opportunity to earn hard currency in the context of the collapsing economy. Saunders and Nyamunda outline how, by October 2006, as many as 20 000 informal miners had descended on the district creating a booming black market for stones. In November of that year the Zimbabwe Republic Police launched Operation Chikorokodza Chapera (the panning is over), arresting over 9 000 people in the district and creating a cordon around the diamond fields. By mid-2007 the extraction of diamonds from the Chiadzwa fields was conducted through a cartel that included officials from the ministry of mines, the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation, the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe and the security forces (Saunders, 2016).

When the violence broke out between the two rounds of the 2008 elections Chiadzwa would be central as a source of resources for funding the security forces and Zanu-PF’s militia. It was also a locus of partisan violence against Manicaland that had voted overwhelmingly for the MDC-T during the March elections. Following the signing of the GPA in October 2008, the state deployed three ZNA brigades to Chiadzwa, unleashing a campaign of violence against informal miners and the inhabitants of the area which reportedly resulted in the deaths of 214 individuals with multiple reports of rapes and beatings by the soldiers. Speaking as finance minister in the GNU, Tendai Biti cited the potential loss in revenue of $233 million. Saunders and Nyamunda estimate that between 2009 and 2012 Zimbabwe lost at least $2 billion in potential diamond revenues (Saunders, 2016, p. 42).

A key outcome of the discovery of diamonds in Marange was the shift in the interests and policy of EU member states in relation to sanctions. Farai Maguwu, the activist founder of the Centre for Research and Development (CRD) based in Mutare, noted the shift in donor relations from when the Kimberly Process to certify Zimbabwean diamonds began in late 2010. Maguwu cites the ‘growing pressure from Belgium to lift sanctions on the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC) so that Zimbabwe’s gems could be accepted in Europe, and notably in the diamond cutting and polishing centre of Antwerp’ (in Saunders, 2016, p. 104, Interview 2012). Sanctions against the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation would be lifted in 2013, while Maguwu claims he was informed by a European diplomat that the CRD had been ‘black-listed by donors because of the problems it was creating for those who
were seeking to normalise Kimberly Process Zimbabwe relations’ (Saunders, 2016).

*Constitution making under the GNU: COPAC*

The key political task of the Government of National Unity was the drafting of the new constitution. Article VI of the Global Political Agreement stipulated that ‘It is the fundamental right and duty of the Zimbabwean people to make a constitution by themselves and for themselves. That the process must be owned and driven by the people and must be inclusive and democratic.’ Accordingly, the National Unity Government passed the 19th amendment of Zimbabwe’s Constitution in order to set in motion a people-driven constitution-building process.

Much like the Zimbabwe Constitutional Commission of 1999/2000, the process would be driven by members of parliament. However, unlike the 2000 commission which included a cross section of national civil society represented by 400 commissioners, the 2009 Parliamentary Select Committee was made up of 25 members of parliament led by three MPs from each of the GPA signatory parties. The co-chairs selected were Munyaradzi Paul Mangwana from Zanu-PF, Douglas Mwonzora for the MDC-T and Edward Mkhosi of the MDC-M. The Global Political Agreement had set a deadline for the approval of the new constitution 18 months after the inauguration of the GNU which was October 2010. The deadline would prove to be unreasonable for a process that would include the collection of submissions, collation of data, and drafting of a new constitution to be put before a referendum. International donors provided $US21 million in a basket managed by the UNDP, while additional funds of up to $23 million were provided to additional elements of constitution-making, including civil society support (UNDP, 2013).

Disagreements in approaches and strategies to the constitution-making process led to a fracture in counter-hegemonic civil society. The NCA and ZCTU opposed the process run by the Parliamentary Select Committee for the Constitution which became known as COPAC. The ZCTU and NCA called for civil society to take charge and advocate for a ‘people driven’ as opposed to a ‘politician driven’ constitution-making
process. The decision to oppose the COPAC process led to the NCA losing virtually all of its funding from donors who were supporting the constitution-making process. The remainder of civil society sought to secure funding to take part in the constitution-making process. Civil society’s role in constitution-making involved holding workshops to discuss contributions to the outreach process, as well observation of the outreach activities. Organisations including Bulawayo Agenda, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), Centre for Community Development in Zimbabwe (CCDZ), Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition and Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), conducted civic education meetings across the country to provide citizens with more clarity on issues for which COPAC would be conducting its outreach (ZZZICOMP, 2010). NGOs were also provided with funding to observe the outreach process. These included The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, and a coalition of Zimbabwe Peace Project and Zimbabwe Election Support Network that conducted observation projects of the outreach.

Throughout the delays NGO observers of the constitution-making process began to report that Zanu-PF were selecting and coaching individuals who would articulate their proposals at constitutional outreach meetings. An operation entitled ‘vara muromo’, or shut your mouth, by Zanu-PF youth militia and undertaken by the Central Intelligence Organisation was put in place to intimidate citizens who may have wanted to make independent contributions at the outreach meetings (ZZZICOMP, 2010). When the outreach meetings began in June 2010, the intimidation of the previous months had rendered the collection of personal opinions all but farcical. Outreach meetings in Harare and Bulawayo were postponed in June 2010 ostensibly because the World Cup would have affected attendance. In all, over 4 533 outreach meetings were held out of a planned 4 820 meetings across the country between July and October 2010 (ZZZICOMP, 2010). Afrobarometer data (2010) indicated that in a national sample 30% of respondents said that they had attended public outreach meetings. Some regions reflected higher attendance, such as Manicaland where 58% of respondents reported having been present at COPAC meetings and Mashonaland Central where 45% of Afrobarometer respondents attested to having attended an
outreach meeting (Afrobarometer, March 2011)\textsuperscript{22}. COPAC’s data for the outreach indicated that average attendance at the meetings ranged from 86 people in Matabeleland North to 328 people in Mashonaland Central (COPAC, 2013).

Substantive contributions to the outreach meetings were driven largely by party affiliation, as well as explicit coaching and directives from Zanu-PF and security structures in numerous cases. As such Zanu-PF insisted on the elements of the Kariba draft in guiding the substantive content of their contributions. The documentary film \textit{Democrats}, which shadowed the COPAC principals Mangwana and Mwonzora, provides video evidence of the coaching, intimidation and manipulation of attendance at meetings across the country by Zanu-PF youths and CIO agents (Democrats, 2015).

Civil society organisations such as the Zimbabwe Elections Support Network, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights continued to stress the necessity of electoral system reforms before any elections, insisting particularly on an overhaul of the national voter’s roll, biometric identification, and international observation. Among the recommendations made by prominent civil society organisations to the Constitutional Commission had been the introduction of a proportional representation system that would curb the conflictual zero-sum nature of Zimbabwean politics. It is important to note that all political parties continued to favour a simple majoritarian system for parliamentary elections.

Following the outreach phase, the Commission began working on the constitutional draft by converting and collating the contributions collected in the outreach process in January 2011. The drafting process was also fraught with disagreement between the parties. Disagreements arose in relation to dual citizenship, devolution, the appointment of the attorney-general, the powers of the executive, age limits and whether term limits would apply retroactively, as well as the appointment of the National Prosecution Authority (Interview with UNDP consultant to constitution

\textsuperscript{22} The Afrobarometer statistic of 58 % attendance rate at the public outreach meetings in Manicaland in interesting given the reports by other observer groups of harassment by security forces and the highest instances of meetings being cancelled due to violence occurring in this province (ZZZ ICOMP final report, 2010 )
making process, 2018; COPAC, 2013). An initial draft of the constitution would only be made available in April 2012, and after fierce negotiations between the parties the COPAC draft constitution was adopted in July 2012 and brought before a second all-stakeholder’s conference in October 2012 (COPAC, 2013). A final draft agreed upon by all parties was tabled in parliament on 31 January 2013.

The COPAC draft had made some substantial improvements on the Lancaster House Agreement. Firstly, the COPAC draft introduced a more comprehensive Bill of Rights which included civil and political rights and provided for more detailed economic rights, including the right to education, health, food and water, environment (Coltart, 2016; Magaisa, 2013). The draft significantly curtailed executive power by curbing the president’s power to appoint judges and provincial governors as well as the president’s power to declare states of emergency. Crucially, the new draft introduced presidential term limits to two five-year terms; however, the application of this new restriction was not retroactive and would therefore allow for Mugabe to run for another two terms. The draft made significant strides in improving the rights of women in the country by specifying the rights of women to equal treatment, equal pay, at least three-months paid maternity leave, equal citizenship rights, protection against domestic violence, equal opportunities, custody and guardianship of children, and that all laws, customs and cultural practices that violate women’s rights would be unconstitutional.

The draft also provided for 60 elected seats in parliament to be reserved exclusively for women. The granting of dual citizenship reflected a key victory by the MDC in their negotiation of the draft, while extending the definition of citizenship to include people born outside Zimbabwe to at least one Zimbabwean parent. A fundamental shift in the structure of government came about in the provisions relating to the devolution of power.

David Coltart, minister for education in the GNU and an MDC-N MP who had campaigned for constitutional reform since the 1980s, called for a ‘yes’ vote despite some concerns, arguing

for all of the obvious flaws in both the process and the content, the draft offered to the Zimbabwean electorate is an improvement of what we have. A no vote will result in Zimbabwe retaining its present constitution with all its objectionable clauses. That will mean that there will be no devolution of power, no dual citizen rights, no rights regarding children and in general the retention of the current deficient Bill of Rights. (Coltart, 2016)
Possibly more compelling than the fear of losing the potential improvement in the draft constitution was the fear of a return to violence rather than a negotiated political order. As Coltart warned: ‘A no vote will also plunge Zimbabwe into another period of uncertainty and possible political conflict. It will mean that our experiment in ending our penchant for settling our political differences using violence has failed’ (2016, p. 558).

The draft was put to referendum on 16 March 2013. The official results of the referendum indicated that 98.29% of the 3 079 966 votes counted cast yes for the new constitution. The turnout meant that 94.49% of the registered electorate had voted to ratify the constitution (ZESN, 2013). Bratton notes, however, that when calculated as a share of the voting-age population the turnout amounted to only 49%. This is somewhat low in comparison with other recent constitutional referendums on the continent such as Kenya in 2010, which had a 72% turnout and South Sudan in 2011 which had a 98% turnout (Bratton, 2016, p. 161).

Despite the peaceful conduct of the referendum, Zanu-PF continued to exercise its domination. An indication of this was the arrest of a prominent human rights lawyer, Beatrice Mthethwa, the day after the results were announced. She was charged with obstructing justice after she had asked for a search warrant from police raiding her client’s home.

### 2013 Elections

The threat of elections had loomed over the fragile unity government from its inception. Elections re-entered the rhetoric of both parties immediately after the formation of the GNU. To some extent this amounted to little more than political bravado by the leadership of both Zanu-PF and the Tsvangirai faction of the MDC. Both referred to early elections when impasses were reached in the functions of the government, particularly during the initial delays of the constitution-building process.

Immediately after the announcement of the referendum results in March 2013, Zanu-PF began to make calls to hold elections before the end of the inclusive government’s term of office in parliament on 29 June 2013. On the basis of the 1980 Constitution,
elections could not legally have been held before the end of the parliamentary term, while a deadline of up to four months meant that necessary reforms and planning could have been conducted before October 2013 (Coltart, 2016, p. 563). For its part, the MDC vehemently opposed holding elections before the voter’s roll management was reformed and an adequate voter registration exercise was held.

On 2 May 2013 a previously unknown citizen, Jealousy Mawarire, petitioned the Supreme Court. He claimed that the absence of the pronouncement of an election date violated his political rights as a voting citizen and requested that elections be held ‘no later than June 30 2013’ (ZESN, EOM, 2013). On 31 May 2013 the Supreme Court, newly stacked with partisan judges appointed by Mugabe in contravention of the GPA, ruled in favour of Mawarire and that elections were to be held no later than 31 July 2013. Mugabe then used the Emergency Powers Act to amend the Electoral Act in order to make the necessary adjustments for the reforms outlined in the new Constitution, including proportional representation and reserved seats for women (Coltart, 2016, p.568). These supra-legal manoeuvres notwithstanding, the 42-day count-down to elections was set and the technical requirements for election preparations were significantly compromised. Having accepted donor funding managed through the UNDP and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, the Government of Zimbabwe then announced that it would not be accepting foreign funding for the 2013 poll after the election date had been set (ZESN, 2013). The shortfall of funds would provide an excuse for technical shortcomings in voter registration.

A seemingly reinvigorated 89-year-old Robert Mugabe set about campaigning across the country. His party presented a glossy manifesto and distributed party regalia, all of which was supposedly funded by expropriated diamond resources. Zanu-PF also launched American-style attack ads; using social media, these advertisements focused mainly on Morgan Tsvangirai’s complicated love life during the period of the GNU.

In substance, the Zanu-PF manifesto was a 108-page document that covered the ideological refrain of independence, sovereignty, and the legacy of the war of independence. Zanu-PF’s message had, however, been rebranded and packaged in newer terms targeted at the country’s youth. These used catchy hashtags such as #TeamZanu-PF and slogans such as ‘Bhora Mughedi’, ‘ball in the goal’. The
manifesto called for the youth ‘to indigenise themselves’ and outlined an ‘ideology of indigenisation’:

The ideological meaning of Indigenisation and People’s Empowerment arises from the historical fact of our independence and sovereignty as Zimbabweans, as an expression of our heroic liberation struggle that was waged by Zimbabweans to attain the freedom and democracy we all enjoy today. (ZANU-PF Election Manifesto, 2013)

The party outlined how this ideology would translate into clear policy goals, stating:

Zanu-PF’s ideological thrust to indigenise the ownership of Zimbabwe’s natural and economic resources that fell into foreign hands as a consequence of colonialism or racist Rhodesian rule is based on the law to ensure fairness, transparency, accountability and predictability in its policy implementation. The relevant law in this regard is the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act (Chapter 14:33) as read with the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment (General Regulations, 2010). (ZANU-PF Election Manifesto, 2013)

The explicit argument from the Zanu-PF manifesto was that the Indigenisation through Economic Empowerment Act would result in a bonanza of ‘at least US$7.3 billion worth of assets projected from the indigenisation of 1,138 foreign companies in 12 key sectors of the economy’ (Zanu-PF Election Manifesto 2013). The party claimed that this US$7.3 billion would be used:

- to grow the economy by recapitalising and capacitating Agribank to stimulate agricultural productivity and safeguard food security; the Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe to rehabilitate physical and social infrastructure to revive the country’s key economic enablers;
- and the Small Enterprises Development Corporation to finance innovative youth and women’s projects to promote financial inclusion on the formal sector.

The party claimed that the key to economic growth lay in activating ‘idle assets’ and that: Like parastatals that are fully owned by the State, all local authorities have idle assets, including land, from which real value can be unlocked to capacitate development banks’. The manifesto estimated that a “reservoir” of idle assets valued at US$1,357,010,326 lay in the hands of national local authorities. (Zanu-PF, 2013, p. 84)
The fact that Zanu-PF was able to deliver on an effective and focused election campaign would indicate that the party had been planning for the eventuality of an election throughout the GNU period. The party’s continued focus on Mugabe as its vanguard leader implied that the period of the GNU had been used to rehabilitate Mugabe’s image as father of the nation and to reinvent his cult of personality.

Other key proposals in the manifesto were:

- to improve provision of urban housing by regularising the tenure of urban dwellers that were allocated housing and commercial stands on peri–urban farms under the Land Reform Programme, giving bankable leasehold security of tenure to all agricultural beneficiaries of the Land Reform Programme and the legalisation [of] artisanal mining. (Zanu-PF, 2013)

Finally, Zanu-PF made reference to polling data, presumably from the Mass Public Opinion Institute and the Freedom House Foundation which had reflected a resurgence in support for indigenisation policies. Zanu-PF argued that:

Even the public polls have said it. The verdict of all opinion surveys by national and international polling organisations published since July 2012 have shown that Zanu-PF is winning the 2013 elections because the Party’s Indigenisation and Empowerment programme is synonymous with the goals of the people. These surveys which have been done by organisations that have nothing to do with Zanu-PF and which have traditional links with the Party’s detractors have shown first that President Mugabe and Zanu-PF have recovered from the illegal regime change setbacks suffered in 2008 and second that the support for President Mugabe and Zanu-PF is among a growing majority of Zimbabweans - especially in the ranks of the youths, women and professionals between the ages of 18 and 40 – is dramatically surging while the support for opposition formations with no policies to offer to uplift the livelihoods of the people is plummeting.

In this vein Zanu-PF sought to highlight its own experience and oppose it to ‘the political immaturity, ideological bankruptcy, policy inexperience, corruption, sexual scandals and the incapacity to govern of the MDC formations whose officials have used the GPA to show their true colours by abandoning the people in pursuit of selfish interests’ (Zanu-PF, 2013).

In comparison to Zanu-PF’s campaign the MDC seemed less prepared for the 2013 elections, presenting only a 36-page manifesto. A possible indicator of the influence of the donor-reporting culture was the fact that the MDC’s Manifesto began with an
executive summary, a structure commonly associated with donor reports. The MDC’s document touted the party’s role in the successes of the GNU; these included four years of economic growth after over 10 years of collapse, ‘the reduction of inflation from 231 million per cent to less than 10%’, and the improvement in basic services including electricity and fuel supplies. The MDC credited itself with other achievements, including the resuscitation of the education system. Finally, the party underlined the passing of the new constitution with its presidential term limits and broadening of citizenship rights as indicators of its record in government (MDC, 2013). The MDC’s manifesto was certainly less detailed than Zanu-PF’s when it came to its proposed policies or their claimed benefits. The MDC proposed its JUICE economic strategy: Jobs, Upliftment, Investment Capital, Environment, which claimed that it would create 1 million jobs by 2018 and a $100 billion economy by 2040, which was certainly less ambitious than their competitor’s claim to immediately ‘unlock’ over $8 billion through indigenisation and idle assets.

Phillan Zamchiya (2016), who shadowed the MDC’s 2013 campaign as a journalist, chronicles the debate between those party technocrats who recommended launching the campaign in Masvingo Province, and Nelson Chamisa, the party’s organising secretary, who wanted to ‘send a strong signal to Zanu-PF that the MDC was ready to rout its stronghold in Mashonaland’. Chamisa’s influence had grown in the party and he won out; as a result the MDC’s campaign was launched in Rudhaka stadium in Marondera. The internal contradictions and lack of party discipline in the MDC would be a critical factor in the build-up to the 2013 elections, as 29 disgruntled MDC-T members chose to run as independent candidates in protest at the way the party ran its primaries. Tendi makes the observation that, in comparison, Zanu-PF saw only three members break rank to run as independents (The Guardian, 23 August, 2013).

The party’s rallies were reportedly as well attended as MDC rallies had been in previous elections (Zamchiya, 2014; Kondo, 2016). Tsvangirai’s message at rallies focused on the more realistic claims of providing free primary education and the creation of a million jobs in the following five years. As a testament to the increasing resonance of Zanu-PF’s ideological arguments around land reform, Tsvangirai found himself refuting the claim that he had been against the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. In a shift from the party’s position in elections since 2000, Tsvangirai
sought to nuance his position by arguing that he had been against the partisan distribution of the land and reassured resettled farmers that the MDC would not remove them from their allocated land (Zamchiya, 2013, 962).

The MDC’s candidates were poorly financed compared to Zanu-PF’s election war chest which was stocked from the diamond bonanza. Zamchiya quotes MDC officials who stated that aspiring MDC councillors were each given $100 by the party to cover campaign-related expenses, while MP candidates each received $1 400, 1 000 posters and 1 200 t-shirts. In comparison, the average Zanu-PF parliamentary candidate had up to 15 000 t-shirts to disperse in their constituencies and $10 each per day to spend on their campaign staff (Zamchiya, 2013, p. 960). The differences in campaign finance would have had an impact in a country where access to small items of patronage made a notable impact on the lives of campaign staff and voters alike. While it would have been difficult to match the campaign funds resulting from the expropriated diamonds, it is possible that given the unexpected deadline for elections, even if donors or their implementing partners had wanted to support the MDC’s 2013 campaign they would not have been able to make their funds available on time.

An observation of the MDC rallies would have indicated that the MDC were confident of victory as polling day approached. Timothy Kondo recalls in an interview in 2016 that the night before polling the party’s executive met at Tsvangirai’s home and every conversation began with the slogan ‘Tapinda Tapinda!’ (We’re in!) (Kondo, 2016).

When the results were announced on 1 August, Zanu-PF had garnered 197 seats while the MDC-T won 70 and the MDC-N won 2. Mugabe won the presidential election, having increased his share of the vote from 43.2% in 2008 to 61.09%, while Tsvangirai’s share dropped from 47.9% to 33.94% (ZESN, 2013). The outcome of the period of ‘passive revolution’ was a definitive victory for Zanu-PF at the polls and represented a blow to the counter-hegemonic movement in Zimbabwe.

**Why Zanu-PF won**

The African Union Election Observer Mission to the 2013 election made the general observation that ‘The voting and counting processes took place in a peaceful and
tranquil environment’ and that ‘voting was carried out in an atmosphere devoid of violence, harassment and disturbances’ (AU EOM, 2013). The preliminary statement cited the Electoral Commission’s failure to provide a copy of the voters roll within ‘a reasonable’ period of time. The Mission noted that the final voters roll was made public two days before the election – which was rather late for meaningful inspection and verification by voters, parties and candidates to take place. The Mission also noted that the 8.7 million ballot papers were 35% above the number of registered voters, and therefore significantly above international norms. The African Union also underlined that extremely high instances of voters were turned away, and that the high instances of assisted voters would not correspond to the country’s comparably high literacy rate, as well as the unbalanced coverage on the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (AU EOM, 2013). The Observer Mission’s preliminary statement was certainly more condemnatory than usual for the African Union. The content of the statement was overshadowed by the confrontational style of a BBC reporter questioning the AU Head of Mission, Olusegun Obasanjo, as to whether the elections had been free and fair. This would have forced the former Nigerian president to admit to having been unduly optimistic about the pre-election environment. In the conference, Obasanjo declared the elections free and fair, contrary to the statement of his own observer mission.

Despite all the above irregularities the results were barely disputed by the MDC. Tsvangirai made muted calls for mass protest but was contradicted by his party’s treasurer-general, Roy Bennet. Bennet emphasised the state’s capacity for coercion as the key reason why the MDC made no calls for mass protest, stating that ‘Anybody who goes out to protest now will get shot. It would be suicide, and who’s going to commit suicide?’ (The Guardian, August 3 2013).

The outcome of the 2013 elections and the extent of Zanu-PF victory surprised most commentators, and more importantly was a shock to the MDC. Zanu-PF’s victory in 2013 is indeed baffling. Tendi’s accounting for Zanu-PF’s victory points to the capacity for consent within Gramscian dialectic. Writing in The Guardian in the days following the election, Tendi argued:

To say that the preponderance of incumbency continued in the latest election entirely because of Zanu-PF’s obstruction and subversion of reforms would be incomplete. Tsvangirai’s party
lost sight of the need for rapid and comprehensive institutional reforms in the early years of power-sharing. It expended most of its energies in fighting for appointments to the ministry of agriculture, attorney general, central bank and provincial governors. By the time it refocused on institutional reforms, the period to elections had shortened significantly. There was little time, energy and external goodwill left for the MDC-T to pursue what should have been its main pursuits from the beginning. (The Guardian, 5 August 2013)

Raftopulous argues that Zanu-PF’s victory can be attributed to ‘Zanu-PF strategies in the context of the transformed political economy, the weaknesses in the MDC formations and the politics of the SADC, the EU and the US’ (Raftopulous, 2014, p. 979). The first cause is echoed by Chan and Gallagher and can be understood as Zanu-PF’s increasingly cogent arguments for its policies in relation to land reform, indigenisation and informal mining (Chan & Gallagher, 2017). Chan and Gallagher’s analysis of Mugabe’s victory in 2013, and as such ZANU-PF’s durability is framed around ‘conditions, characters and relationships’ (2017, p. 3). They argue that the key conditions that shaped the 2013 elections were rooted in the colonial era and ‘the fact that the ruling party and its leaders were forged through a violent anti-colonial war still shapes the rationales of government’. Chan and Gallagher (2017, p.7) infer the influence of ‘characters’ and ‘relationships’ in that Mugabe had ‘masterly control over his own party, and over political events in the country, he had huge importance in the region (evidenced in his election as president of the SADC in 2014 and of the AU in 2015) and continued to dominate and to a large extent manipulate Western policy towards his country’.

As such, their argument frames the regime’s durability in 2013 on ‘material attributes of power’ but also ‘culturalist understandings’ of power. This latter framing represents Mugabe as ‘both a nurturing/ repressive father-figure and the best embodiment of Westernised sophistication. The English language, intelligence and ability to conduct himself on the world stage are a source of pride for many Zimbabweans’. This paradox, is for Chan and Gallagher, why so many people voted for Mugabe, a man who has presided over economic ruin, political violence and misery for millions of people. And it is why they rejected a man who is widely acknowledged to be personally courageous, and who, in joining the GNU, helped stabilise a nightmarish political and economic situation, bringing some measure of order. In the end, when Zimbabweans looked at the two men running, they couldn’t see Tsvangirai as president of Zimbabwe – it wasn’t ‘thinkable’. He didn’t have the educational credentials, political sophistication, historical
embeddedness or regional standing of Mugabe. He didn’t encapsulate their idea of Zimbabwe. Mugabe, with all his complexity – his cold savagery, his brilliant rhetoric, his projection of power, and his ability to embody a new, independent, confident country – did (2013, p.15).

To admit that Zanu-PF’s policies were convincing by implication concedes that Zimbabweans chose to punish the party which had brought about some degree of normalcy to the economy – as though the populace were entirely oblivious to the Zanu-PF mismanagement which had brought about the hyperinflation of 2008. It would also imply that a very significant segment of the population was convinced by Zanu-PF’s claims of over a billion dollars in ‘idle assets’ and that indigenisation would ‘unlock’ over four billion dollars. This would also be magically ‘unlocked’ in the financial markets to produce another 29 billion dollars which Zanu-PF would be trusted to distribute to the masses. It is perhaps not implausible to hypothesise that a population devastated by a lack of hope and fed a steady diet of propaganda might succumb to the populism of Zanu-PF’s ideology. But Chan and Gallagher are probably correct to link the appeal of Caesarist leadership to a particular combination of conditions and social forces.

Derek Matyszak of the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa (2017) engages directly with Chan and Gallagher’s argument and provides a nuanced analysis of the 2013 election result combining structural and technical approaches. Matyszak questions Chan and Gallagher’s interpretation of the 47% of respondents who declined to state a preference for either political party as ‘undecided voters’ or the equivalent of swing voters in more mature democracies. Chan and Gallagher argue that ‘even those with previous party affiliations were prepared to wait and see, and judge, on performance and persuasion factors as the full term of government expired and the election commenced. In short, the 47 per cent represented an ‘everything to play for’ factor’ (2017, p. 40). Matyszak cautions that this interpretation is incorrect bearing in mind the potential for retributive violence against respondents to such opinion polling.

23The framing of Zimbabwean societal relations around the paradoxical nurturing/ repressive father figure who embodies Westernised sophistication while confronting western dominance is not new. The concept is best encapsulated in the title of Tsitsi Dangarembga’s 1988 novel Nervous Conditions. The novel takes its title from Jean Paul Sartre’s foreword to Franz Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth in which Sartre argues that the status of the African bourgeoisie is that of a nervous condition in that the ‘radical class’ which opposes colonial oppression must also mimic the language and mannerisms of the colonial oppressor.
Matyszak critiques ‘the new narrative’ that the policies of indigenisation, land reform, as well as the more relaxed policies towards artisanal mining and street vendors had sufficient mass appeal to shift 1.3 Million votes to Mugabe and Zanu-PF. While Matyszak emphasises the fact that the policies outlined in the Zanu-PF was ‘all smoke and mirrors’ given that it would be virtually impossible, even in Zimbabwe to enact a law requiring companies to get their shareholders to dispose of 51% of indigenous Zimbabweans. Matyszak also argues that the fear of losing farm land appropriated under the Fast Track Land Reform Programme or mining claims or vending spaces since 2008 may have accounted for continued support of Zanu-PF it would not account for an increase in electoral support for the party.

Using evidence from the ZESN and African Union election observer mission reports noted above, Matyszak cites the fact that there were 207 000 assisted voters in the 2013 election, a fact which does not correspond with Zimbabwe’s 96% adult literacy rate. This fact would suggest the that voters were fearful of violence should they have cast their vote for the MDC rather than Zanu-PF. Casting an assisted vote would therefore have acted as insurance that the voter had cast his or her ballot for Zanu-PF. Matyszak also highlights that the fact that 304,890 voters (accounting for 8.7%) of the electorate turned away from the polling stations supposedly due to not having been registered at those specific stations as evidence of bias in the voter registration process which would have explained the extent of the support for Mugabe in the 2013 election.

Matyszak does concede that the argument that while support for Zanu-PF may not have increased, support for Tsavangirai and the MDC decreased. One of the core reasons he cites, in concurrence with Chan and Gallagher (2013), is Morgan Tsvangirai’s tarnished image as a leader. The waning of Tsvangirai’s lustre arose from his the perception of his weakness as a leader under the GNU in which he constantly appeared to be undermined by Mugabe. Tsvangirai’s indecisiveness is underlined by Chan and Gallagher and was echoed in primary interviews for this thesis by people who considered themselves close to him including Timothy Kondo, Collen Gwiyo, and Lucia Matibenga. In addition to his perceived weak leadership Morgan Tsvangirai’s complicated love life was also a source of public disaffection as Zanu-PF capitalised on the negative perceptions in a conservative society. Additionally, the MDC’s shift from a political movement to a political party in government meant that
a number of MDC politicians felt it was ‘their time to eat’\textsuperscript{24} and the endemic corruption in MDC local councils would have discouraged former MDC supporters from voting for the party in 2013.

Certainly, the dilemmas and internal contradictions of the broad-based counter-hegemonic movement outlined in the previous chapters further consolidated when the party came into government. The first manifestation of coalition dynamics was when the MDC sought to staff their offices in the GNU, as the pool for recruitment for these key posts would come from civil society. This led to a drain of key actors from civil society while also producing a new competitive dynamic for technocratic appointments in the GNU. Pedzisayi Ruhanya, a former student activist who in 2011 was employed at the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, was critical of the co-option of CSO leadership into government roles:

\begin{quote}
The problem is that they have now formed a quasi-government NGO and [are] polluting the whole civil society. They have their own organisations and civil society that they say they are civil society when we know that they are an appendage to the party.
(Ruhanya, 2011)
\end{quote}

The poaching of civil society leadership also reflected the overlap with the donor community, as international NGOs – including the International Republic Institute and Freedom House – were the conduits for donor funding for staff in the Prime Minister’s office. Donor funding had a clear impact on policy once the party was in government; as Zhangazha (2009) notes:

\begin{quote}
There is an over-reliance on one or two individuals within the top leadership about what should happen and what shouldn’t happen and the second point is external interference both in relation to funding strategic planning, thinking, and funding on specific terms, with an intended outcome. I mean if the IRI gives you money to get your top leadership to go to another place or country for some it’s clear that they expect you come up with policies that are palatable to their interests. It comes with who is negotiating with who. And sometimes the party gets broke.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{24} An expression Matyszak borrows from Michaela Wrong’s book \textit{Our Turn to Eat} about corruption in Kenya.
The class dynamics of a movement which combined the contradictory interests of labour with those of industry leaders also became more urgent once the party was in government. In an interview in 2011, Lucia Matibenga describes the conflicts and sometimes cognitive dissonance at the core of the party:

I had a meeting this morning at which there was Eddie Cross as the policy coordinator of policy secretaries in the MDC and he was proposing a vision. And in that vision, he talks about "a free market economy"... you know. To me that’s a slap in my face. You also get to a meeting where people are like "why can’t we relax labour laws a bit and you are like, where am I? Am I in the DA in South Africa? I know I am having private fights with Morgan, and quite more openly with my cousin [Elias] Mudzuri, that you know that you are from a social democratic party and you play golf... what’s that? I'm not really talking about associating with white farmers and so on. I mean which party does not get funding from elsewhere? That will not for me qualify as a neo-liberal agenda. It’s because we have now included everybody and people have a different background and a different training. I’m not thinking profit, I'm thinking pay... but for a business person who of course was, they are also thinking profits and already these two cannot go together. (Matibenga, 2011)

Increasing internal friction had not been limited to the larger MDC faction. In February 2011 the smaller MDC faction voted to remove Arthur Mutambara as its leader and replaced him as party leader as well as delegate deputy prime minister with Welshman Ncube. Mutambara would continue to contest his party’s decision and remained deputy prime minister, with the support of Mugabe, until the end of the GNU in 2013.

Added to the above lack of coherence the period of the inclusive government showed evidence of corruption by both MDC councillors and members of parliament. As noted above, MDC members of parliament had blatantly sought to profit from the constitution-making process by renting out state vehicles for the outreach process, while the party had been forced to admit that up to 25 of its councillors had been involved in varying levels of corruption (Bulawayo24, 2012).

The reasons for the MDC’s loss were ultimately multifaceted. They depended as much on questions of coercion as they did on shifting patterns of consent, on the role of the hegemonic use of the state and the MDC’s weakening coalition with national civil society.


Conclusion

This chapter concurs with Raftopulous’ assessment of the Government of National Unity as a case of ‘passive revolution’. As described in Chapter 2, Gramsci’s concept of passive revolution refers to the coming to power of a new historical situation of counter-hegemonic struggle in which social and economic relations become static. Passive revolution is often the outcome of a war of position by the dominant classes after a war of manoeuvre by the dominated classes. In Zimbabwe’s case, the passive revolution represented by the inclusive government came about as a result of the overwhelming use of coercion to subvert the results of the 2008 elections. Heeding Gramsci’s warning, this chapter has not interpreted passive revolution as historical defeatism, that is to say, it cannot suggest that by entering the inclusive government the MDC factions were destined for defeat. There was certainly sufficient potential for reforms and strategies in the GNU which the counter-hegemonic forces could have used to bring about an overall change in the country’s power balance.

The chapter has outlined the structure of the GNU to illustrate how the counter-hegemonic parties’ inability to gain power over ministries related to state security (and therefore coercion) adversely affected the ability to bring about any conclusive change in the nature of hegemony. This particular outcome indicates the weaknesses in party negotiation strategies as they were unable to insist on control of these key coercive elements of the state.

The chapter then outlined the measures taken to bring about economic recovery. The application and impact of dollarisation have been elaborated on in order to reflect the positive impact of the multicurrency regime. This brought hyperinflation to an end and led to a return to normalcy in banking, as well as the capacity to import goods such as fuel and food items. It has been shown, however, that the adoption of the US dollar in particular has led to Zimbabwe becoming a high-cost economy for production. In addition, dollarisation has led to further de-industrialisation and the loss of more employment as Zimbabwe can no longer compete with South Africa when labour and manufacturing costs are compared. It has also been shown that due to the overwhelming control of the state bureaucracies, the governing elites in Zanu-PF have
monopolised access both to the means of accumulation and to the national political economy where the state determines access to resources. This access to the state is particularly evident in the extraction of resources from the Chiadzwa/Marange diamond fields. The chapter has shown how access to Chiadzwa diamonds brought about a shift in the economic base of the state by providing an abundant source of income and patronage for the state based bourgeoisie and the armed forces. It has also provided a means of manufacturing economic dependence by controlling access to patronage through informal mining. Finally, the Marange Diamonds created a seismic shift in the interests and policies of European nations, particularly Belgium, in relation to sanctions. This shift had the effect of relieving external pressure on Zanu-PF while reducing political and financial support for Zimbabwe’s opposition civil society, which had become entirely dependent on donor support for its functions.

The chapter continues to elaborate on the process of constitution-making as a key facet of the counter-hegemonic struggle in the country, as well as an indicator of the nature of passive revolution in the GNU period. Given that constitution-making had been a central arena of contestation throughout the counter-hegemonic struggle in Zimbabwe, the ability to manage the process of constitution-making signified a degree of progress in terms of setting the rules of the political game in the country. Constitution-making under the GNU, however, encapsulated the dilemmas of democratic counter-hegemonic struggle. Even the process of rule-setting was circumscribed by authoritarian power dynamics. This included intransigence in establishing the parameters of debate, the use of coercion to dissuade free expression, and ultimately ignoring those contributions which did not suit the hegemon’s interest. In the Zimbabwean case a compromise acceptable to the counter-hegemonic movement was made. Checks on executive and term limits were instituted, the Bill of Rights was extended by including social and economic rights as well as increasing the rights of women, an independent electoral commission was established and right to dual citizenship was enacted.

In addition, the chapter illustrated how the battle over constitution-making led to further rifts in the counter-hegemonic bloc, as segments of opposition civil society contested the process run by politicians. This episode also reflects the dependence on donor funding in Zimbabwe’s civil society, as the decision to oppose the constitution-
making process left organisations such as the NCA entirely abandoned by the donors, while other organisations such as the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Zimbabwe Election Support Network and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights were funded by multiple donors to participate in the constitution-making process in terms of content as well as observers of the outreach process.

The chapter concludes with an analysis of the build-up to the elections which Zanu-PF ultimately won, providing Robert Mugabe with another potential four-year term in office. The outcome of the election surprised most observers and commentators and has given rise to a number of hypotheses for why Zanu-PF won. Analyses of the 2013 elections concluded that Zanu-PF’s ideological positions did win over a significant segment of the population, and changes in the economic structure further entrenched a dependency on Zanu-PF patronage. However, it was the party’s manipulation of the state mechanisms of registration and coercion which ultimately led to its victory in 2013.

Raftopulous (2014) correctly situates this moment as the ‘end of an era’ in the counter-hegemonic struggle in Zimbabwe. This can be understood in the context of a changing historical bloc, as the political and economic conditions which had initially given rise to the counter-hegemonic movement changed substantially as the county’s economy became more informal and more dependent on access to patronage.

The next chapter deals with the continued weakness of organised opposition in Zimbabwe and the rise of new forms of counter-hegemonic forces. These new forces such as the Tajamuka and #ThisFlag movements used social media platforms and were more organic to the informal political economy. The next phase of Zimbabwe’s history is, however, marked by internal rifts within Zanu-PF which culminated in Mugabe’s removal via a supposedly bloodless coup d’état. The chapter will analyse these internal rifts in the hegemonic bloc and the outcome of the coup d’état in the context of previous chapters which outlined the nature of Zimbabwe’s governing class. It will be shown that the coup in 2017 reflected the predominance of coercion in the maintenance of Zanu-PF’s hegemony, as well as how the hegemonic party has been able to overcome its internal struggles while maintaining overall control of the state.
Chapter 7

New counter-hegemonic arenas and the 2017 coup

This chapter analyses the balance of hegemony and counter-hegemony after the end of the Government of National Unity and the results of the 2013 elections. The post-! 2013 period witnessed the further disintegration of the counter-hegemonic bloc as well as the rise of new counter-hegemonic forces such as the Tajamuka and #ThisFlag movements. Apart from the bourgeoning of these new forces, Zimbabwe’s history after the 2013 phase will be defined by the removal of Robert Mugabe from office via a military coup and the reconsolidation of Zanu-PF under the leadership of Emmerson Mnangagwa. The chapter begins by outlining the continued disintegration of the counter-hegemonic bloc in the MDC after 2013, leading to the departure of Tendai Biti to form his own party, the MDC-Renewal, in 2014. The growth of new protest movements in the Tajamuka and #This Flag campaign in 2016 will then be outlined to show the changes in the terrain of counter-hegemonic politics towards movements that were more organic to the post-2013 political economy and used new methods and social media tools. The chapter will then address the internal dynamics within Zanu-PF starting with the conflict between Vice-President Joice Mujuru and Emerson Mnangagwa, which then evolved into a conflict between Mnangagwa and the President’s wife Grace Mugabe. The chapter will show how internal party dynamics, which date back to the Chimurenga period as outlined in Chapter 4, were instrumental in the military coup and the removal of Mugabe in 2017. On the counter-hegemonic front, events after 2017 would be defined by the death of Morgan Tsvangirai and the turmoil within the opposition movement. This was as the internal struggles between ideological and class cleavages detailed in the previous chapters left an even more divided opposition in the build-up to the country’s first post-Mugabe elections in 2018. These events allow for an analysis of the post-2013 historical bloc and the argument that the coup of 2017 does not reflect a hegemonic change. Rather, it emphasises the nature of Zanu-PF hegemony and how elements of both coercion and consent were used in the events of November 2017 to reconsolidate the party’s control of the
country. The chapter will conclude by analysing the build-up towards the 2018 elections as a repeat of the dynamics which led to Zanu-PF’s 2013 victory, and as final evidence of the durability of Zanu-PF hegemony and the weaknesses of the counter-hegemonic movement.

The post 2013 historical bloc and a weakened counter-hegemonic movement

The period following the 2013 elections in Zimbabwe brought about a shift in counter-hegemonic politics in the state. The outcome of the election was devastating for the MDC which won 70 seats out of the 270 available parliamentary seats. At a policy dialogue held at the Southern Africa Political Economy Series Trust in Harare in March of 2014, Tendai Biti, the MDC-T’s secretary general, provided his analysis for why the MDC had lost the 2013 election. ‘I think it’s important that the democratic movement has a message. The message of No to the big man has been exhausted’ (zimbabwesituation.com, 2014). Biti continued, comparing the MDC’s manifesto to that of Zanu-PF: ‘We were selling hopes and dreams when ZANU was selling practical realities. “We (Zanu-PF) are going to give you a farm, it’s there. We (Zanu-PF) are going to give you $5000 from Kasukuwere’s Ministry”’ (ibid.). Ultimately, Biti situated the MDC’s defeat within the party’s incapacity to articulate policies that reflected the country’s crisis political economy:

We must learn from 2013, and the lesson from 2013 is that the political economy of Zimbabwe has changed dramatically. Whereas in 1999 when the MDC was formed 60 to 70 percent of the working people in Zimbabwe were in formal employment, in 2013 and 2014 84 percent of the population is in the informal sector. Whereas the MDC could be successful, formed on the basis of the structure that the labour movement had, there is hardly any formal workforce worth talking about now. The challenge with the informal sector is that it operates on prediction, it operates on patronage if you want a table at Mupedzanhamo (the flea market in Harare’s Mbare suburb), the local ZANU-PF chairperson has got to give it to you. If you want a place to dig for gold in Chegutu, some Zanu-PF official has to give you that. (ibid.)

Biti’s admission of the MDC’s failures in 2013 made bare the cracks in his party. On 27 January, Elton Mangoma, the MDC’s deputy treasurer-general, wrote a letter to
Morgan Tsvangirai in which he argued that while the outcome of the 2013 elections had been the result of electoral fraud; the leadership of the MDC ‘should be responsible and shoulder some blame for allowing that electoral fraud to take place’. Mangoma further commented:

It is my unbending resolve that leadership renewal, at this juncture, could be the only avenue to restoring the credibility of the party lest it risks being confined to history. At a time when confidence is plummeting, there is need for the MDC to freshen up, create fresh impetus and rally its troops to remain united and focused. The MDC still has a significant role to play in the democratisation process of Zimbabwe but cannot do so in its current state. With 2018 approaching, it is apparent that campaigning for the same commences promptly under a renewed leadership. There is no denial that Morgan Tsvangirai has embossed his name into the history books of this country. There is also no denial that he has played a pivotal role in Zimbabwe’s quest for democracy and socio-economic transformation. However, it is my humble submission that at this juncture, it is time you consider leaving the office of the president of the movement. 2014 marks 15 years of Morgan Tsvangirai as president of the party. You have done the best that you could and continuing will result in diminishing returns and eating into your legacy. The party is in dire need for new ideas, new thinking, a new trajectory and new stimulus.

Mangoma’s letter chastised Tsvangirai personally for having failed to bring about reforms while he had executive power, and took him to task over the perception of impropriety surrounding the purchase of his home in the affluent suburb of Highlands, his complicated personal life and the failure to abide by the party’s constitution and the evident financial corruption within the party.

The letter concluded with the demand that Tsvangirai declare his intention to step aside and that interim leadership be taken by vice-president Thokozani Khupe. This would last until the party could hold an extra-ordinary congress as the only means whereby the party could achieve its objective of ‘Acquiring state power following an electoral win in the next election. Governing democratically and bringing about real transformation in Zimbabwe.’ (Mangoma Letter 2014)
After the letter was leaked, Mangoma was set upon and assaulted by youths supporting Tsvangirai. Following the attack Tendai Biti convened a meeting of the National Council of the MDC on 26 April 2014 and issued the following statement:

Over the years, the MDC has developed tendencies and a culture that has led to the deviation from its core values. That culture has included the following: the use of violence as a way of settling disputes, corruption, disrespect of the constitution, a culture of impunity, the existence of parallel structures including a Kitchen Cabinet and vigilante groups associated with the leader. (Biti Press Statement, 26 April 2014 accessed via MDC email newsletter)

Biti was joined by nine other sitting MDC MPs in suspending Morgan Tsvangirai as the party’s chairman. The MPs joining Biti were brothers Solomon and Paul Madzore who represented Dzivarasekwa and Glen View South respectively, Moses Manyengavana of Highfield West and Willas Madzimure of Kambuzuma. They were joined by six MPs from Matebeleland, Samuel Siphepha Nkomo, Bekithemba Nyathi, Evelyn Masaiti, Watchy Sibanda, Settlement Chikwinya and Reggie Moyo (Voice of America, 29 April 2014). On 29 April 2009 Tsvangirai chaired an MDC National Council meeting comprising Thokozani Khupe, Lovemore Moyo, Senator Morgan Komichi, Tapiwa Mashakada, Nelson Chamisa, Abedinico Bhebhe, Mwonzora and Theresa Makone. They stated that Biti’s call to suspend Tsvangirai was ‘bogus, illegitimate and illegal’ and ultimately expelled Biti and his co-conspirators from the party.

The 2014 events were similar to the 2005 split in that the cleavage in the party was led by a charismatic intellectual joined by other representatives of this class within the party. The fact that representatives from Matebeleland joined the Biti split, reflected the loose bond between the counter-hegemonic leadership and political representatives of Ndebele identity, as had been the case in 2005 when Welshman Ncube (a Ndebele) had been joined by Gibson Sibanda (the former Secretary-General of the ZCTU who was also Ndebele). The Biti faction was later joined by one former trade unionist, Lucia Matibenga, who had become disgruntled under the leadership of Tsvangirai particularly during the GNU period (Matibenga, 2011). The April 2014 split notably did not include Nelson Chamisa, the former student leader who had been in Biti’s
shadow since the early days of the party’s formation; and Thokozani Khupe, the only remaining MDC MP from Matebeleland and a former trade unionist. The fracturing during this period might indicate that cleavages within the party were no longer entirely along class or tribal identities; however, Chamisa and Khupe’s status as outliers in remaining can be interpreted as having been driven by strategic ambition as both would be more likely to take over leadership of the party in Biti’s absence. Chamisa and Khupe’s presence in the party would however signify the party’s continued fissures along class and identity lines over the following four years.

Biti’s coalition would ultimately form the People’s Democratic Party which in turn would also prove to be unstable, as Elton Mangoma would depart in 2015 and Paul Madzore re-entered the MDC fold in 2016.

_Tajamuka and #ThisFlag_

After the optimism of the early GNU years, the results of the 2013 elections resulted in a lack of confidence by foreign and national investors and the economy began to see a downturn. The IMF’s Article IV report on Zimbabwe covering the year 2013 declared that the economic rebound which had seen GDP growth average 10.5% between 2009 and 2012 was officially over. According to the IMF, Zimbabwe’s poverty rate stood at 72% in 2011 while unemployment remained above 80%. Despite the latter, payment of civil service salaries accounted for 79% of the state’s projected total revenue. These economic indicators had a devastating impact on ordinary citizens, as while the country’s shops were stocked – unlike in 2008 – few people were able to afford the very basics and even government salaries were paid only intermittently.

In October 2014 Itai Dzamara, a 35-year-old journalist inspired by the Occupy Wall Street protests, hand-delivered a petition to the president’s offices in Munhumatapa buildings requesting that Mugabe step down. The petition stated: ‘we occupied Africa Unity Square today, yet again forced the state to respond, and, yet again, demonstrated our goodwill by agreeing to negotiate. We are the people! We are the numbers!’ (Nehandaradio.com October 21 2014). Dzamara’s protest at the African Unity Square attracted no more than 150 participants on its first day and for the most part remained
a solitary protest for several months. On 9 March 2015 Dzamara was abducted by assailants who fitted the profile of military intelligence agents; he was never heard from again and has been presumed dead. Dzamara’s abduction represented another key reflection of the tremendous and arbitrary power of the state.

On 14 April 2016 the MDC held the first mass protests since the stay-aways of 1998. The protest march was made up of over 2 000 MDC supporters, backed by students and trade union members, led by Morgan Tsvangirai and other MDC leaders (‘2 000 people join anti-Mugabe protest in Harare’, news.bbc.co.uk 15 April 2016). In response to the protest Zanu-PF declared that it would hold its own ‘Million Man March’ on Africa Day, 25 May.

On 16 April 2016 a Christian pastor, Evan Mawarire, posted a four-minute video to his Twitter and Facebook accounts. He began the video by stating ‘I'm not a politician; I'm not an activist... just a citizen’. Over a soundtrack of emotive music Mawarire then expressed his disappointment with how the country was falling short of what the standards represented by the colours of the national flag; agriculture, minerals, and the sacrifice of the country’s people in the liberation struggle. Mawarire’s video concluded with the statement:

This is the time that a change must happen, quit standing on the sidelines and watching this flag fly and wishing for a future that you are not at all wanting to get involved in. This flag, everyday that is flies is begging for you to say something. Its begging for you to cry out and to say why must we be in the situation that we are in. This flag, its your flag, its my flag.

The #ThisFlag video accumulated tens of thousands of views within its first day and led to hundreds of similar videos being posted echoing Mawarire’s anger and individual hopes for change. As the video grew in popularity, Mawarire used his platform to call for a week of online protest beginning on the date of Zanu-PF’s planned ‘Million Man March’. The ruling party’s planned protest on 25 May 2016 bussed in tens of thousands of supporters holding placards in support of the president, and independent newspapers reported that the event cost US$600 000. Mugabe’s speech at the event made reference to his concerns with the internal schisms within
The #ThisFlag movement can certainly be considered distinct from the previous protest movements in the country’s opposition and characterised a new counter-hegemonic phase. The social networking counter-hegemonic actions were largely unorganised and spontaneous, as young activists – including young lawyers Fadzayi Mahere and Douglas Coltart – began to appear on social media criticising the government. Mawarire, unlike previous waves of counter-hegemonic activity in the 1990s and early 2000s, was not funded by international donors. He had not been trained in the counter-hegemonic use of social media as had several other activists such as the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, which had been by funded and trained the Open Society Foundation. As a result, #ThisFlag was organic as it mushroomed from its start with an individual who had apparently decided of his own accord to make a critical video. Significantly, Mawarire was critical of both the ruling party and the opposition, and the methods he used are certainly more in keeping with the times as the use of social media globally in democratic struggles has become commonplace since the Arab Spring of 2011.

Mawarire’s #ThisFlag and the events of April and May 2016 coincided with another prominent protest in the Tajamuka/Sesjikile movement (Shona and Ndebele words for ‘We’re fed up!’). Unlike Mawarire’s seemingly impulsive protest, Tajamuka was comparable to the professionalised NGOs which had formed the MDC. It was an organisation run by young former student activists including former ZINASU President Promise Mkhwananzi. For several months the Tajamuka movement staged a protest outside the Rainbow Towers Hotel against Vice President Pekhezala Mphoko, who had been residing in the presidential suite for over eighteen months. Mkhwananzi emphasised the role of social media in creating new counter-hegemonic fronts in an interview with NPR (npr.org, ‘Can Hashtags and Pop-Up Protests Topple a Leader?’ October 21 2016), stating:

The major limitation of the opposition political parties has been that they're strait-jacketed, they're rigid. Now we have created platforms where people can operate freely, can participate
very easily. One of the major differences is the centrality of the social media in the whole equation.

On 2 July 2016 spontaneous protests turned violent at the Beitbridge border with South Africa as the government passed Statutary Instrument (SI 64/2016). This imposed measures restricting the import of a range of products including grocery items, fertilisers, building materials and some cosmetic products (www.veritaszim.net). Given that the majority of the country’s urban population makes a living from informal trading (kukhiyakhiya) these import blocks posed a serious threat to livelihoods, especially in a border town. Protestors looted a Zimbabwe Revenue Authority warehouse, setting it on fire.

The anger driving the protests against the ban on imports was heightened by public apprehension about the government’s announcement that it would soon be printing bond notes as a local surrogate currency, theoretically equivalent to the US Dollar, in a bid to deal with the country’s liquidity crisis. In a press statement issued on 4 May 2016 the Reserve Bank had announced the establishment of a US$200 million foreign exchange and export incentive facility supported by the African Export-Import Bank (RBZ Press Statement, 4 May 2016). The Reserve Bank announced that ‘in order to mitigate against capital flight, this facility shall be granted to qualifying foreign exchange earners in bond coins and notes which shall continue to operate alongside the currencies within the multi-currency system and at par with the USD’. To many the bond notes marked a stealthy return of the Zimbabwe dollar, entirely unsupported by any value. There was also the looming possibility that those in power would shortly print their own money and allow themselves to spend the virtually counterfeit paper to acquire real assets, as government functionaries had done in 2008. Busisa Moyo, the President of the Zimbabwe Confederation of Industries, had stated that following the announcement of plans to introduce the bond notes people were ‘rushing to the bank to withdraw whatever they can as the significant concern is that people’s hard-earned savings which are currently hard currency dominated may soon be changed into a denomination of soft currency’ (The Sunday Mail, 15 May 2016).
Building on the mounting popularity of the #This flag protest and spontaneous eruptions of discontent across the country, on 4 July 2016 Mawarire called for a national stay away to be held on 6 July 2016. In a more militant video that his first, Mawarire declared:

We are shutting Zimbabwe down. As citizens we are staying away from work because government has not listened to us, they take us for fools when we say zvanyanya (it’s too much). Citizens of Zimbabwe I want to invite you to do something to save our country. To the government, we are doing this not because we hate Zimbabwe but because we love this country. We love Zimbabwe to keep watching it burn and to keep watching it go down. There shall be no violence, there will be no marching, there will be no protesting in the roads…

Mawarire continued listing grievances and linked the shutdown to the Beitbridge protests.

Civil servants: you have not been paid, don’t go to work on Wednesday. This government needs to deal with corruption. Deal with the fact that you can’t just make laws. You arrested 17 people Beitbridge but you can’t arrest government officials in their offices. Enough is enough. (Video Posted to zimeye.com youtube channel 4 July 2016)

The national stay-away was publicised on social media under the hashtags #shutdownzimbabwe, #thisflag, and #tajamuka. These tags reflected the coalescence of two separate movements tied by the use of social media. While the use of hashtags to drive online conversations was a new development, calling a national stay-away reflected this use of a method of protest that had last been successfully used in 1997 when Tsvangirai was still the leader of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions.

On 6 July the country’s major urban centres were brought to a standstill as Zimbabweans stayed away from work. The protest coincided with a strike by commuter omnibus drivers which had begun two days earlier and had erupted in violence. The bus drivers’ protest was directly aimed at the police who had increasingly been setting up ad hoc road blocks to extort bribes. The stay-away also overlapped with a strike by teachers, doctors and nurses who began a strike on 5 July
protesting at unpaid wages. These strikes were organised by the Progressive Teacher’s Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) and the Zimbabwe Nurses Association (ZINA) independently from the #thisflag movement (www.dailynews.co.zw, 6 July 2016). The night after the stay-away Mawarire posted a video to his social media accounts, thanking Zimbabweans for ‘lifting their voices’. The pastor spoke against the violence which had taken place in certain parts of Harare, stating ‘we condemn violence’. As he had with the Beitbridge protests Mawarire integrated the grievances of the importers, commuter omnibus drivers, the teachers and medical workers into his video. This inclusion of broader concerns began to place Mawarire as the natural leader of a wider movement. Mawarire and the Tajamuka movement then called for follow-up stayaways on 13 and 14 July 2016.

The morning before the second attempted stayaway, Mawarire was arrested and charged with ‘inciting violence and disturbing public peace’ which the state prosecutor then changed to ‘subversion and attempts to unseat the constitutional government’ (news.bbc.co.uk, 12 July 2016). Hundreds of citizens draped in the national flag mounted a vigil outside the magistrate’s court in Harare and launched a 12-hour vigil, chanting and singing songs. Over 100 lawyers from Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights attended the hearing to offer legal assistance. Mawarire was released on 13 July after the presiding judge dismissed the case (http://www.dw.com/en/zimbabwe-activist-evan-mawarire-is-freed/a-19398879). Possibly as a result of the focus on Mawarire’s arrest, as well as the signs that the state was willing to use force against protestors, the stayaway of 13 and 14 July did not take place. The Progressive Teacher’s Union of Zimbabwe had also announced that they would not be participating in the stay-away as they had not been consulted by Mawarire and the Tajamuka movement (www.voazimbabwe.com, 12 July 2016).

Mawarire’s arrest was the zenith of the protests in 2016. Two days after his release Mawarire left the country and sought asylum in the United States of America citing his arrest and threats against his family as the justification for his application. His departure slowed the movement’s momentum. For the remainder of 2016 there were
virtually no similar protests and bond notes were introduced in November of that year, with no resistance.

In Gramscian terms the spontaneous counter-hegemonic actions of 2016 oscillated between the actions of a war of position and those of a war of manoeuvre. The actions can be understood as a war of position in that activities began on social media, including Mawarire’s original video and his calls for a week of online activism. Hashtag protests are certainly on the terrain of war of position but manage to integrate the capacity to inform with outward protest. Virtual actions on the terrain of ideologies/superstructure/consent managed to galvanise spontaneous public protests on the streets over material issues and events. These included the vice president’s prolonged stay at the luxury Rainbow Towers, unpaid doctor and teacher salaries, import restrictions and the fear of a return to the mass printing of currency and resultant hyperinflation. The hashtags translated into a war of manoeuvre as a frontal assault on hegemonic power through the stay-away of 6 July. After Mawarire’s arrest and departure from the country, the war of manoeuvre was not sustained and remained unorganised, so it could therefore not make any decisive impact on the balance of power.

The convulsions of the new opposition fronts from April to August 2016 overshadowed two other major events which would affect the counter-hegemonic as well as the hegemonic forces. In June 2016 it was announced that Morgan Tsvangirai had been diagnosed with colon cancer. Tsvangirai declared that he would remain the leader of the party and would not appoint a successor.

More important changes were occurring within the space of Zanu-PF as the hegemonic force. On 21 July 2016 war veterans from the country’s ten provinces, including all Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association district chairpersons, met to discuss the country’s economic and political crises. Issuing a communique after their meeting the leadership of the ZNLWA declared:

The ZANU (PF) Party Leadership has dismally failed to use the resounding mandate given to it in the 2013 general election, to address the economic problems that have beset our great
nation since independence from British rule. We note, with concern, shock and dismay, the systematic entrenchment of dictatorial tendencies, personified by the President and his cohorts, which have slowly devoured the values of the liberation struggle in utter disregard of the Constitution, as demonstrated by the deliberate neglect and abandonment, by the Party President, of the masses, who are the foundation upon which the liberation war was fought and won, and who have, thereby, become the bedrock of the Party. Suddenly, ideologically bankrupt million-man marches are being organized in honour of bankrupt leadership! The same leadership has failed to address the bread and butter issues. (ZNLWVA communique published on theindependent.co.zw, 22 July 2016)

Underlining the importance of the role of history in the formation of hegemonic power in Zimbabwe, and, intriguingly, in a significant re-scripting of the “patriotic” historical narrative that Zanu-PF had been propagating for the last decade, the communiqué referenced Mugabe’s release from prison as the result of the war effort rather than the sympathy of his jailers. Referring to the prison coup which made Mugabe President of Zanu the communiqué stated: ‘He was not the President of the Party ZANU (PF), but we made him so, thinking he was one of us. Our decision to make him the President of ZANU (PF) was accepted here at home, regionally by the Front-line States, and internationally’ (ibid.).

The communiqué then listed a number of scandals including the looting of the Chiadzwa diamonds which it blamed entirely on Mugabe and his cabal who had ‘absolutely no clue as to the difference between public funds earned from taxation of the people, and private individual income’ (ibid.). The ZNLWVA then made reference to the moniker for the competing political factions within Zanu-PF. The first was the G40 which represented Mugabe, his immediate family and other Zezuru leadership including Minister of Home Affairs Ignatius Chombo, Minister of Youth and Indigenisation Saviour Kasukuwere and the Police Commissioner General Augustine Chiwuri. The second faction was known as the Lacoste, referencing the French brand’s use of a crocodile which happened to be the nickname for Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa and his military leadership, which included Army General Constantine Chiwenga and Airforce General Perence Shiri.

The communiqué concluded with the declaration:

we the veterans of Zimbabwe’s war of liberation, together with our toiling masses, hereby declare that henceforth, in any forthcoming elections, will not support such a leader who has
presided over untold suffering of ‘the general population for his own personal aggrandizement and that of his cronies’. (ibid.)

The declaration marked the beginning of the end of party unity and of Mugabe’s leadership of the hegemonic bloc.

The Gramscian methodology allows for an analysis which posits such internal, internecine conflict in the identities and histories of a particular movement or bloc while maintaining the overarching realities of the national political economy. Certainly, the material experience of economic crisis resulting from the actions of a kleptocratic governing class were driving actions from the entire society; this external pressure would ultimately force the hegemonic bloc to split in order to maintain its power.

**Fractures in the hegemonic bloc**

The fracturing of Zanu-PF into the G40 and Lacoste factions can be traced to the removal of Joice Mujuru as vice president in December 2014. Joice Mujuru, a liberation war veteran who had risen through the politburo and cabinet and had been appointed as vice president in 2004 following the death of Simon Muzenda (Bratton, 2016, p. 176). Mujuru’s power was seen as deriving from her husband Solomon Mujuru, the former commander of the Zimbabwe National Army and business magnate who was also known under his guerrilla nom de guerre Rex Nhongo (Mandaza, 2011, 2018). Joice Mujuru’s rise to the vice presidency in 2004 had placed her in line for the presidency according to Amendment 18 of the national Constitution.

Mujuru’s interests had clashed with those of Emmerson Mnangagwa after the latter’s role in the Tsholotsho plot in 2004. As noted in Chapter 6, the declaration of the Tsholotsho plot had sought to redress a perceived Zezuru primacy within the leadership of Zanu-PF by establishing an ethnic and regional balance between all four ethnic groups. The writers of the declaration understood this to mean Karanga, Manyika, Zezuru and Ndebele in the party’s four top leadership positions, ensuring a
rotation of the party’s presidency (Moyo, 2004). Mnangagwa’s attempt to secure leadership for himself as the prominent Karanga leadership candidate was exposed, apparently through Mujuru’s connections in the Central Intelligence Organisation. Mnangagwa’s ambitions also reflected the interests within the military structures, including General Constantine Chiwenga who sought a civilian proxy (Bratton, 2016, p. 176; Mandaza, 2018). While Mnangagwa and the other 2004 plotters had been ejected from the party each made their way back into Mugabe’s good graces over the following five years. Among these was Jonathan Moyo who had been rejected in 2004 but redeemed himself and once again became party’s chief ideologue during the 2008 election. Moyo had developed a pattern of being a political mercenary and supported Grace Mugabe and her G40 faction from 2016 onwards. Jacob Mudenda had been the governor for Matabeleland North and had re-entered the political fray as an MP and speaker of parliament after the 2013 election. Mnangagwa re-established himself within Zanu-PF during the 2008 elections where his ruthlessness and organisational skills were important to the party in retaining power. The factional conflict crystallised in August 2011 when Solomon Mujuru was killed in a suspicious fire in his home. Her husband’s death weakened Joice Mujuru’s support within the security forces and reduced any potential protection she may have expected from them.

Mnangagwa’s interests began to coincide with those of First Lady Grace Mugabe in 2014. Robert Mugabe maintained a degree of power in his refusal to name either Mujuru or Mnangagwa as his successor. The Mugabe family, Grace Mugabe, her children and the increasingly large patronage network that had arisen around her, began to require a degree of reassurance that she and her network would be somehow protected in the increasingly likely demise of the aged president. The campaign to make Grace Mugabe relevant included the bestowal of a doctorate in sociology from the University of Zimbabwe. This can also be understood as her ordination into the traditional corps of intellectuals as a prerequisite for her entry into political life. Once Grace Mugabe had received her doctorate she was in a position to accede to political power.

In the build-up to the 2014 Zanu-PF congress a campaign carried out by Information Minister Jonathan Moyo and First Lady Grace Mugabe began to accuse Mujuru of corruption and of attempting to assassinate the president. By 4 December 2014 Mujuru
had been ousted from her position in the politburo and her position as vice president. As the ruling party’s mouthpiece, the *Herald* reported on Mujuru’s removal:

Over the past few weeks, serious allegations of high level corruption and abuse of office have been raised against Dr Mujuru manifest in extorting shareholding from companies, demanding 10 percent bribes, illicit dealings in diamonds and gold, attempting to defeat the course of justice, extorting investors, undermining the authority of the President and seeking to depose him through unconstitutional means, among them a plot to assassinate him. (*herald.co.zw* 4 December 2014)

Eight other members of cabinet were also ejected along with Mujuru in the December 2014 purge; these included Didymus Mutasa, Webster Shamu, Francis Nhema, Olivia Muchena, Dzikamai Mavhaire, Nicholas Goche, Simbaneuta Mudarikwa and Munacho Mutezo. Many of them had been permanent fixtures in the cabinet since independence.

When the party’s congress was held between 2 and 7 December 2016 the removal of Mujuru and the ascendance of Grace Mugabe to political relevance was the central theme. The resolutions of the congress stated that Grace Mugabe showed revolutionary skill and courageous leadership when she nipped in the bud the scheme of the cabal of counter-revolutionaries and quislings…

[The Party] further salutes the First Lady Cde. Dr Grace Mugabe, for her bold, forthright and refreshing candour in timely exposing the rot that had set in the Party and the national body politic as a result of the corrupt and treasonous actions of Vice President Mujuru and her cabal of counter-revolutionaries and quislings. (Resolutions of the Zanu-PF 6th National Congress, published on *sundaymail.co.zw*, 7 December 2017)

By the end of the Congress, Grace Mugabe had been appointed chairlady of the party’s women’s league after the incumbent, Oppah Muchinguri had stepped aside to allow the first lady to take the position. Mngagagwa was appointed to the vice-presidential position vacated by Mujuru on 10 December 2014.
The coalition between Grace Mugabe and Mnangagwa was short-lived. This may have been the result of Grace Mugabe having lost a degree of political relevance for Mnangagwa when he was officially in line to become the president. Another possible reason would be the resilience of tribal identities which provided political protection in moments of insecurity, as the party’s multiple purges had shown.

For her part, Grace Mugabe became more politically vocal once she became chair of the party’s Women’s League. Her patronage network had grown significantly and there were more reports of her distribution of rents in the form of groceries, which she would admit had been confiscated by the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (video of Grace Mugabe on povonews.co.zw twitter feed (https://twitter.com/povonewsafrica/status/83318145229541890). When it was alleged that a pipe bomb had been discovered at Mugabe’s dairy farm the first lady became more open and frantic in her criticism of Mnangagwa, openly asserting that since she had put him in the position of vice president she could also remove him (http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/02/the-strange-case-of-grace-mugabes-dairy-farm-and-brandy-bottle-bombs/).

By 2016 reports of the factions in the ruling party emphasised Mnangagwa’s ambition, however silent, as verging on treason. A major shift came about with the declaration in July 2016 by the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association that they would not be supporting a Mugabe candidacy in 2018, when he would be 95 years old. The declaration was interpreted as an implicit endorsement of Mnangagwa and certainly a criticism of Grace Mugabe who had no liberation war credentials; and referred to her personal greed.

As a liberation war veteran himself, Mnangagwa was able to maintain his relationship with the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans particularly through the leadership of the veterans’ association chairperson, Christopher Mutsvangwa. Mnangagwa had joined ZAPU in 1962 as a guerrilla fighter to train in Tanzania. According to Chung (2013) Mnangagwa was court-marchalled and sentenced to death by a tribunal led by Dumiso Dabengwa in 1962 for criticising Joshua Nkomo. His life was spared by Leopold Takawira and Simon Muzenda, both of whom were Karanga
and with whom he joined ZANU in 1963. After his training at Nanking Military Academy he was involved in one of the first battles of the Second Chimurenga as a member of the Crocodile Gang. His membership of this guerrilla unit would earn him the nickname the Crocodile. Mnangagwa was arrested for his role in blowing up a train in Masvingo and only escaped the mandatory death penalty because he was deemed to be under-age. He was sentenced instead to 10 years in prison. Upon his released from prison he went on to study for a law degree at the University of Zambia. He returned to the liberation struggle in 1976 as a ZANU headquarters advisor to Robert Mugabe in Maputo, in Mozambique (Chan, 2013, p. 64). Following independence, he held positions as minister for justice, minister for defence as well as a period as speaker of parliament and a minister without portfolio appointed by the president. He had therefore been inside the Zanu-PF inner circle for close to 50 years. Mnangagwa had also developed a reputation for tremendous cruelty as he was complicit in the Gukurahundi massacres in the 1980s and had been instrumental in the election violence of 2008. His power was certainly more reliant on the fear of coercion than Grace Mugabe’s power which relied more on her patronage system. Mnangagwa was heavily involved in the profiting from the war in the DRC in the late 1990s, and in this regard, he is typical of the Zimbabwean governing class who came to enrich themselves through access to the state. However much in the line of succession Mnangagwa may have been, Zanu-PF’s obsessive hierarchy and party discipline had forced him to apologise in December 2016 after a photograph was taken of him holding a Mug which read ‘I am the Boss’ (allafrica.com).

It is necessary to address the key Gramscian political economic indicators of class interest in this internal shift. While both the Zanu-PF factions originated in state-based bourgeoisie, the opposition between the factions was based on narrow material interests, distrust and a fear that either (loosely tribal) faction might sever the other’s connection to enrichment and patronage through the state. An important factor of the political economy of Zimbabwe’s crisis is the cross-generational role of the governing class and their access to the means of production. The economic downturn of the economy in the years preceding 2008 and then the final collapse of that year provided this class with more opportunity to enrich themselves. When the lack of access to foreign currency and the hyperinflation of this period combined with the almost total
lack of goods in the country, those who had access to cash through their political influence at banks were able to prey upon desperate Zimbabweans who were selling off assets of any form in order to make ends meet or just to afford food. A new section of the kleptocratic governing class emerged through access to hard currency. These newer predatory members of the governing class were therefore able to profit from buying from the very desperate and eventually selling off assets to whoever had access to stable foreign currency. They were also in a position to import desperately needed goods at exploitative mark-ups. This class included the members of the Zanu-PF hierarchy but also their children, many of whom had been evicted from western countries where they had been studying. The children of these Zanu-PF leaders were also often the beneficiaries of the land reform process; however, without title deeds and with the collapse of the banking system access to credit was all but impossible. These young men and women who had appropriated the farms of their cohorts at private schools were essentially little more than glorified farm managers as they inhabited commercial farms which they had neither the means nor the expertise to manage. Interestingly, this class of first-generation Zanu-PF descendants have a very tenuous relationship with the class upon whose loyalty and coercive capacity they are entirely dependent. Having been raised as part of the country’s growing governing bourgeoisie they were educated mainly in the country’s private schools, usually with a majority of white students, many of whose farms they would come to appropriate. This weak connection between the governing class and the coercive arms of the state is certainly a weak link in the bourgeois elements of the ruling party’s grip on power. It generally reflected the split between the younger G40 segments and the established military bourgeoisie in Mnangagwa’s Lacoste faction. These inter-class fractures overlapped with tribal identities only because of the historical Karanga dominance in the military, while the Zezuru factions surrounding Mugabe had taken over the police force and the intelligence services.

This factionalism, then was the effect of a mixture of institutional, generational, class and ethnic considerations combining to fragment top-echelons of the Zanu-PF political community. Were these tensions, though, more than simply factional; did they have an ideological dimension, pointing to even varying conceptions of a hegemonomic project? It is very difficult to identify evidence that would support a definitive
argument in this direction. It is of course likely that the G40 group though supposedly aligned with the Presidential Guard, the police and the leadership of Central Intelligence might have been less reflexively dependent on or willing deploy armed violence than the heavily militarised Lacoste faction (Moore, 2018, p. 9-10). As Moore points, out even if police loyalty had been guaranteed, they would hardly have been “a reliable partner in a contest with a very good military force” (Moore, 2018 p. 11). This shortcoming might have placed them on a slightly different point along that spectrum of coercion and consent that any hegemonic project must incorporate. But that is a long way from the factions actually each representing different positions respect to ideology or any re-envisioning of a future Zimbabwe. To be sure researchers in post-coup Zimbabwe could find plenty of street informants to tell them that “Grace Mugabe and Jonathan Moyo” were “moles”, intent on “decompos[ing] ZANU PF and destroying it from within” but evidence of such motivations has yet to emerge (Chirume, et al. 2018, 43-1, p. 81). This was of course a reflection of the justificatory language for the coup used by the military command who claimed they were acting to reclaim the nation from “counter-revolutionaries” (Rutherford, 2018, p. 53).

**November 2017 coup d’état**

In September 2017 Grace Mugabe had escaped South Africa before criminal charges had been laid against her for assaulting a young female companion of her sons, Robert Junior and Belarmin. It had certainly become clear by this point that she would not be the face of her faction’s leadership, and rumours within Zanu-PF circles began to circulate that former defence minister Sidney Sekeramyi would probably be the G40 candidate for vice president.

In August of that year, Emmerson Mnangagwa had reportedly fallen ill at a rally and had to be airlifted to South Africa. The vice president then claimed he had been deliberately poisoned, insinuating that the act had been perpetrated by the G40.

Addressing the accusation at a rally in a speech which was widely shared on social media, the first lady asked: ‘Why should I kill Mnangagwa? Who is Mnangagwa on this earth? Killing someone who was given a job by my husband? That is nonsensical’. Mrs. Mugabe then told the crowds ‘we are being threatened day and night that if [this
one does not become president, we will kill you’ (theguardian.com, 6 October 2017). Grace Mugabe was certainly aware of the implications of openly declaring a coup attempt and thus fell short of disclosing the origins of this supposed threat. To openly accuse Mnangagwa of a coup attempt would have thrown down the gauntlet in an open confrontation, as such an accusation would have necessitated that Mnangagwa be immediately arrested and charged with treason.

By November recriminations between the first lady and the vice president had come out into the open. While President Mugabe had remained above the fray of the internal squabbles, he began to criticise Mnangagwa after Grace Mugabe was booed by the crowd at a rally for Zanu-PF youths in Bulawayo on 4 November. Speaking mostly in Shona and appearing to address Mnangagwa who sat behind him, Mugabe declared:

We don’t beg anyone to be part of our party. We are going towards congress. That is where we will decide a lot of things. Those of you who see yourselves as the members of the party from Masvingo: you can go and form your own party. We can’t have you insulting us, day in day out. What do you think you are? (video of the youth rally posted at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Fp2s5GZgA8)

Once the president’s intentions to remove Mnangagwa became clear, the stakes of the simmering resentment between the factions were heightened. On 6 November 2018 in a statement read by the minister for information Simon Khaya Moyo, it was announced that the president was firing Mnangagwa as vice president. The statement read:

It had become evident that his conduct in the discharge of his duties had become inconsistent with his official responsibilities. The Vice President has consistently and persistently exhibited traits of disloyalty, disrespect, deceitfulness and unreliability. He has also demonstrated little probity in the execution of his duties. (https://www.herald.co.zw/breaking-ed-mnangagwa-fired/)

Mnangagwa issued his own statement and fled to South Africa. In it he declared:

I voluntarily left Zambia to join the Liberation struggle in Mozambique in 1976 where I was assigned as the Special Assistant to the President, Cde R.C. Mugabe. This role was reconfirmed at the Chimoio Congress in 1977. I have been very close to the President ever since. Our relationship has over the years blossomed beyond that of master and servant but to
father and son. My mouth has never uttered a single foul word against the President nor have I ever contemplated bringing him harm in any way. I therefore find it preposterous that any sane person can lyrically direct such accusations towards me. Of late, I have been vilified beyond measure. My service to the party and government of Zimbabwe and my public and private posture towards my boss are well known. No amount of lies and convoluted thinking can diminish my loyalty to my party and the President. I have never appointed or surrogated myself in any position in the Party or in Government. I remain firm and resolute against those who plunder public funds and are used by foreign countries to destabilize the Party. These same people are brazenly protected in public by the First Lady thereby making a mockery of our public institutions. I stand prepared, once again, to pay the ultimate price in defence of Zimbabwe.

The ousted vice-president ended the statement vowing to return to Zimbabwe: ‘I will be communicating with you soon and shall return to Zimbabwe to lead you. PAMBERI NE ZANU-PF!!!! PAMBERI NE ORIGINAL ZANU-PF!!! PASI NE G40’.

On 13 November 2017 the commander of the defence forces, General Constantine Chiwenga, called a press conference. Flanked by commanders of the various branches of the military he emphasised the military’s role in defending the ‘gains of the liberation struggle’. While in uniform Chiwenga spoke from the position of the defender of Zanu-PF’s legacy rather than that of the state. Endorsing the patriotic history refrain of Zanu-PF which cast national disputes as being driven by external colonial interests, the general warned of ‘the revolution being hijacked by agents of our erstwhile enemies who are now at the brink of returning our country to foreign domination against which so many of our people perished’. Chiwenga then claimed that ‘the current purging and cleansing process in Zanu-PF which so far is targeting mostly members associated with our liberation history is a serious cause for concern to us in the Defence Forces’. The foregoing reflected the general historical interconnection between ideology and coercion present in the reality of the Zimbabwe defence forces, this time casting themselves as protectors of the revolution and ultimately the party.
Emphasising the party’s history in dealing with internal dissent through violence, Chiwenga argued:

Our revolutionary path is replete with conduct and rebellion by people who have attempted to destroy the revolution from within. The formation of FROLIZI, the attempt to remove the late Cde Chitepo from his position of Chairman at the Mumbwa bogus Congress in 1973, the Nhari-Badza rebellion, Ndabaningi Sithole rebellion soon after the death of Cde Chitepo, the Vashandi 1 and 2 as well as the rebellion that led to the death of the late ZIPRA Commander, Cde Alfred Nikita Mangena, among others are cases in point. Therefore, the current shenanigans by people who do not share the same liberation history of Zanu-PF Party are not a surprise to us. (ibid.)

This reminder was evidently issued as a threat, and by blaming ‘people who do not share the same liberation history’, Chiwenga was identifying Grace Mugabe and her young coterie.

The military’s statement was undoubtedly cautious of falling foul of SADC and African Union conventions on unconstitutional take-overs of power. The statement attempted to present their somewhat contradictory situation as that of the military representing the revolutionary party rather than the nation and therefore of managing an internal party dispute as opposed to staging a coup. Attempting to thread the needle in this case the statement added ‘standing political virtues are a product of faithful adherence to the founding values, decorum, discipline and revolutionary protocol’.

In somewhat circuitous logic and departing from the above casting of the crisis as an internal party squabble, the statement then warned of the experiences of countries such as Somalia, DRC, Central Africa Republic and many others in the region where minor political differences degenerated into serious conflict that had decimated the social, political and economic security of ordinary people.

Citing ‘Section 212 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe mandates the Zimbabwe Defence Forces to protect Zimbabwe, its people, its national security and interests and its territorial integrity and to uphold this Constitution’, the military’s statement then casts ‘the reckless utterances by politicians denigrating the military which are causing
despondency within the rank and file’ as a threat to national security and therefore a potential cause for military intervention in party affairs.

Concluding by tempering the threats of a coup implied in the statement, the general read:

There is only one Commander-in-Chief, His Excellency, The President, Head of State and Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, Cde R. G. Mugabe. The military in an institution whose roles cut across the wider spectrum of Government support functions in the form of Military Aid to Civil Power and Military Aid to Civil Ministries, which are roles derived from Defence Instruments. Therefore, we want to state here and now that the history of our revolution cannot be rewritten by those who have not been part of it. (ibid.)

The statement reflects how the history of the party and its power dynamics continued to influence Zanu-PF’s rule. In addition, it shows how exhibitions of coercive power are inseparably tied up with ideological concepts in the party’s national hegemony, as was as the military’s internal control over the party.

On 14 November 2017, images of armoured personnel carriers on the roads outside Harare began to circulate on social media. The images triggered rumours of a coup though no other evidence of a military take-over had become evident. It was not until the evening of 15 November that Major General SB Moyo of the Zimbabwe National Army appeared on Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation TV and read the following statement:

Firstly, we wish to assure the nation that His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and commander-in-chief of Zimbabwe Defence Forces, Comrade RG Mugabe, and his family are safe and sound and their security is guaranteed. We are only targeting criminals around him who are committing crimes that are causing social and economic suffering in the country in order to bring them to justice.

As with the statement of the 13 November, the military sought to cast their intervention as anything but a coup: ‘As soon as we have accomplished our mission, we expect that the situation will return to normalcy’. The statement then reassured the civil service,
the judiciary, the legislative branch and the general citizenry as well as the international community that the action was ‘not a military takeover of government. What the Zimbabwe Defence Forces is actually doing is to pacify a degenerating political, social and economic situation in our country, which if not addressed may result in a violent conflict’.

If any further indication was needed that the locus of hegemony in the conjunctural moment lay only in within the space of hegemonic bloc, Morgan Tsvangirai called for a conference on 16 November 2017. Tsvangirai stated that his party appreciated ‘the assurances and the commitment to peace and the sanctity of human life by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, including respect for citizens’ fundamental rights’ (nehandaradio.com, 16 November 2017). The fact that since its inception the MDC had suffered grievously under the actions of the military yet was forced to make this calculated statement that it trusted the Zimbabwean military’s respect for fundamental human rights, is quite telling. Tsvangirai continued that it was in the interest of the people that ‘Mr. Robert Mugabe step down immediately in line with the national expectation and sentiment, taking full regard of his legacy and contribution to Zimbabwe pre and post-independence’ (ibid.). That a party which had stood in opposition to Mugabe would deem it necessary to praise Mugabe’s legacy while demanding his resignation was also a testament to the ideological power of the Zanu-PF’s cultural hegemony. It also indicated the extent to which Zanu-PF controlled Zimbabwe’s narratives in what Gramsci refers to as hegemonic common sense.

The MDC’s statement made a call for ‘a negotiated, all-inclusive transitional mechanism’ and for ‘comprehensive reforms for a free, fair and credible election to be held upon the full implementation of all reforms’. It ended with the apparently unnecessary threat to SADC ‘to our neighbours, you now all know the simple choice you face; either support our rights or our refugees’ (ibid.).

On 18 November thousands of Zimbabweans came out on the streets waving national flags, cheering the military and demanding that Mugabe step down. The following day Mugabe appeared on national television and was expected to announce his resignation. Flanked by the various heads of all branches of the security forces, the president read
a statement in which he disclosed that a meeting between Mugabe and the security forces had been mediated by the Catholic priest Fidelis Mukonori.

Mugabe stated that the meeting with the command element underscored the need to collectively start processes to return the nation to normalcy. Seemingly unaware of the anger of the general populace, Mugabe continued:

if there is any one observation we have made and drawn from events of the past week it is the unshakeable pedestal upon which rests our state of peace, law and order amply indicating that as Zimbabweans we are generally a peaceably disposed people with a givenness to expressing our grievances and resolving our differences by ourselves and with a level of dignity, discipline and restraint so rare to many other nations. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODfDvOc1i54)

Mugabe’s speech successfully indicated that the operations of the previous week had not been a coup, describing the ‘strong sense of collegiality and comradeship now binding the various arms of our security establishment’. As the speech continued for twenty minutes it began to appear that Mugabe was not announcing his resignation:

The way forward therefore is not swapping vying cliques that ride roughshod over party rules and procedures, there has to be a net return to the guiding principles to its constitution which must apply fairly and equitably in all situations and before all members. The era of victimisation and arbitrary decisions must be put behind. There must be a recognition that Zanu-PF is a party of traditions and has been served by successive generations who are bound together by shared ideals and values which must continue to reign supreme in our nations. Hence our intergenerational conflict must be harmonised through a melding of old established players as they embrace and welcome new rules through a well- defined sense of hierarchy and succession. Indeed, all these matters will be discussed and settled at the forthcoming congress within the framework of a clear roadmap which seeks to resolve once and for all any omissions which have affected our party negatively. (ibid.)

Mugabe concluded his speech by stating:

The congress is due in a few weeks from now. I will preside over its processes which must not be prepossessed by any acts calculated to undermine it or to compromise the outcomes in the eyes of the public. We cannot be guided by bitterness or vengefulness, both of which would
not make us any better party members or any better Zimbabweans. Our hallowed policy of reconciliation which we announced in 1980 and through which we reached out to those who had occupied and oppressed us for nearly a century and those we had traded fire with in a bitter war surely cannot be unavailable to our own both in the party and in our nation. We must learn to forgive and resolved contradictions in a comradely Zimbabwean spirit. (ibid.)

In an aside, Mugabe spoke to the military brass sitting behind him in Shona saying ‘Sorry, one or two places, ndambonzvengama’, admitting that he had skipped sections of the speech. This led to speculation that the document had been switched at the last moment.

It appeared that Mugabe’s instinct in this case was to emphasise the primacy of hierarchy. This in turn reflects his long history of using passive revolution as a tool managing external conflicts in which the power dynamic of a negotiated settlement would often have led to his opponents accepting less than optimal conditions. He would then have been able to manage a situation of passive revolution from a position of superiority, as had been the case with the Unity Accord with ZAPU and the Government of National Unity in 2008. The difference in 2017 was that the coercive element lay with the military and Mnangagwa, and Mugabe was therefore powerless in the coercive sense.

Mugabe’s defiance was ultimately short-lived as the next day Zanu-PF members of parliament tabled a motion for impeachment for 22 November. While impeachment proceedings were brought before parliament a letter of resignation was handed to Jacob Mudenda, the speaker of parliament. The letter itself was short:

Following my verbal communication with the Speaker of the National Assembly, Advocate Jacob Mudenda at 13:53 hours, 21st November, 2017 intimating my intention to resign as the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, I, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, in terms of Section 96, Sub-Section 1 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, hereby formally tender my resignation as the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe with immediate effect.

25 The Shona word here translates to: sneaking past
My decision to resign is voluntary on my part and arises from my concern for the welfare of the people of Zimbabwe and my desire to ensure a smooth, peaceful and non-violent transfer of power that underpins national security, peace and stability.

Kindly give public notice of my resignation as soon as possible as required by Section 96, Sub-Section 1 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

Yours faithfully,
Robert Gabriel Mugabe,
President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

Spontaneous celebrations erupted across the country as joyous scenes of Zimbabweans on the street were broadcast across the world.

The SADC secretariat issued a statement on its website:

The Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) commends His Excellency, President Robert Gabriel Mugabe, for his bold decision to step down from his position of Head of State of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and his lifetime commitment to serving Zimbabwe and the SADC region.

The African Union issued a similar statement:

Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, welcomes the decision by President Robert Mugabe to step down from his position as Head of State following a lifetime of service to the Zimbabwean nation. President Mugabe will be remembered as a fearless pan-Africanist liberation fighter, and the father of the independent Zimbabwean nation. Today’s decision will go down in history as an act of statesmanship that can only bolster President Mugabe’s political legacy.
Emmerson Mnangagwa returned to Zimbabwe from his brief exile in South Africa as the Zanu-PF nominee for the position of president and was inaugurated on 24 November at the National Sports Stadium in Harare.

In his inauguration speech Mnangagwa began by extending an olive branch to Mugabe (published on thechronicle.co.zw, 24 November 2017):

Let me at this stage pay special tribute to one of, and the only surviving father of our nation, Cde Robert Gabriel Mugabe. He led us in the struggle for national independence and assumed responsibilities of leadership at the formative and very challenging time in the birth of our nation. That is to be lauded and celebrated for all times.

Whatever errors of commission or omission that might have occurred during that critical phase in the life of our nation, let us all accept and acknowledge his immense contribution towards the building of our nation. (ibid.)

Striking a different tone to that of his often-belligerent predecessor, Mnangagwa declared:

For close to two decades now, this country went through many developments… We must accept that our challenges emanate in part from the manner which we managed our politics, both nationally and internationally, leading to circumstances in which our country has undeservedly been perceived as a pariah state (ibid.).

Mnangagwa did however emphasise the primacy and irreversibility of Zimbabwe’s land reform:

We wish the rest of the world to understand and appreciate that policies and programmes related to land reform were inevitable. Whilst there is a lot we may need to do by way of outcomes, the principle of repossessing our land cannot be challenged or reversed (ibid.).

Treading a new path, however, Mnangagwa declared that:

Government is committed to compensating those farmers from whom land was taken, in terms of laws of the land. As we go into the future complex issues of land tenure will have to be addressed both urgently and definitely, in order to ensure finality and closure to the ownership
and management of this key resource which is central to national stability and to sustained economic recovery (ibid.).

In a signal to international investors he stated that:

All foreign investments will be safe in our country and we will fully abide by the terms of Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements which we have concluded with a number of nations (ibid.).

In his conclusion the newly inaugurated president referred to elections in 2018:

I encourage all of us to remain peaceful, even as preparations for political contestations for next year’s harmonised elections gather momentum. The task before us is much bigger than competing for political life (ibid.).

In short, Mnangagwa hoped that economic recovery and a selection set of political concessions during the upcoming electoral season might re-consolidate “domestic legitimacy” (Beardsworth, et al. 2019). At least one seasoned observer viewed these sentiments as a self-conscious “distancing” from Mugabe’s regime, even a “shift in vision”, albeit if only a “stated” change (ICG, 2018)

During the honeymoon after Mnangagwa’s ascendance, positive albeit symbolic measures were taken including reducing the size of the famously large presidential motorcade. In the first weeks of December 2017 international investors deployed political risk advisors to Zimbabwe to assess the new dispensation. The exclusive, subscription-only journal Africa Confidential effused: ‘The good news is relentless. Each week another wide-eyed foreign investor pitches up in Harare [and] meets President Emmerson ‘Open for Business’ Mnangagwa, then pledges to pour tens of millions of dollars into the country's rich geological resources’ (Africa Confidential, 20 April 2018). With the belligerence of the Mugabe years over and Zimbabwe open for business, the country’s state-based bourgeoisie was set to re-engage with global capital as it had prior to the land reform in 2000.

To cast the events of late 2017 into the Gramscian framework which this thesis uses it would be important to ask if the coup d’état of 2017 reflected a hegemonic change in
the country. The answer to this would surely be, no. The coup reflected the continued dominance by the hegemonic bloc as a state based bureaucratic and military bourgeoisie. When Mnangagwa announced his cabinet on 1 December 2017 it was composed entirely of individuals who had been in previous cabinets under Mugabe, with the addition of Major SB Moyo (who had read the televised declaration on 15 November as minister foreign affairs) and the appointment General Constantino Chiwenga as the new vice president next in line to Mnangagwa – unconstitutionally he retained his military rank. In addition to Chiwenga and Moyo’s placements there has been further advance of top military figures adding to their already extensive portfolios in agriculture, mining and parastatals, “further enmeshing themselves in key areas of economic activity” (Beardsworth et al. 2019, p. 17). The military are increasingly visible in the protocol surrounding the presidency; the substitution of soldiers for the policemen who used to serve Mugabe as his close protection officers has been interpreted by one Zimbabwean observer as “a less-the-subtle a statement about the power behind the president” (Magaisa, 2019).

The discourse of the coup as seen in the speeches of all the major actors, including the military and even the country’s counter-hegemonic forces, indicated that the power of Zanu-PF’s ideological framing of history and politics was to remain unchallenged. In the Gramscian sense of hegemony as a continuum between consent and coercion the coup indicated that the coercive power remained within Zanu-PF and had ultimately proven decisive in determining the trajectory for the country’s history. The counter-hegemonic forces of the MDC were forced to become complicit with the military power and use the vocabulary and terminology of the hegemon. Other explanatory factors such as the role of tribal identities and conflict between the Karanga and Zezuru elements are not primary aggregations of power as much as they reflect more latent identities actors turn for support. Internal dynamics within the governing class continued to play a greater role in the nature of the conflict. A younger predatory class, with its patronage network attached to the first lady and centred around Zezuru-dominated intelligence circles, began to clash with the older military-based bourgeoisie which was Karanga-dominated as a result of the historical engagement of the Karanga in the war of liberation. These tribal identities ultimately held little sway
as, shown by Grace Mugabe’s vain efforts to convince any reasonable number of Zezurus outside her patronage network to rise against the perceived Karanga threat.

**Build-up to the 2018 elections**

Following the inauguration, the 2018 elections provided space for hegemonic contestation and an opportunity for Mnangagwa to prove constitutional legitimacy. For the opposition there will be an opportunity to compete on a more level playing Field should the president’s inauguration promises have been kept.

Prior to Mugabe’s removal Zimbabwean civil society had advocated for the introduction of a biometric voter registration and identification system (theindendent.co.zw 16 March 2017). Biometric systems, which record data such as finger print scans, iris scans or facial recognition indicators, will arguably provide a more reliable voter’s roll. This will in turn which make it difficult to duplicate registration and should allow for the removal of deceased voters from the roll. Biometric voter registration does not, however, mitigate against a number of the other strategies which Zanu-PF had used in the past to influence the outcome of elections, including the suppression of registration through bureaucratic means or by outright intimidation. In May 2016 the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) announced that it would be implementing a $US55 million voter registration exercise before the 2018 election. By February 2017, there was a fog of political uncertainty in which it had become evident that delays in the procurement of the BVR equipment would probably cause delays in polling or result in the abandonment of the biometric system and a return to the previous system with its evident flaws. Once the kits were procured with joint support from the EU and the UNDP, registration commenced in October of 2017 (https://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org). According to reporting from the EC-UNDP electoral assistance division, the ZEC would be in a position to register 5.5 million registered voters, representing 80% of the eligible voter population. By the end of 2017 4.87 million people had been registered, representing 67.5% of the total eligible voter population. The ZEC then extended voter registration for an additional
30 days between January and February 2018 and registered 5.03 million by the end of January 2018 (ibid.). The implementation of the registration certainly appears to provide the potential for a more credible election insofar as it would prevent malfeasance during registration.

It was announced on 10 April 2018 that Zimbabwe would be inviting international election observers for the first time since 2002. In addition to observers from the AU and SADC who had been provided with accreditation since 2002, observers from the European Union, the Carter Center, the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute would be accredited to observe the polls (https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN1HH1A9-OZATP). Registration reforms and the presence of international observers certainly offered the possibility that Zimbabwe’s 2018 elections would be credible. On 30 May 2018, Mnangagwa announced the date for the elections as 30 July 2018.

In the context of understanding regime durability and change it is important to note that underestimating the impact of electoral reforms often leads to changes in the incumbent’s grip on power. The foregoing was the case in Zimbabwe in 2008 when the governing party underestimated the impact of counting at polling stations rather than at central counting offices.

**Zanu-PF’s 2018 campaign**

Zanu-PF launched its campaign on 4 May 2018 under the theme ‘Unite, Fight Corruption, Develop, Re-Engage, Create Jobs’ (newzimbabwe.com, 4 May 2018). The *Zimbabwe Independent* claimed that the Zanu-PF campaign would cost $US200 Million. The newspaper claimed that the ruling party’s war chest had been funded by ‘several foreign governments, struggling parastatals as well as investments from the security establishment thought to be contributing illegally’ (ibid.).

Quoting the Zanu-PF national political commissar, Lieutenant-General Engelbert Rugeje (retired), the *Herald* reported that the party distributed more than 15 million T-shirts, 15 million caps and 2 million kitenge wraps emblazoned with a picture of Mnangagwa’s face.
Party primaries held in early May 2018 indicated that the ascendance of a Mnangagwa faction in the party was far from decisive. A number of key Mnagagwa allies failed to gain the party’s nomination. Among these were Oppah Muchinguri and Chris Mutsvangwa (https://www.herald.co.zw/bigwigs-fall-in-zanu-pf-primaries). In 2018 Muchinguri became Zanu-PF national chairperson, having often been a Mugabe cabinet minister. She was appointed by Mnangagwa as minister for environment in December 2017. Mutsvangwa had been the chairman of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veteran’s Association when the party broke ranks with the Mugabe’s leadership in 2016 and had been appointed minister for information by Mnangagwa. Rather than indicating weakness within the party, the volatility in the Zanu-PF primaries may indicate the reconsolidated hegemony of that party as candidates interpret securing the party’s nomination as tantamount to winning a parliamentary seat.

Any notion that Zanu-PF may have changed its attitude to dissent was banished in April 2018 when Vice President Chiwenga summarily fired 16 000 striking nurses (https://news.pindula.co.zw/, 17 April 2018). Though the nurses were rehired a week later and the government promised to hire additional nurses, the episode reflects how the newly-militarised Zanu-PF leadership is likely to continue dealing with dissent (https://news.pindula.co.zw/ 23 April 2018).

**Failing counter-hegemony**

Morgan Tsvangirai died on 14 February 2018, leaving a counter-hegemonic movement splitting along the lines of the contradictory class interests of the ‘big church’ he had assembled twenty years earlier. The split between bourgeois intellectuals and labour, which had triggered all previous splits within the party, became even more important in the immediate aftermath of Tsvangirai’s death. Vice-president of the party Thokozani Khupe, the former trade unionist, was Tsvangirai’s legal successor in the event of his incapacitation. However, in a decision that reflected the extent to which the party had long abandoned its connection to labour, the day after Tsvangirai’s death MDC vice chairman Morgan Komichi announced that former
student leader Nelson Chamisa would be the party’s candidate in the 2018 elections (https://www.iol.co.za/). The struggle for power between Khupe and Chamisa exploded at Tsvangirai’s funeral when youths attacked Khupe and Douglas Mwonzora at Tsvangirai’s rural home in Buhera, forcing her to take refuge in a hut in the former leader’s compound (thechronicle.co.zw, 23 February 2018). Multiple incidents of inter-factional violence would continue to take place throughout 2018 leading to the abandonment of polls, particularly in urban districts of Harare and Bulawayo (https://www.newzimbabwe.com, 21 May 2018).

With the 40-year-old former student leader Chamisa in charge the MDC had successfully reformed an alliance with its previous breakaway parties, led by Welshman Ncube and Tendai Biti in August of 2017. After Tsvangirai’s death and Khupe’s removal, the strategic re-alliance indicated the core of the party as a bourgeois project. The MDC Alliance launched its campaign after Tsvangirai’s death in March 2018, conducting mass rallies across the country pulling in up to ten thousand supporters in Bulawayo and Harare and smaller though sizeable crowds in rural rallies across the country (nehandaradio.com, 28 April, 2018). As with the Zanu-PF primaries, sitting MPs in the MDC alliance also lost primary elections in May of 2018; these included James Maridadi (Mabvuku/Tafara), Fani Munengami (Glen View North) and Simon Chidhakwa (Zengeza West). A national representative sample of 2,400 Zimbabweans was surveyed by Afrobarometer between 28 April 2018 and 12 May 2018. In the poll, 19 per cent refused to answer, and another 7 per cent didn’t know. 42 per cent were willing to declare their intention to support ZANU-PF. Thirty per cent professed support for Chamisa’s MDC. Both in the presidential and parliamentary contests, the poll suggested ZAMNU retaining its historic advantage in the countryside (Afrobarometer, 2018, pp. 8-10).

It is unlikely that the MDC would have been able to secure a majority in parliament and less likely that Chamisa would be able to beat Mnangagwa in the presidential election. Arguably, the alliance’s complicity in supporting the military coup, having judged Mnangagwa as the lesser of two evils, stripped the movement of its moral superiority in relation to its belief in constitutionalism. With international partners seeking to re-engage with the Zimbabwean government after Mugabe’s removal, the party evidently does not have the financial support it had enjoyed when its ability to
bring about a hegemonic shift in the country appeared more viable. The stark ideological difference between the MDC and Zanu-PF has been blurred by Mnangagwa’s recasting of himself and his party as business friendly (https://www.cnbc.com/2018/01/24). Pretence of supporting non-violence and respect for the rule of law has been invalidated by the party and particularly by Chamisa’s tendency towards violence to achieve his political goals, as well as the subversion of the party’s constitution in order to promote ambitious young leadership. As both a woman and as Ndebele, Khupe would arguably not have been a viable candidate in a conservative male-dominated society where tribal identity is unlikely to allow a candidate from the minority group to win the presidency. However valid this strategic concern may have been in removing Khupe from leadership, the application of this logic would therefore discount any claims that the party is an ideologically driven, non-tribal, non-class-based movement seeking to provide a democratic alternative, or capable of bringing about hegemonic change.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has traced the narrative of recent Zimbabwean history until the most recent events at the time of writing. Thematically the chapter brings this thesis to its point of departure, which is the reality of a bafflingly durable hybrid, semi-authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, Zimbabwe’s durable hybrid regime is not an anomaly on the African continent. The chapter began by tracing the events surrounding the post-2013 splits in the MDC. It was shown how, after the defeat in the post-GNU elections, fractures along lines of class identity as well as issues with Tsvangirai’s leadership led to Tendai Biti’s departure along with a number of key party leaders. As with the 2005 split, Nelson Chamisa’s decision to remain is interpreted as being driven by ambition rather than principle. Chamisa’s ambition also indicates calculations based on a keen understanding of the nature of the party. With Biti outside the MDC fold, and despite Thokozani Khupe’s seniority in the party hierarchy, Chamisa was aware that he would be next in line for the leadership. This calculation is based on the understanding that
the power of the labour movement within the party had waned, as well as the fact that the party’s procedures and discipline could easily be flouted.

The chapter then addressed the period of spontaneous organic political unrest in 2016. The emergence of new actors in the counter-hegemonic sphere included the Tajamuka movement and the online activism of Pastor Evan Mawarire’s #ThisFlag which began to manifest in street protests and a successful stay-away. It has been shown how spontaneous online criticism arose against state corruption, the drafting of arbitrary and self-serving legislation and the proposals to impose bond notes. The chapter discusses how ideological and cultural actions on the war of position translated to an effective albeit unsustained war of movement, as Mawarire’s #ThisFlag movement grew from a single video to a movement capable of mobilising the first national stay-away in 18 years. However, the fact that the movement was not organised and that its reluctant figurehead fled the country for 6 months led to a loss in momentum by the end of 2016.

Zanu-PF’s party discipline had remained largely unwavering for over fifty years. Cracks had begun to appear from 2004 as separate camps began to vie to replace Mugabe whose bewildering capacity for clinging to power was matched only by his longevity. The chapter outlines how Emmerson Mnangagwa had been able to redeem himself after the debacle of the Tsholotsho plot in 2005. Mnangagwa would form a coalition with First Lady Grace Mugabe to oust Vice President Joice Mujuru in 2014. With Mujuru ejected from the party and the vice-presidency, Mnangagwa and Grace Mugabe would turn on each other. The former’s Lacoste faction engaged in a competition for control of the party with the first lady’s G40. While the Mnangagwa group represented his personal interest in Karanga leadership, and representatives of the G40 group are mostly from Mugabe’s Zezuru tribe, the chapter has argued that these tribal identities are coincidental to class factions within the state-based bourgeoisie. It has been argued that Mnangagwa represents an older generation of state-based bourgeoisie who accumulated wealth through access to the state and the means of state violence. Grace Mugabe’s cabal represented younger members of the governing class who had risen from petty thugs during the election violence of 2000 and 2002 and had enriched themselves by preying on opportunities resulting from the economic crisis and hyperinflation. The extent to which these broad categories
reflected tribal identity drew on the largely Karanga military structures and the fact that the Mugabe family had established a substantial predatory patronage network within their own tribe.

The chapter then outlined in detail the events leading to the 2017 coup d’état. The detail sought to provide an answer to the question of whether the new dispensation reflects a change in hegemony. It does not. The chapter has shown that understanding hegemony as the overlapping continuums between consent and coercion within the context of the historical bloc, which is the interaction between the base and superstructure, Zanu-PF hegemony has remained intact since 2017.

The chapter analysed the extent to which electoral reforms, including bio-metric voter registration and the invitation of international election observers, may serve to balance the electoral playing field. This thesis would cautiously posit that an underestimation of the capacity of such reforms is a critical factor in regime collapse as Zimbabwean experiences in 2008 had previously shown.

The chapter then concludes by analysing the electoral campaign strategies of both the hegemonic and the counter-hegemonic forces respectively. It shows that Zanu-PF’s strategies are similar to those the party has always used, though relying heavily on the momentum gathered from events in 2017. It shows that the hegemonic bloc is not entirely stable given high-profile losses in the primaries. The loss of party chefs may however reflect the competitive locus of national political power within the party rather than in competition with the opposition.

The chapter concludes more resolutely than this thesis’ point of departure by stating that the MDC’s role as a counter-hegemonic force is moribund. In their complicity with the coup, the party has found itself legitimating Mnangagwa’s leadership in a regime that remains identical, apart from the purging of a few individuals. The party’s following of Zanu-PF’s lead has resulted in the use of the very same discourse of ‘patriotic history’ which the hegemonic bloc has used successfully to paint the MDC as outsiders and sell-outs. This chapter argues that the contradiction of bourgeois and labour identities and ideologies within the party has been the central conflict within the movement and may be the cause of its failure to bring about hegemonic change. The actions of the opposition leadership in flouting party discipline, a convenient
disregard for constitutionalism and the tendency towards violence reflect that the MDC does not provide a viable alternative to Zanu-PF hegemony. The events of 2017 have been able to recast Zanu-PF as a party in reform and could be interpreted as the party’s consolidation of hegemonic power for the foreseeable future, as Zimbabwe returns to the corporatism of the 1990s unburdened by the necessity for land reform.
Chapter 9

Conclusion: Case study findings and implications for the analysis of other counter-hegemonic movements

This thesis has sought to answer the research question:

*How to account for the durability of Zanu-PF rule?*

It has done this by applying Antonio Gramsci’s historical political economy, particularly his concepts of historical blocs and hegemony, to account for the nearly four decade-long rule of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF). The thesis has argued that Gramsci’s theories provide useful tools for explaining the durability entrenched regimes such as ZANU-PF by employing an ontology, an epistemology and a method that incorporates historical, economic and ideological factors. Gramsci’s theories help us analyse dynamics of structure and agency, modes of production and ideology, as well as consent and coercion in the creation and maintenance of long lasting political dominance. The Gramscian concept of the historical bloc has supplied a conceptual continuum between the base, a society’s mode of economic production and reproduction, and the superstructure, the dominant ideologies and political institutions. The thesis identified three post-independence historical blocs in Zimbabwe: 1980 era’s ‘corporatist/welfarist’ or ‘compromise state’ historical bloc; the attempted neo-liberal Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) historical bloc and finally the crisis hegemonic bloc which corresponds with the Third Chimurenga and the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. The thesis considers that this last bloc includes the period of the Government of National Unity Between 2009-2013 and has persisted to the present. Hegemony has been understood as the continuum between ‘intellectual and moral leadership obtained by consent’ and the strategies employed on the terrain of ‘relations of force’ in achieving and maintaining political dominance (Gramsci, 2000, p. 202). The thesis has shown that while Zanu-PF has never enjoyed leadership based solely on intellectual and moral leadership without the threat of violence the party also never ruled entirely by force without claiming to derive its authority from a higher ideological and moral source. Through the substantive chapters of the thesis from Chapter 4 to Chapter 8 the thesis
has sought to make explicit at which points either consent or coercion has been primary in maintaining the party’s dominance within each historical bloc. In applying Gramscian theories to Zimbabwean history and politics the thesis has been sensitive to the conundrums at the centre of Gramsci’s and indeed wider Marxian theory. Firstly, the question of whether politics and ideology can be read off an analysis of a society’s mode of production and reproduction? Secondly whether scholars and political actors can develop accurate analyses or political strategies bound by relations of consent and coercion based off the analysis of production and the class structures it creates? In using a Gramscian tools of the Historical Bloc and Hegemony as continuums between base and superstructure and consent and coercion respectively the thesis has hopefully been faithful to Gramsci’s engagement with wider political theories and his warnings against binary engagements of either of these theoretical conundrums. Theoretical questions notwithstanding; the primary concern of the thesis has been empirical. It has sought to understand how Zanu-PF (and by generalisation other similarly entrenched African regimes such as those for instance in Algeria, Sudan, and Ethiopia) has used varying combinations of consensual and coercive measures within the framework of history defined by economic and ideological factors. Thus the engagement with Gramscian theory has been considered so as to avoid reductionism and subjective voluntarism about base or superstructure, structure and agency or the dominance of either consent or coercion while not aiming to resolve these theoretical questions.

The methodological approach holds that Zimbabwe’s turbulent history is determined as much by modes of production as it is by ideology, politics and methods of representation and that Zanu-PF’s maintenance of power has relied on both coercion and consent. Gramsci’s theories have provided useful heuristic tools to understand these dynamics and their deep historical roots in a manner that equally considers structural factors as it does key moments of agency and strategic decisions by important political leaders.

This dissertation also began with the observation that despite the existence of democratic procedures such as elections in all African states, more African states can be considered undemocratic than democratic. The Freedom House, *Freedom in the World* survey for 2018 counts 7 democracies in sub-Saharan Africa, 21 other countries
that are considered partly free, while 19 are considered unfree regimes (Freedom House 2018). Indeed, at any given point since the wave of African independence in the 1960s, no more than a handful of African states have been considered fully free if we use the democratisation indices as a measurement. Furthermore, the countries that have been considered free have not always remained so and there have been as many backsliders as there have been democratisers at any given time. This observation allows for the assertion that contrary to the teleological assertions of democratic transition and consolidation theories, African states are not necessarily transitioning towards democracy. This observation therefore provided a further justification for the analysis of a more general trend in Africa which is the persistence of authoritarian forms of rule and hybrid regimes in African states?

The dissertation has used the single case study of Zimbabwe to refine current theories on the durability of authoritarian forms of rule in African states. The research design follows the structured-focused case study approach defined by George et al. (2005) as ‘the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalisable to other events’. The case of Zimbabwe has had a number of objectives; firstly, to underline the weaknesses and gaps in transition theory’s applicability to the case in hand. This has accomplished the objective of what Lijphart and Eckstein refer to as disciplined configurative or disciplined interpretive case studies which have the capacity to impugn established theories that ought to but do not fit. In doing so, it has shown how transition theories fail to suitably explain or account for the lack of change in Zimbabwe. Secondly, the case study approach has served a heuristic purpose by inductively ‘identifying new variables, hypotheses, causal mechanisms, and causal paths’ (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 75).

The method used has been structured so that the researcher proposed general questions to reflect the research objective, and these questions have been applied to the case study. This has been in order to guide and standardise data collection, thereby making possible the systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings in other cases. The method has been focused to deal with only certain aspects of the historical case under examination. The requirements for structure and focus ‘apply equally to individual cases since that may later be joined by additional cases’ (George et al., 2005, p. 67).
Zimbabwe is a representative case of an authoritarian regime which has remained durable despite the presence of a viable democratisation movement. In 2017 Robert Mugabe, the country’s leader since independence, was removed from power through unconstitutional means and at the hands of his own party rather than through the ballot box. This unconstitutional succession and the death in February 2018 of Morgan Tsvangirai, who had led the country’s opposition for twenty years, are clear indicators of the degree to which the opposition in Zimbabwe has become quasi-irrelevant.

While noting the ‘protracted and necessarily contingent’ nature of negotiations over rules and practice’ (Le Bas, 2016), this thesis argues that after nearly 20 years of counter-hegemonic struggle, Tsvangirai’s Movement for Democratic Change has failed to change to the rules of the game. This is particularly true of the period after of the GNU when the movement had some access to state machinery yet was still not able to make a decisive shift to a position of dominance over Zanu-PF, either electorally or ideologically. The Zimbabwean reality points to the dilemma at the centre of all pseudo-democracies and electoral autocracies; while the mechanisms for a democratic overturn of power have theoretically been in place, these have not been respected by at least one of the central actors in the political game. Central to this is the fact that, in order to bring about any changes in the nature of the regime, it was necessary that Mugabe lose control over coercive power in the country.

**The Gramscian method and its application to the Zimbabwean context**

Gramsci’s historical materialism is an elaboration of Marxist political economy which holds that understanding political movements requires both an appreciation of material factors arising from the mode of production as well as the ideational superstructure and political institutions which accompany the base mode of production. Gramsci’s method has provided useful tools for the analysis of political change and of regime durability in Zimbabwe.

The first of these concepts is the historical bloc which interweaves elements of the mode of production (the base) and ideological and cultural frameworks for explaining these societies (the superstructure). The historical bloc has been useful in framing the
various phases of Zimbabwe’s colonial and post-colonial history and how modes of accumulation have created the various class structures and their interests. To this material reality of production, the concept of the historical bloc weaves the ideological and cultural awareness of each class. The thesis therefore observed distinct phases in the early colonial historical bloc, the post-Unilateral Declaration of Independence settler-state bloc, the immediate post-independence bloc and the crisis bloc.

The second Gramscian tool used by this thesis is the theory of hegemony, which is understood as the intersection between elements of consent and coercion in the creation and maintenance of political power. The thesis has therefore analysed the interplay between elements of coercion and ideological and cultural understanding within each of the above noted historical phases. The dissertation has sought to elaborate on whether elements of coercion or consent have been decisive in maintaining hegemony in various phases in Zimbabwe’s history. In framing democratisation in Zimbabwe as counter-hegemonic, the thesis has applied Gramsci’s strategic theories of the ‘war of position’ (which takes place on the plane of the ideological and cultural), and the war of movement (which takes place on the plane of the material and coercive) to analyse the various strategies of the counter-hegemonic movement in Zimbabwe.

The Gramscian concept of intellectuals as producers of ideological and cultural understanding of material reality is also particularly applicable to the Zimbabwean reality where ideologies have had a central role in the maintenance of political power. The concept of passive revolution has also been helpful in understanding compromise by hegemonic powers in order to maintain a degree of dominance. This offered illuminating insights into analysing firstly, the compromise at the time of independence in 1980 between white and international capital and the nationalist movement; and secondly, the Government of National Unity in 2009 in which Zanu-PF as hegemonic power made political compromises with the counter-hegemonic forces in order to reorganise and maintain its dominance.

Gramsci’s method for analysing a political movement during the course of its development has also been relevant in studying counter-hegemony in Zimbabwe. This study has been directed by Gramsci’s method for the analysis of counter-hegemonic movements. This has been conducted by asking questions of the Movement for
Democratic Change such as the social content of their membership (Chapter 5) and the movements role in the balance of forces and the strategies it applies to achieving its goals (Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

One strength of Gramsci’s method is that it does not insist on either economic or cultural determinism and does not discount the application of other aggregations of power, including ethnic or tribal identities as they exist in states like Zimbabwe. The Gramscian historical method does not emphasise either structure or agency as the determining forces in history. Instead, it allows for the analysis of political struggles within a framework broadly established around a continuum between the mode of production and class interests as they correspond to other forms of identity such as race or class and which can also be influenced by intellectual and cultural framing of this material reality. This thesis has therefore applied Gramscian methods to study the formation and durability of the Zanu-PF regime in Zimbabwe through the broad historical phases of the post-independence historical blocs.

Chapter 3: The construction and consolidation of Zanu-PF hegemony

Chapter 3 of this thesis outlined the construction and consolidation of hegemony by the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF). This served as a point of departure for addressing the primary research problem of accounting for the durability of the regime when faced with a seemingly robust opposition in the late 1990s. The chapter applies the Gramscian theoretical constructs of the historical bloc and hegemony in order to analyse how Zanu-PF came to power through its own counter-hegemonic struggle against the white settler state and how the party constructed its own hegemony in the post-independence historical bloc. The chapter thus situated the formation of leadership in the political economy of the colonial settler state. The settler-colonial state was created with the primary function of managing the extraction of labour and primary resources. This proletarianisation of the black population through alienation from their land in the early part of the 20th century produced an African working class which was forced to bridge its rural and urban existence. The dispossession of the black majority from their land created the central conflict in Zimbabwe’s political economy. Framed within the concept of the historical
bloc, land tenure in Zimbabwe has been central to hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggle. It has been shown that a black educated elite became the organic intellectuals for the post-World War II nationalist movement. The fact that the leadership of the nationalist movement originated in the country’s small petit bourgeoisie would determine its interests in the struggle, its motives and its ideology, and how these influenced the approach to a counter-hegemonic stance against the settler state. As such, this generation of nationalists bridged the concerns of black urban labour and the rural peasantry which it brought under its umbrella, and chose armed guerrilla warfare as their primary means for counter-hegemonic struggle. Armed struggle would account for why the nationalist leadership became less reliant on a politicised labour movement than on the rural peasantry, a fact that may have influenced the nature of post-independence nationalist hegemony. The party’s strategy of armed struggle would give the party an insight into how to protect its own hegemony once constructed. The party’s reliance on a strategy of violence and a culture which was intolerant of dissent also translated into the maintenance of hegemony after independence and the durability of the regime. The discourse of armed struggle, which necessarily views adversaries as enemies and internal dissent as ‘selling out’, would inform the nature of the post-independence ideology and this would crystallise in periods of stronger opposition. This patriotic history was central to the post-independence hegemonic superstructure.

While the nationalist leadership paid lip service to an ideology of socialism, historical scholarship of the period indicates that their commitment was at best lukewarm (Moore, 1991; Herbst, 1990; Mandaza, 1986; Dashwood, 2000; Chung, 2006). The dilemma that this petit bourgeois group encountered would be the same as that faced in general by anti-colonial movements across the continent and is best encapsulated in Cabral’s statement that ‘in order to truly fulfill the role in the national liberation struggle, the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie must be capable of committing suicide as a class in order to be reborn as revolutionary workers’ (Cabral, 1966). The nature of the state, whether dominated by a white settler class or the black petit bourgeois class, is resilient to counter-hegemonic resistance.
Chapter 3 further outlined how the new governing class sought to construct its own hegemony through an economic base which applied corporatist practices. The objective of this was to maintain both white settler capital and the interests of international capital in Zimbabwe while also adding a welfarist component to the state. The chapter outlines how Zanu-PF hegemony was constructed from 1980 until the organic crisis which became apparent from about 1997 onwards. The class compromise meant that while the state’s institutions were intended not to challenge the central interests of the agrarian and entrepreneurial elites, the black bureaucratic and political elite within the state began to transcend its petit bourgeois status through privileged access to state resources and the capacity for patronage that these produced. The change in the economic sphere also resulted in the gradual embourgeoisement of the African petit bourgeoisie. Zanu-PF faced very little opposition during this period as post-independence euphoria and a largely de-politicised polity meant that there were virtually no challenges to the party’s hegemony. The party’s tendency towards authoritarianism was revealed in how it immediately sought to fuse itself with the state. It intensified its intolerance of opposition by quashing the rebellion in the south of the country in the Gukurahundi massacres between 1983 and 1987, and the calls for a one-party state by the end of first decade of independence. 

The application of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme indicates the level of embourgeoisement of the governing class and the calculations of their interests in managing the political economy of the state. When attempts at liberalisation began to affect the urban working class through de-industrialisation, dissent in this class began to rise. The chapter describes how the regime increasingly relied on coercion to maintain its power. In retaining our analysis within the frame of the historical bloc it is important to note that the sources of discontent in the society which drove the counter-hegemonic movement were economic and lie in the Marxian/Gramscian base rather than in the ideological superstructure. The rise of opposition in Zimbabwe during the late 1990s corresponds with the Gramscian concept of organic crisis.
Gramsci’s note that the events surrounding the organic crisis ‘form the terrain of the “conjunctural”, and it is upon this terrain that the forces of opposition organise’, accurately depicts the period from 1997 onwards when the counter-hegemonic movement in Zimbabwe was formed.

Chapter 4 then asks the question outlined by Gramsci in his method for the analysis of a counter-hegemonic social movement by addressing the question: ‘What was the social content of the mass following of the movement?’. By the mid-1990s a counter-hegemonic movement began to form around twin issues: the poor economic performance resulting from the application of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, and the evident centralisation of power and intolerance of opposition. The late 1990s saw a shift from attempts to engage with the government into confrontation as the opposition began to coalesce around questions of constitutional reform, forming the National Constitutional Assembly in 1997. In this respect, Zimbabwe’s counter-hegemonic movement was composed of multiple overlapping constituencies and social groups which came together in the period of organic crisis beginning in 1997. The question also allows us to apply another key concept of Gramsci’s methodology by examining the extent to which these elements constitute organic intellectuals of the counter-hegemonic struggle. The chapter then analyses the country’s most prominent membership-based group in the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. In doing so the chapter details the ZCTU’s membership and organisational structures, key demands and concerns of the movement’s membership as well as its leadership and mobilisation methods.

The chapter then elaborated on the role of critical intellectuals from the University of Zimbabwe as a counter-hegemonic force advocating for political reform. In addition to critical intellectuals, student leadership at universities at the end of the 1980s had been central in opposing the one-party state. The legacy of this leadership would produce the next cadre of critical intellectuals who would move from student leadership to a central position in all other sections of the counter-hegemonic movement, apart from the trade unions. Student leaders also introduced a tendency toward violence for achieving political ends into the counter-hegemonic movement. This violence has, however, focused mainly on internal conflict rather than at the regime which would have had greater coercive power. Former student leaders would
become key actors in cross-pollinating different segments of the counter-hegemonic movement; these included active lawyers, members of the professionalised NGO sphere and religious organisations as well as the national (that is, local Zimbabwean) staff of international foundations and donor agencies.

The thesis has outlined the problematic role of the professionalised NGO space. Among the key attributes of professionalised NGOs are narrow membership base, their small leadership pool, dependence on donor funding and the overlaps between the leadership component of NGOs and the national staff of international donor agencies.

The thesis chronicles how the dovetailing memberships and coalitions which formed the National Constitutional Assembly in 1997 would combine with the formal structures of the ZCTU to form the Movement for Democratic Change political party in 1999. The structures at the formation of the NCA and MDC in the late 1990s would foreshadow the interaction of these diverse interests once they coalesced, either as an opposition civil society or within the formal structure of the MDC. Chapter 5 concludes with a conjunctural account of the formation of both the NCA and the MDC and the potentially fragile coalitions and contradictions in the movement. These would account for later weaknesses which manifested in multiple splits in the party and would continue to surface even after Tsvangirai’s death in 2018.

The chapter concludes by returning to a chronological narrative which outlines the conjunctural roots of the opposition movement in the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly in 1997 and the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999.

**Hegemonic and counter-hegemonic relations of force, 2000-2008**

Chapter 5 addressed the first phase of open contestation in Zimbabwe between the hegemonic power in the form of the Zanu-PF governing class, and the counter-hegemonic force which was a broad coalition of labour, sections of the middle class and some representatives of national white industry and farming. Gramsci’s method distinguishes relations of forces on three levels or moments. The first of these is the
relation of economic forces, the mode of accumulation and production, and the development of material forces. The second moment is the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness and organisation attained by the various social groups. The third is the relation of military forces which encapsulates not only brute coercive power, but also ideological consent (2000, p. 202).

The political economy of Zimbabwe after 2000 is the political economy of a state in crisis as its formal economy collapsed. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) effectively put an end to the existence of a white land-owning class in the country. This class was replaced by a new black land-owning class under the A1 and A2 structures of the FTLRP. The latter are essentially high-ranking military officials and Zanu-PF loyalists who created a state-based bureaucratic bourgeoisie. By 2008 the number of beneficiaries in this class would be approximately 16 000. The class of A1 farmers who each received plots of approximately 12 acres comprised about 145 000 individuals. Given that neither of these classes holds title deeds to the plots they occupied they are entirely beholden to the whims of Zanu-PF leadership and could have their 99-year leases revoked with little notice.

Apart from the land grab in the land reform programme, the governing class essentially became a kleptocratic class using access to the state to buttress their predatory accumulation. This class capitalised on the collapse of the economy to further enrich themselves. Where access to foreign currency, mines and agriculture was entirely dependent on access to the state, these individuals were able to leverage their access to great profit as shortages of commodities such as fuel and food led to the governing class monopolising supply chains. Targeted international sanctions may have affected the ability of the governing class to externalise funds but did not prevent a collapse into a more blatant kleptocracy.

The urban working class became a dispersed urban poor reliant on informal trading for their economic existence. Labour structures would be severely weakened. Membership in the ZCTU declined from 1.7 million in 1998 to 350 000 in 2011 (Kanyenze, 2011) The effects of the mass evictions in operation Murambatsvina in 2005 would exacerbate this as the work force moved towards an informal basis.
Throughout this period Zanu-PF’s notorious party discipline had been able to maintain the hegemon’s structural and organisational integrity. The party had consolidated its structures in 2000 following its loss in the constitutional referendum and called on old allies in the National Liberation War Veterans Association. Charismatic young leaders such as Border Gezi added new organisational strength and were able to drum up a degree of organisational self-awareness, coupled with an increased capacity for violence against the new opposition.

While the centre was able to hold within Zanu-PF, internal rifts were never far below the surface. Intrigue within the party was revealed with the 2004 Tsholotsho plot in which Emmerson Mnangagwa, Jacob Mudenda and Jonathan Moyo were apparently exposed as planning a plot to place Mnangagwa, then Speaker of Parliament, as vice president and therefore in direct line of the presidency. Other camps were forming with Joice Mujuru (then vice president) appearing as the most likely candidate with the support of her estranged husband General Solomon Mujuru. Zanu-PF’s internal disciplinary force held the plot in check.

The fact that the MDC was a broad coalition meant there would always be the potential for fractures. By 2005 the MDC had begun to splinter, apparently due to principles of strategy. However, the split took a regional (ethnic) and to some degree class nature as Sibanda, a labour leader, joined his fellow Ndebele, the intellectual Welshman Ncube to form their own faction of the MDC. The lack of coherent strategy in the counter-hegemonic movement was also triggered by competition for donor funding, as the opportunity to secure a significant salary when other opportunities for employment are diminished becomes an important motivational factor in engaging in the counter-hegemonic struggle. The additional pull of access to power was another motivation for engaging in the counter-hegemonic movement. This shift to politics also weakened civil society and labour as prominent leaders were leaving the labour movement and civil society to join other sections of the movement in the MDC, as well as to well-paid jobs in the donor agencies.

Given that the party and state had been fused since independence, Zanu-PF was able to use coercive power and both legal and institutional superstructures to maintain its hegemony. The police, army, and Central Intelligence Organisation provided
overwhelming force to support Zanu-PF and this was supplemented by the war veterans and youth militia during the land invasion and election periods.

For its part, the MDC continued to focus its counter-hegemonic strategy on elections. This strategy was, however, proving ineffective against Zanu-PF’s overwhelming capacity for coercion, its ability to compromise legal and electoral institutions, and by 2008 its ability to ignore the results of the election and refusal to relinquish power.

Apart from the institutional and coercive capacity of Zanu-PF the party also used its ideological weaponry in the form of patriotic history on a largely captive audience. There is no question that, notwithstanding Mugabe’s and Zanu-PF’s attraction based on fear of coercion or ever-diminishing sources of patronage, the party’s ideological narratives within the framework of patriotic history indoctrinated a great number of Zimbabweans. The extent to which patriotic history convinced a large section of Zimbabwe can be interpreted as that part of Zanu-PF’s hegemony which supplemented the coercion inflicted on sections of the population, and the patronage doled out to others. Mugabe and his intellectuals had compelling arguments blaming the West, white farmers and the opposition as their puppets. These must wholly account for why even a substantial proportion of citizens in urban areas, who – despite the evidence of their personal economic hardships, despite having their pensions obliterated or losing their jobs – would continue to vote for the party. Given that the majority of Zimbabweans consumed media only from sources owned by the government and managed by Zanu-PF propagandists, it is no surprise that such people do exist, and in no small numbers. By 2008 Zanu-PF’s propaganda had become increasingly sycophantic, as all national news and the state-owned press began to refer to Mugabe as ‘His Excellency The President and First Secretary of ZANU-PF, Commander in Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces Cde. Robert Gabriel Mugabe’, or ‘Our Vanguard leader’.

By 2008 the balance of forces in Zimbabwe between hegemony and counter-hegemony had reached a stalemate. Violence could no longer maintain Zanu-PF’s grip on power, as the results of the party’s policies had crippled the economy and all consent mechanisms were beginning to ring hollow. The trajectory of hegemony in Zimbabwe from 2008 would be determined by the MDC’s strategic decision to enter into the Government of National Unity.
Passive revolution

The Gramscian concept of passive revolution refers to the coming to power of a new historical situation of counter-hegemonic struggle in which social and economic relations become static. Passive revolution is often the outcome of a war of position by the dominant classes after a war of manoeuvre by the dominated classes. In Zimbabwe’s case, the passive revolution represented by the inclusive government came about as a result of the overwhelming use of coercion to subvert the results of the 2008 elections. Heeding Gramsci’s warning, this thesis has not interpreted passive revolution as historical defeatism; that is to say, it cannot suggest that by entering the inclusive government the MDC factions were destined for defeat. There was certainly sufficient potential for reforms and strategies in the GNU which the counter-hegemonic forces could have used to bring about an overall change in the country’s power balance.

The structure of the GNU illustrates how the counter-hegemonic party’s failure to gain power over ministries related to state security (and therefore coercion) adversely affected their ability to bring about any conclusive change in the nature of hegemony. This particular outcome indicated the weaknesses in party negotiation strategies as they were unable to insist on control of these key coercive elements of the state.

The chapter then outlined the measures taken to bring about economic recovery. The application and impact of dollarisation have been elaborated on in order to reflect the positive influence of the multicurrency regime. This brought hyperinflation to an end and led to a return to normalcy in banking, as well as the capacity to import goods such as fuel and food. It has been shown, however, that the adoption of the US dollar in particular has led to Zimbabwe becoming a high-cost economy for production. In addition, it has led to further de-industrialisation and the loss of more employment as Zimbabwe can no longer compete with South Africa when labour and manufacturing costs are compared. It has also been shown that due to the overwhelming control of state bureaucracies, the governing elites in Zanu-PF have monopolised access to both the means of accumulation and the national political economy, where the state determines access to resources. This access to the state is particularly evident in the
extraction of resources from the Chiadzwa/Marange diamond fields. The chapter has shown how access to Chiadzwa diamonds brought about a shift in the economic base of the state by providing an abundant source of income and patronage for the state and the armed forces. It has also provided a means of manufacturing economic dependence by controlling access to patronage through informal mining. Finally, Marange Diamonds created a seismic shift in the interests and policies of European nations, particularly Belgium, in relation to sanctions. This shift had the effect of relieving external pressure on Zanu-PF while reducing political and financial support for Zimbabwe’s opposition civil society, which had become entirely dependent on donor support for its functions.

The process of constitution-making during a period of passive revolution is central to the question of regime durability in a semi-authoritarian regime. The constitution-making process allowed the counter-hegemonic movement a role in drafting the rules of the political game. Given that constitution-making had been a central arena of contestation throughout the counter-hegemonic struggle in Zimbabwe, the ability to manage the process of constitution-making signified a degree of progress in terms of setting the rules of the political game in the country. Constitution-making under the GNU, however, encapsulated the dilemmas of democratic counter-hegemonic struggle. Even the process of rule-setting was circumscribed by authoritarian power dynamics. This included intransigence in establishing the parameters of debate, the use of coercion to clamp down on free expression, and ultimately ignored those contributions which did not suit hegemon interest. In the Zimbabwean case a compromise acceptable to the counter-hegemonic movement was made. Checks on executive and term limits were instituted, the Bill of Rights was extended by including social and economic rights as well as increasing the rights of women, an independent electoral commission was established and right to dual citizenship was enacted.

**Rifts in the counter-hegemonic bloc**

Chapter 6 of this dissertation illustrated how the battle over constitution-making led to further rifts in the counter-hegemonic bloc as segments of opposition civil society contested the process run by politicians. This also reflects the dependence on donor
funding in Zimbabwe’s civil society, as the decision to oppose the constitution-making process left organisations such as the NCA entirely abandoned by the donors. Other organisations such as the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Zimbabwe Election Support Network and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights were funded by multiple donors to participate both in the constitution-making process in terms of content, and as observers of the outreach process.

The chapter concludes with an analysis of the build-up to the elections which Zanu-PF ultimately won, providing Robert Mugabe with another potential four-year term in office. Analyses of the 2013 elections concluded that Zanu-PF’s ideological positions did win over a significant segment of the population, and changes in the economic structure in the country created a dependency on Zanu-PF patronage. However, it was the party’s manipulation of the state mechanisms of registration and coercion which ultimately led to its victory in 2013, effectively the ‘end of an era’ in the counter-hegemonic struggle in Zimbabwe.

**New counter-hegemonic actors and the resurgence of the hegemonic bloc**

After the defeat in the post-GNU elections, fractures along lines of class identity as well as issues with Tsvangirai’s leadership led to Tendai Biti’s departure along with a number of key party leaders. As with the 2005 split, Nelson Chamisa’s decision to remain is interpreted as being driven by ambition rather than principle. Chamisa’s ambition also indicates calculations based on a keen understanding of the nature of the party. This calculation is based on the understanding that the power of the labour movement within the party had waned, as well as the fact that the party’s procedures and discipline could easily be flouted.

The chapter then addressed the period of spontaneous organic political unrest in 2016. The emergence of new actors in the counter-hegemonic sphere included the Tajamuka movement and the online activism of Pastor Evan Mawarire’s #ThisFlag, which began to manifest in street protests and a successful stay-away. It has been shown how spontaneous online criticism arose against state corruption, the drafting of arbitrary and self-serving legislation and the proposals to impose bond notes. The chapter discusses how ideological and cultural actions on the war of position translated to an
effective albeit unsustained war of movement, as Mawarire’s #Thisflag movement grew from a single video to a movement capable of mobilising the first national stay-away in 18 years. However, the fact that the movement was not organised and that its reluctant figurehead fled the country for six months led to a loss in momentum by the end of 2016.

Zanu-PF’s party discipline had remained largely unwavering for over fifty years. Cracks had begun to appear from 2004 as separate camps began to vie to replace Mugabe, whose bewildering capacity for clinging to power was matched only by his longevity. The chapter outlines how Emmerson Mnangagwa had been able to redeem himself after the debacle of the Tsholotsho plot in 2005. Mngangagwa would form a coalition with First Lady Grace Mugabe to oust Vice President Joice Mujuru in 2014. With Mujuru ejected from the party and the vice-presidency, Mnangagwa and Grace Mugabe would turn on each other. The former’s Lacoste faction engaged in a competition for control of the party together with the first lady’s G40. While the Mnangagwa group represented his personal interest in Karanga leadership, and representatives of the G40 group are mostly from Mugabe’s Zezuru tribe, the chapter has argued that these tribal identities coincide with the class factions in the state-based bourgeoisie. It has been argued that Mnangagwa represents an older generation of state-based bourgeoisie who accumulated wealth through access to the state and the means of state violence. Grace Mugabe’s cabal represented younger members of the governing class who had risen from petty thuggery during the election violence of 2000 and 2002 and had enriched themselves by preying on opportunities resulting from the economic crisis and hyperinflation. The extent to which these broad categories reflected tribal identity drew on the largely Karanga military structures and the fact that the Mugabe family had established a substantial predatory patronage network within their own tribe.

The chapter then outlined in detail the events leading to the 2017 coup d’état. The detail sought to provide an answer to the question of whether the new dispensation reflects a change in hegemony and concluded that it does not. The chapter has shown that understanding hegemony as the overlapping continuums between consent and coercion within the context of the historical bloc, that is the interaction between the base and superstructure, Zanu-PF hegemony has remained intact since 2017.
The chapter analysed the extent to which electoral reforms, including bio-metric voter registration and the presence of international election observers, may serve to balance the electoral playing field. This thesis cautiously posits that an underestimation of the capacity of such reforms is a critical factor in regime collapse, as Zimbabwean experiences in 2008 had previously shown.

The chapter concludes by analysing the electoral campaign strategies of both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces. It shows that Zanu-PF’s strategies are similar to those the party has always used, though relying heavily on the momentum gathered from events in 2017. It shows that the hegemonic bloc is not entirely stable given high-profile losses in the primaries. The loss of party chefs may however reflect the competitive locus of national political power within the party rather than in competition with the opposition.

The chapter concludes more resolutely than the departure point of this thesis by stating that the MDC’s role as a counter-hegemonic force is moribund. In their complicity with the coup, the party has found itself legitimating Mnangagwa’s leadership in a regime that remains almost identical, apart from purging a few individuals. That the party has followed Zanu-PF’s lead has resulted in the use of the same discourse of patriotic history which the hegemonic bloc has used successfully to paint the MDC as outsiders and sell-outs. This chapter argues that the contradiction of bourgeois and labour identities and ideologies within the party constitutes the central conflict within the movement and may cause its failure to bring about hegemonic change. The actions of the opposition leadership in flouting party discipline, a convenient disregard for constitutionalism and their tendency towards violence reflect that the MDC does not provide a viable alternative to Zanu-PF hegemony. The events of 2017 have recast Zanu-PF as a party in reform and could be interpreted as the party’s consolidation of hegemonic power for the foreseeable future, as Zimbabwe returns to the corporatism of the 1990s unburdened by the necessity for land reform.

**Accounting for the durability of authoritarian rule in Zimbabwe**
This thesis first sought to answer the case specific question of how to account for the durability of authoritarian rule in Zimbabwe.

This thesis views the struggle for democracy in African states as necessarily on of counter-hegemony because the very nature of democratic struggles in semi-authoritarian states necessitates the defeat of the non-democratic regime in order to bring about changes in the rules of the political game. Taking the foregoing as a point of departure this section outlines some of the conclusions based on the preceding chapters to account for the durability of authoritarian rule in Zimbabwe. Taking the foregoing as a point of departure this section outlines some of the conclusions based on the preceding chapters to account for the durability of authoritarian rule in Zimbabwe.

A primary observation based on Gramscian historical political economy is the importance of how the regime established and consolidated its hegemony. Gramsci’s concept of the historical bloc as the continuum between the mode of production and ideological and cultural superstructures is a critical factor in securing the analysis in an economic and ideological foundation while not privileging either as necessarily determinant. The Gramscian concept of hegemony as the combination of consent and coercion is equally significant for this analysis.

In the Zimbabwean case, Zanu-PF’s hegemony has its roots in the mode of production of the colonial state. The fact that the class that would govern the independent nation came from the country’s educated elite would affect their engagement with the post-colonial state. The nationalist elites’ role as organic intellectuals for the black majority emphasised the material as well as symbolic impact of alienation from the land. The strategy of counter-hegemonic action against the white settler state, which necessitated armed struggle, inevitably influenced the nature of the regime. As noted above this strategy resulted in a regime that depended heavily on coercion in order to maintain its authority, as well as a number of ancillary outcomes. These included the regime’s relationship with the peasantry, its view of internal and external opposition as well as its modes of generating consent through guerrilla propaganda techniques. An understanding of the nature of the state as part of the historical bloc is also crucial to
understanding the governing class. This thesis has situated Zimbabwe’s post-colonial historical bloc in the compromise in class forces resulting from the Lancaster House Agreement and the resultant constitutional structure. This compromise of class forces produced a framework in which the governing black petit bourgeoisie were able to enrich themselves through access to the state while paying minimal attention to the question of civil and political rights, or broader questions of economic redistribution and land reform, even after the constitutional prohibitions on land reform had expired.

The concept of organic crisis, understood as the moment when the underlying contradictions of hegemonic order become apparent, situates the rise of democratic counter-hegemonic action in the country. In this regard this thesis has relied on Gramsci’s method for the analysis of counter-hegemonic forces, and a general lesson from this analysis is that the composition of counter-hegemonic forces is of crucial importance.

Gramscian concepts such as the historical bloc and hegemony have analytical as well as strategic importance. An observation arising from the MDC as a counter-hegemonic movement is that its emphasis on the superstructure and ideologies (particularly those of democratic, civil and political rights) at the expense of social and economic issues weakens their position. The battle of a counter-hegemonic movement must necessarily involve an understanding of both the base and the superstructure. This emphasis arose from the influence of middle-class interests including some sections of academia, students, and the professionalised NGO sphere which overlaps with the national staff of donor agencies.

It is evident from the analysis of democratic NGO space that actors in this arena are not necessarily more inclined to behave in a particularly democratic manner. Indeed, evidence in the Zimbabwean case has shown that NGOs which work in areas of democratic governance often represent very narrow interests, have virtually no membership basis and as such are not organic to their society. These organisations in Zimbabwe are often more motivated by the interests of international donors than they are influenced by national concerns relating to democratisation. In the Zimbabwean case this space reflects middle-class interests, as the conflict between these actors and the former labour leadership in the MDC has shown. The NGO sphere also offers
examples of narrow nepotism as shown by the overlap in the boards of Zimbabwe’s handful of democra­tisation and governance NGOs. International donor support for democratic movements must be understood in light of its capacity to produce pools of patronage similar to those created by the state. The connection between local donor workers and opposition leadership produces the capacity for patronage and corruption as their overlapping personnel and previous relationship has shown in Zimbabwe’s opposition civil society. Possibly the most important observation in the case of Zimbabwe is that support for a professionalised NGO sector may limit the momentum of organic civil society organisations, as the rise of donor funded NGOs effectively ended the effectiveness of national organisations such as the Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress and irreversibly changed the approaches of organisations such as ZIMRIGHTS.

A similar observation from Zimbabwe is that with the formation of the MDC as a counter-hegemonic movement in which the forces of labour were combined with those of the middle class and capital-owning classes, the interests of the middle classes are more likely than the labour movement to influence leadership. The social content of the opposition also influences the strategies used by this movement when engaged in counter-hegemonic actions. The MDC’s focus on elections as the route to hegemony was fraught with the dilemma of semi-authoritarian counter-hegemony. However, without a degree of coercive capacity the movement was not able to enforce the rules of the political game, or indeed to change them in order to level the playing field.

The time it took to bring about change in Zimbabwe was a factor in the overall failure of the MDC’s counter-hegemonic project. Their inability to bring about a speedy change to the dynamics of power exposed the movement’s weaknesses. This may explain the general hypothesis that when faced with a coercive regime, a counter-hegemonic force is more likely to fail the longer it takes to bring about a change in power. This was further underlined by the engagement of the GNU in the passive revolution. Zimbabwe’s experience illustrates the fact that opposition movements entering into governments of national unity after violent elections do so to their detriment. This is because the incumbent hegemonic power usually maintains control over the means of coercion and adjusts its strategies to maintain power. The foregoing observation may allow the positing of a counterfactual hypothesis, that had Morgan
Tsvangirai and the MDC decided not to enter into the government of national unity and had instead insisted on his electoral win in 2008, the MDC may either have had to force the military into an engagement, or to capitulate. Indeed, Zanu-PF may also have been forced to continue its leadership (which in 2008 had proved disastrous) and shoulder the blame for any continued failures.

The events of 2017 indicate that control of the means of coercion is probably the decisive factor in bringing about change in a semi-authoritarian regime. This observation is less optimistic than transition theories as counter-hegemonic movements are seldom in a position to gain coercive dominance. Should they achieve this it would not be without great cost, which may explain why democratic counter-hegemonic change in Africa is so rare. The change in the nature of the leadership in Zimbabwe may confirm transition theories such as those of Guillermo O’Donnell, which emphasise contingent choices by elites and decisions by soft-liners within the regime to bring about reform. These observations can only be stated as hypotheses however, as Zanu-PF’s commitment to democratic change has certainly not been tested. It would also be inaccurate to categorise Emmerson Mnangagwa as a soft-liner given his record during the Gukurahundi, the 2008 elections and indeed the unconstitutional takeover of power in 2017.

How to account for the persistence of authoritarian forms of rule and hybrid regimes in African states

Using the case of Zimbabwe as an example of how a semi-authoritarian regime remained durable despite the presence of a vibrant democratic opposition, this thesis has shown that Gramsci’s theory of political economy provides useful tools for the analysis of regime durability and stalled democratisation movements.

The thesis began with the observation that democratisation in ultimately about changing the rules of the political game or being able to enforce those rules and hold actors that break them to account. However, democratic opposition movements often lack the power to do so. As this thesis has shown in Zimbabwe, democratisation is dependent on the capacity for democratic opposition movements to gain sufficient
political power to change the rules of the game and to ensure that these rules are kept. The thesis has shown that Gramsci’s hegemony framed as the capacity to access and maintain state power, is a valuable method for the analysis of regime durability and change in African states. It is argued here that as the thesis has been able to account for the persistence of authoritarian rule in Zimbabwe, this method is similarly suitable for the analysis of other authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes on the African continent. These include, at the time of writing, Cameroon, Kenya, Ethiopia, Algeria, and Democratic Republic of Congo. The method can also be applied to research designs that consider previously durable regimes and how they eventually collapsed; recent examples are Yaya Jammeh’s fall in Gambia in 2017, and Blaise Compaoré’s decline in Burkina Faso in 2014. This thesis also rejects the teleological arguments of democratic transition and consolidation theory which might consider states such as South Africa Botswana, Namibia and Ghana to be consolidated democracies and therefore immune to the dynamics of semi-authoritarian regimes noted above. It is therefore argued that the Gramscian method is also applicable to analysing the political economies and democratic trajectories of these countries.

The Gramscian tool of the historical bloc, which consists of elements of the mode of production (the base) with ideological and cultural frameworks to explain these societies (the superstructure), illuminates the study of counter-hegemonic democratisation movements on the African continent. This underscores the importance of a historical analysis of how authoritarian regimes came to power. The historical study of how movements such as the Front de Liberation National in Algeria, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front in Ethiopia, or the off-shoots of the Parti Democratique du Cote D’Ivoire in the Ivory Coast and the Kenya African National Union established and defended their hegemony may provide explanations for the durability of the rule of these parties. Bereketeab et al. (2016) have shown how national liberation movements in the cases listed above were able to combine coercive instruments of state with ideological frameworks which legitimated their rule. These were rooted in a reference to colonial dispossession in a manner which contributes to the durability of these forms of regime. Framing the history of such durable regimes within the economic structures of the mode of production and class interests in the state, as well as ideological and cultural superstructures, is an effective tool for
analysing their political economies. The Gramscian method does not discount the salience of identities other than class, including tribe (Kenya, DRC, Ethiopia), linguistic differences (Cameroon) or religion (Nigeria). However, these are contextualised in their relationship to production and accumulation as articulated through state power. The method is also applicable to other hegemonic parties which may not currently behave in authoritarian ways, without assuming that they will remain as they are. These include the African National Congress in South Africa in power since 1994 and the Botswana Democratic Party which has been in power since 1965. The historical bloc has been useful in framing the various phases of Zimbabwe’s colonial and post-colonial history and how modes of accumulation have created the various class structures and their interests. To this material reality of production, the concept of the historical bloc integrates the ideological and cultural superstructure with an awareness of material and economic realities.

The second contribution of the Gramscian method is the theory of hegemony, understood as the continuum between consent and coercion in maintaining political power. In the Zimbabwean case the thesis showed how Zanu-PF has been able to maintain in its hegemonic authority by a combination of consent or coercion used to varying degrees at different periods. This view of hegemony consists of the combination of elements of different forms of violence with the ideological and cultural capacity to convert segments of the population and would be useful for understanding the supremacy of political leadership in any African state and the extent to which this leadership is based on the use of consent or coercion. Among suitable examples, the analysis of hegemony as the combination of consent and coercion would be useful for understanding hegemony in Rwanda under Paul Kagame’s Rwandan Peoples Front, or Burundi under Pierre Nkurunzinza’s Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie, CNDD–FDD. The dominance of semi-authoritarian regimes across the continent can be explained by the extent to which they are either capable of applying sufficient coercive power to ensure conformity, or by their ability to generate adequate consent. The generation of consent can also be determined by the extent to which hegemonic forces are composed of organic intellectuals who effectively articulate material reality into ideological and cultural frameworks, which resonate with a majority of the population. Certainly, the
consent component may impose fewer costs but its combination with an effective threat of violence helps to contain its risks.

Where hegemonic parties are faced with a viable opposition, the Gramscian method provides a framework for analysing these counter-hegemonic movements. As noted above, these political parties and civil society organisations should not be considered as necessarily democratic, which democratic transition theories tend to do. This thesis shows that counter-hegemonic actors must be situated in the historical bloc by analysing the social content of these movements and how and where their leadership and membership fit within the national modes of production. The extent to which a movement’s methods combine elements of coercion and consent is therefore a crucial factor in studying their success or failure. Gramsci theorised that the balance of hegemonic forces has three planes; firstly economic forces, the mode of accumulation and production, and the development of material forces; secondly the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness and organisation; and thirdly the relation of military forces which means both coercive power and ideological consent. Some examples of counter-hegemonic movements to which these methods can be appropriately applied are: the Kenyan civil society-driven democratisation forces in the late 1990s, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy in Zambia in the early 1990s, and Etienne Tshisekedi’s Union pour la Democratie et le Progres Social in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The counter-hegemonic actions these movements take can be categorised according to the Gramsci’s war of position, which consists of ideological actions in the form of consent building; or war of movement which consists of direct political engagement such as mass strikes or indeed coups d’état. In other words, counter-hegemonic movements as with ruling groups need to have the forces that enable them to command loyalty and promote action both through persuasion or consent and through coercion. Hence the nature of African oppositional movements that are similar to ruling groups in that they seek to monopolise territory and enlist mass armies of youthful supporters. Physical presence and on-the-ground activism remain critical components in many African electoral setting. The Gramscian theory unlike democratisation theory would not see civil society as inherently good and a bulwark against the tyrannical state. Rather it situates democracy promoting NGOs within the national and international political economy which also considers the role
of donor funding in the interests of national NGOs.

Another key Gramscian concept observed in Zimbabwe which may be generalised to other African regimes in passive revolution. As noted above the formation of the GNU in 2008 is an example of a passive revolution as the counter-hegemonic party’s failure to gain power over ministries related to state security (and therefore coercion) adversely affected their ability to bring about any conclusive change in the nature of hegemony. National Unity Government’s as a method of passive revolution can be corroborated in the case of Kenya in 2007 as well. The 2017 coup in Zimbabwe is also representative of passive revolutions as various versions of “coup a la Zimbabweene” have taken place on the continent in which ruling parties have been able to remove their long-standing leaders without bringing about any overall change in the form of the regime. Since late 2017 Ethiopia, Algeria and Sudan have all seen such changes in leadership and only Sudan appears to have brought about a more inclusive transition though the change is far from decisive.

The Zimbabwean case has provided some observations which can be stated as hypotheses and these might guide the application of Gramscian methods to the analysis of durable regimes and counter-hegemonic challenges in Africa. One hypothesis worth considering in comparative analysis is the primacy of coercion over consent in maintaining or changing regime forms. Using Zimbabwe as an example, it may be reasonable to infer that the reason why semi-authoritarian regimes remain durable is that they maintain an overwhelming capacity for coercion. One could therefore posit that while consent generation may be necessary it is not sufficient to bring about hegemonic change. A second hypothesis based on the Zimbabwean case would be that the collapse of structural employment reduces the capacity for interest aggregation and thus for a working-class or labour-driven opposition movement. In addition, where opposition movements incorporate multiple overlapping class identities, these contradictory interests may curtail their capacity to engage in counter-hegemonic action.

Taking the recent history of negotiated settlements as a recommendation for settling disputed elections, the Zimbabwean case may indicate that such settlements are likely to produce situations of passive revolution which harm the counter-hegemonic
challenge and protect the hegemonic powers. Hypothetically, counter-hegemonic change may only come about where the counter-hegemonic power has achieved coercive dominance or there is a coercive stalemate.

These scenarios are stated purely as hypotheses based on observations from the Zimbabwean case. This thesis has also indicated that by applying such questions to account for the durability of authoritarianism in Zimbabwe, the Gramscian theory of historical political economy is equally applicable elsewhere for the generation and testing of hypotheses accounting for the durability of authoritarian regimes in Africa as well as other geographical contexts.
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