ZIMBABWE @40

Monograph ~ II

Zimbabwe at 40: Elusive Development, Fragile Democracy

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by **Lloyd Sachikonye**

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About the Author

Lloyd Sachikonye is a Professor of Political Science based at UZ where he has researched and taught for 30 years. His main research interests relate to democratic processes in Africa and development strategies in Southern Africa. Amongst his many publications are *Civil Society, State and Democracy* (1995), *When the State turns on its Citizens* (2011) and *Zimbabwe's Lost Decade* (2012). Prof. Sachikonye is a founding Trustee of the International Development Institute (IDI).

Acronyms

BACOSSI	Basic Commodities Supply Side Intervention
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
COPAC	Constitutional Parliamentary Committee
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CZI	Confederation of Zimbabwe Industry
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EOM	Election Observation Mission
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
FFYNDP	First Five Year National Development Plan
FPTP	First Past the Post
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GNU	Government of National Unity
GOZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GPA	Global Political Agreement
ICT.	Information Communication Technology
IFIs.	International Financial Institutions.
JOC	Joint Operations Command
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
MDC-A	Movement for Democratic Change-Alliance
MERP	Millennium Economic Recovery Programme
MTP	Medium-Term Plan
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NEDPP	National Economic Development Priority Programme
NERP	National Economic Revival Programme
NSSA	National Social Security Authority
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PR.	Proportional Representation
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community.
SOE	State-owned Enterprise

STERP	Short Term Economic Revival Programme
TSP	Transitional Stabilisation Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States dollar
WB	World Bank
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZIDERA	Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
Zim ASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation

Preface

Zimbabwe became 40 in April 2020. It is a birthday that represents a landmark in a new nation's development and history. A span of 40 years could denote some sense of maturity, durability and stability, or as some would prefer, a nation-in-the-making. It is a reminder that the country will reach its half-century in the not-too-distant future. A fortieth birthday is therefore a major vantage point from which to look back over the past four decades and ahead to the next decade.

Zimbabwe began its independent statehood as a middle-income country. By 2020, it had regressed to become a low-income country. This monograph offers a review of this period, its evolution and experiences, development and governance. It is introspective. How has Zimbabwe sought to achieve development in a broad sense? How has it grappled with its twin inheritance of industrialised enclave and subsistence periphery economies? These are the key questions that we address in examining how Zimbabwe has managed its development process since 1980. There have been challenges but also opportunities for the government that took the reins of power in 1980. We now explore how the new state has steered both development and governance during the last 40 years.

Development relates to quantitative material and qualitative changes that occur as a society makes a transition from a subsistence to a modern economy. It is a process that seeks to overcome, 'poverty, ignorance and disease'. Development in this sense is not merely economic growth but social development in its broadest sense.

A country's development process cannot be assessed without considering its politics and governance system. Choices and decisions about development presuppose issues of power, its distribution and management. This is where politics comes in. If, indeed, politics is about 'who gets what, when and how', then these core questions apply to how development is managed. This monograph offers a modest attempt to explore 'who got what, when and how' since 1980, thereby acknowledging the symbiosis between development and governance; what happens in one sector deeply influences what occurs in the other.

Zimbabwe has expressed its aspirations for development and democracy in many forums, plans and declarations. Its Constitution overwhelmingly approved in a national referendum in 2013 embodies these aspirations. Here we seek to tentatively answer the recurring questions of why our development seems to remain elusive, and why democracy remains.

Consisting of four parts, the monograph first explores the conceptual framework of development, and then considers a variety of perspectives on Zimbabwe's development. The second part examines the patterns of accumulation and challenges of economic management during the four decades. In the third section, the intersection between economic and political issues is illuminated; and the factors that conspired to constrain development are explained at length. The fourth part summarises and concludes with some broad recommendations.

1

Elusive Development, Fragile Democracy

1.1 Introduction

There are few examples in Africa of a country and society whose inheritance and bounty were as enviable as that of Zimbabwe in 1980. Although engaged in a liberation war and battered by sanctions for fifteen years, its economy was resilient and promising at independence. Its infrastructure was remarkably sound, and its economy the second most industrialised on the African continent. On his first visit to Harare in 1980, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania was so pleasantly surprised by what he saw that he described the country as 'a jewel', decades before its diamond wealth was 'discovered'. Although a self-governing settler colony for 90 years with a white minority population of a quarter million plus several million blacks, shrewd economic stewardship had generated steady development over those decades. Aspiring for dominion status like other British white dominions, the colony had laid foundations for a self-reliant and vibrant economy that did not only specialise in raw materials but also in industrial processing.

However, the inheritance in 1980 was a mixed blessing to the new black rulers. On one hand, there was a sophisticated economy buttressed by a sound infrastructure to inherit and maintain. On the other, there were vestiges of colonialism and discrimination that had created a dual economy in which millions of Africans were still largely consigned to subsistence farming and livelihoods. Scholars described the sophisticated part of the economy as an 'enclave' in an underdeveloped periphery (Arrighi, 1973; Mhone, 2000; Kanyenze, Kondo, Chitambara and Martens, 2011). The dual economy phenomenon was not confined to Zimbabwe but was an inheritance like in other former white settler colonies of Namibia and South Africa. Islands of sophisticated development co-existed with backward rural peripheries in a sea of underdevelopment.

The momentous challenge for the new black rulers was how to maintain a delicate balance between maintaining and perhaps expanding the advanced heights of their inherited economy, while pulling up the backward peripheries of subsistence economy containing large reservoirs of labour. Ultimately, the new ruling elite would be judged on whether they would demonstrate ingenuity and originality in spreading development to the rural periphery and amongst the urban black population. In short, their record would be judged on whether they uplifted the lives of the majority of their population from 'poverty, hunger and disease'.

This short historical snapshot of the past 40 years directs the spotlight onto what we really mean by 'development'. It is a process denoting material progress and socio-economic change but it is a concept that was not widespread pre-World War 2. We subscribe to the view that development is based on a set of interrelated processes that lead to the transformation of essentially rural, agricultural societies into urban, industrial nations (Kanyenze, 2018:76). Of central importance are processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and the growth of the working and middle classes. Development entails material growth that leads to qualitative changes in a society. Collectively, these changes define the transformation of a traditional economy into a modern economic system (ibid. 76).

Using this conceptual framework:

- does Zimbabwe's experience in the past 40 years amount to 'development'?
- If so, what kind of 'development' has occurred, and with what transformative effects on society? And,
- To what extent has the population been uplifted in its economic and social conditions since 1980?

These are basic questions that we explore in the first part of this discussion. We link these development questions to political and governance conditions in Zimbabwean society in the second part. We explore conditions that have been *favourable* or *unfavourable* for development during the period under review taking into account that development and governance processes are symbiotic. Broadly speaking, the monograph explores the fragility of both development and democracy during the past 40 years.

1.2 Perspectives on Development in Zimbabwe

There is more than one school of thought on development in Zimbabwe. Four approaches can be identified. The first can be termed variously as the *nationalist, socialist-oriented and radical approach*. During the first decade of independence, emphasis was placed on state intervention in the economy and ending what was termed 'imperialist exploitation'. At the same time, there was recognition that the reality of the capitalist basis of the economy required a pragmatic approach. Early indications of direction of development policy included the 'Growth with Equity' statement in 1981 as well as the Transitional National Development Plan (TNDP) of 1982 (GoZ, 1981, 1982). The objective to 'achieve greater and more equitable degree of ownership of natural resources including land, and ownership of a significant proportion of the economy by nationals and the State' contained a nationalist thrust (GoZ, 1981). This thrust would be broadly consistent through the following decades culminating in the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) of 2000, and the Indigenisation and Empowerment Act of 2007.

The radical thrust of this nationalist approach would be quite evident during the land reform process of 2000- 2003. Some analysts (Moyo and Yeros, 2007) saw revolutionary potential in land reform noting that peripheral capitalism had been unable to resolve the national and agrarian questions leading to recurrent economic, social and political crises. They saw a potential revolutionary situation in the late 1990s and early 2000s during which socio-political conflict escalated, formal democratic norms and procedures were partially suspended, agrarian property rights were abrogated, and bureaucratic hierarchy itself was suspended in the countryside (ibid. 107). The ambitions of this approach were national ownership and control of resources although the strategy for that, beyond seizure of assets, was not made clear; or made feasible to ensure continuity of production at a high level. National ownership and control of resources was not a sufficient ingredient for development success, as later decades would amply demonstrate.

The second approach was the *neo-liberal and market-led perspective* that gave primacy to market forces, and a reduced role of the state. In this approach, there was a confluence of interests of the Zimbabwean state and international financial institutions (IFIs) principally the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The main pillars in this approach was the greater emphasis placed on macroeconomic stabilisation, trade liberalisation and deficit reduction. This was implemented more explicitly through structural adjustment programmes as in Zimbabwe's second decade (from 1990 to 1995), and in its fourth decade (2018 to 2020).

What was the record of this particular approach to development? Although it was implemented with considerable fanfare in 1991, Zimbabwe's economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) failed to meet its targets that had been set as:

- 5 per cent annual growth;
- reduction of the budget deficit to 5 per cent of GDP by 1995;
- reduction of the debt service ratio to 20 per cent by 1995 and
- public enterprise reforms, amongst others (GoZ, 1991:4).

Many post-mortems identified inherent weaknesses in the programme's neo-liberal thrust, which was premised on the markets producing a correction to the economy and providing greater stimulus ((Gibbon, 1995; Sachikonye, 1995).

Amongst some of the outcomes of the neo-liberal programme were considerable retrenchments, decline in real wages and an increase in the incidence of poverty from 40% in 1990 to 63% in 1995. Although some financial inflows had come into country, the economic and social conditions had not improved. The WB itself (1995) admitted that there had been mistakes in sequencing of trade liberalisation and rationalisation of tariff, tax and export incentive regimes, amongst other shortcomings.

The Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP) of 2018 to 2020 seemed to demonstrate that lessons from the neo-liberal thrust of ESAP had not been learnt. The TSP sought to:

- stabilise the macro-economy and financial sector;
- introduce policy and institutional reforms to transform to a private sector led economy;
- launch quick-wins to stimulate growth and
- stimulate domestic production, exporting, rebuilding and transforming the economy to an upper middle-income status by 2030 (GoZ, 2018: 7).

By mid-2020, however, there was little to show for the much-vaunted TSP. The economy was anaemic with inflation at 838% in July 2020, and the domestic currency in a free fall. Poverty rates had shot up to 70% with extreme poverty at about 34% cent (Kanyenze, 2020). The mounting evidence of negative growth convinced some analysts to conclude that far from stabilising the economy, TSP had actually destabilised it (ibid.). Clearly, there had been major flaws in the neo-liberal development approach, especially in the short- and medium-term programmes like ESAP and TSP.

The third perspective on the development process has put *emphasis on historical and spatial dimensions*. The process of enclave development created islands or zones of modern industrial development while neglecting the rural peripheries where subsistence economies hardly changed. Progress in the enclaves co-existed with stagnation in the rural subsistence sector. Thus development was experienced by a few while underdevelopment was the fate of the majority of the population. This persisted after independence.

According to this perspective, *the dualism that characterises 'enclave development' explains a perennial challenge of underutilisation of resources, implying underdevelopment*. The latter is a reflection of an embedded economic dualism associated with the 'grafted' type of capitalism that developed during colonialism and after (see Kanyenze et al. 2011: 5). It was not development that integrated all sectors, urban and rural, advanced and emerging. While labour resources were drawn from the rural and urban peripheries to feed development in the enclave, stagnation persisted in the former. Not only was the rural sector in a peripheral relationship to the enclave economy, it was also a reservoir of cheap labour supplies. It also provided the social function of acting as the repository for spent labour from the formal and informal sectors (ZCTU, 1996). There lacked a formula that ensured simultaneous development in the enclave and periphery both in the colonial and post-colonial eras.

A further insight from this perspective of dualism is that an enclave economy lacks capacity to generate internal savings and hence relies on foreign investment and development aid that pre-empts the need for self-generated savings. The implication of this structural deformity is that:

> the trickle-down effects from the formal sector are too weak to transform and absorb these sectors into formal activities. Thus market forces on their own would simply perpetuate this dualism, even in the presence of some growth… (ibid.).

Furthermore, an enclave economy would be limited by the nature of the system itself: the fact that a large segment of the labour force would be engaged in low-productivity activities that make effective demand low, thus limiting the domestic market size. In such a situation of low internal demand, there is reinforced dependency of the enclave economy on external demand.

In sum, while the formal or enclave sector is market-driven, the non-formal sectors on the periphery rely on a combination of market and traditional modes of behavior and resource utilisation that reinforce the prevalence of low productivity and low incomes as well as continued marginalisation. As it was emphasised:

> the existence of enclavity, dualism and dependency implies that the economy is disjointed in a structural manner, which is self-reinforcing. Apart from specific macroeconomic policies that may be undertaken at any given point in time, the prevailing economic environment is structurally compromised in terms of economic efficiency… (ibid.)

This development perspective underscores how large and complicated the process of transforming an enclave economy would be. Conventional neo-liberal and other orthodox approaches would be inadequate for such a task. Similarly insufficient would be superficial ‘development plans’ that do not address the core issue of enclavity.

The fourth development perspective that we explore relates to *a structural analysis that assesses both the legacy of the inherited colonial economy and the potential role of agency* in social and economic change. Industrial growth and diversification during the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) period from 1965 to 1979 showed possibilities of an enclave economy providing an anchor for growth. Deliberate state-directed policies to direct investment and conserve foreign exchange were other dimensions of a development strategy that showed promise in attaining an export orientation and domestic expansion.

According to this perspective, Zimbabwe continued to be a semi-peripheral economy – witness its profound reliance on exports of primary commodities, extreme differentiation in wealth and income (Bond, 1998: 152). Following independence, its reliance on international capital and policy advice grew steadily. This was somewhat veiled during the 1980s by a combination of radical populist rhetoric and the steady hand of what was then a relatively strong but largely white national capitalist class (ibid. 152).

During the 1980s, an opportunity to pursue policies that maintained steady growth and diversification was missed. Some analysts believed that stagnation in the key sectors essentially represented a continuation of crisis tendencies that had surfaced in the mid-1970s (ibid. 164). Profits in most productive sectors were anaemic during most of the 1980s. The broad process was one in which the steady industrialisation of the 1960s and 1970s would be succeeded by the onset of de-industrialisation in the 1990s.

The thrust of this development perspective is that the new state was not proactive enough in using whatever space existed for a bold development policy. Its grip on policy making was weak. For instance, during the immediate post-independence period, financial institutions carried on business as usual:

> [S]tate intervention was aimed at buying a small part of the banking system for an emergent black financial elite, rather than transforming it for the country's majority…' (ibid. 185).

The response of the new ruling elite lacked vision, consistency and drive. It needed these resources to address the legacies of enclavity and resistance by the white business class to measures to expedite access to wealth creating opportunities. Instead, the new elite was less than enthusiastic to provide space for an emergent black bourgeoisie. Throughout the first two decades of independence, the new post-independence government displayed considerable nervousness over the emergence of such a bourgeoisie as it was viewed as a threat to its political control. The possibility of a rival power centre based on black business interests was an anathema to the leadership in government and ruling party.

2

Development and Phases of Accumulation

It is customary to review Zimbabwe's development process in terms of distinct phases in the post-independence period. There is a tendency to define the phases in relation to decades with the 1980s viewed as formative years that experienced relatively cautious and pragmatic policies. Conventional analysis highlights the focus that was made in the 1980s on creating stability in the economy and significant investment in the social sectors of education and health (see Mandaza, 1986; Cliffe and Stoneman, 1989).

On the other hand, the 1990s are also viewed as a decade in which there was a switch to neo-liberal economic measures encapsulated in ESAP, and stiff resistance to these measures largely by labour, but also by adversely affected sections of the bourgeoisie. The resistance forced an economic about-turn towards the end of the decade. Against the background of pressure from a vocal civil society, and the formation of a new opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the ruling elite seemed to panic and switch to authoritarian populist tendencies. An example of populist inspired decisions was the grant of un-budgeted gratuities and pensions to war veterans in 1997 causing an immediate large devaluation of the Zimbabwe dollar.

It is generally agreed that the 2000s experienced significant economic decline in the context of a prolonged political crisis, haphazard land reform, zigzag policies as well as targeted sanctions. Development largely stalled, in fact regressed with the contraction of the economy by more than 40% (UNDP, 2008). The structural impact that land reform had on the economy was largely underestimated not least by the political leadership. The disruption of the linkages between commercial agriculture and manufacturing had far-reaching effects on the economy as a whole, and it would make sustainable recovery very difficult in the following years.

There was a modicum of economic stability during the period of the Government of National Unity (GNU) from 2009 to 2013. Under the stewardship of an MDC finance minister, Tendai Biti, the economy grew as investments flows resumed. However, this recovery was undermined with the return to profligate spending and corruption in the last four years of Mugabe's rule from 2013 to 2017. There was a sense of *déjà vu* with the return of currency instability precipitated by the introduction of bond notes in 2016, and chronic high inflation in 2019 and 2020.

This snapshot of 40 years of economic stop-start policies, phases of growth and contraction, instability and temporary recovery does not convey the complexity of the twists and turns, and how they affected the development process in the *longue durée.* This narrative of the four decades of economic policies should be accompanied by an analytical review and explication of those policies. For example:

- how can the departure from inward-oriented industrialisation of 1970s and frugal monetary policies to de-industrialisation in the 1990s be explained?
- Why did the new elite not actively encourage growth of black business as a counterweight to dominant white and foreign business? and
- How can corruption tendencies that were sown in the 1980s, and proliferated in the 1990s and 2000s be explained?

Amongst others, these questions are pivotal in explaining why development stalled and regressed during the four decades.

We explore these questions with specific reference to the key economic trends in each of the four decades. Some analysts (Moore, 2003; Mkandawire, 2016) have found the analytical concept of accumulation in understanding the broad development process during these decades. A charitable view is that Zimbabwe faced a triple crisis in the post-independence period. This consisted of imperatives of primary or 'primitive accumulation', nation-state formation and democratisation with the crisis coming to a head in late 1990s.

Primitive accumulation related to the change of pre-capitalist agrarian relations of production to capitalist ones. The process of that accumulation required the addressing of race and agrarian questions. Zimbabwe's dilemma was the requirement to address three imperatives simultaneously. It did not help that a bourgeoisie that could have chosen the road to a productive and industrially based accumulation in the early to mid-1980s chose neo-liberal policies that led to financial speculation and underutilisation of alienated land (Moore, 2003: 39). A related perspective is that the initial conditions created by settler colonialism, the nature of liberation struggle and the multiplicity of telescoped transitions that Zimbabwe has had to handle over the four decades simply overloaded the political system (Mkandawire, 2016: 2).

2.1 Development in the 1980s

But how was the question of development itself handled in the first decade of independence? The two key instruments used were the Transitional National Development Plan (TNDP) covering 1982 to 1985, and the First Five Year National Development Plan (FFYNDP) covering 1986 to 1990. For its part, the TNDP spelt out ambitious development targets:

- expanding of linkages within and between manufacturing and other sectors in the economy;
- promotion of import-substitution policies wherever possible;
- decentralisation of industries;
- promotion of labour-intensive industries
- support for land resettlement of small farmers and
- increase in local participation in the economy (GoZ, 1982).

For its part, the FFYNDP plan sought to achieve an annual growth rate of 5.1% create 28,000 jobs a year and an ambitious USD7 billion investment to be funded 60:40 from domestic and foreign sources respectively.

These two Plans and the annual Budget were the main instruments in the 1980s to pursue development goals. To what extent did they achieve their objectives? Consensus is that they fell short. For example, the TNDP period mainly registered negative growth in 1982 and 1983 followed by a slight recovery of 1.3 per cent growth in 1984. Employment generation was below target while investment declined over the three-year plan period. By 1985, the volume of investment in fixed assets was one-fifth below its 1982 level, and the share of productive sectors in total investment fell below 40% (Kanyenze et al. 2011: 36).

While growth picked up during the FFYNDP period in 1986-1990, employment grew more slowly below target, and the budget deficit climbed to about 10% of GDP. How can failure to meet plan targets and development ambitions during the 1980s be explained? The first shortfall was inadequate capacity amongst the new black bureaucrats who had limited knowledge and experience in planning. There was not only a shortage of planners but also a poor understanding of what planning entailed (Stoneman, 1988).

As an example of lack of real planning content in the government's economic plans, projected growth depended on achieving an export growth rate of 7% per annum without addressing constraints in the domestic economy besetting that growth (Cliffe and Stoneman, 1989). In addition to lack of realism in target setting, the process was in no sense comprehensive 'central planning'. There were no attempts to use indicative planning techniques to ensure compatibility. Furthermore, there were no mechanisms for ensuring compliance with plan targets beyond an implicit assumption that by maintaining tight control over foreign exchange and imports, the state could indirectly thereby control investment decisions.

An analyst observed a difference in planning skill levels between the old and new planners: 'the 1980s bureaucrats were not the same breed as the technocrats of the mid-1960s, steeped in monetary and financial interventionism…' (Bond, 1998:183). Those colonial bureaucrats had effectively conserved capital to serve the project of UDI that entailed extensive diversification and import-substitution industrialisation. This was in contrast to the inexperienced leadership at the Finance ministry in 1980. The new government admitted that there was limited institutional capacity in its ranks, and that weak capacity in line ministries and implementing agencies led to an overstretching of resources devoted to policy analysis and formulation (ibid. 200). There was probably little choice open to the new administration short of slowing the process of Africanisation of the key ministries such as Finance, Commerce and Trade. The deficit in development planning skills would continue to haunt the new government in subsequent decades.

Loose and unrealistic planning was evident in the formulation of ESAP in 1991 and in subsequent plans in the 2000s that tended to set a target of 5 to 6% growth per annum. In the 2000s, there were multiple plans that were hardly implemented or reviewed. This made planning lose credibility as a development instrument. An analyst argued that the key issue was the design of the plans and programmes themselves: *'the targets set are quantitative, not qualitative; it is important to focus on qualitative, human-centred indicators which reflect the ultimate goal of development'* (Kanyenze, 2004:138). To be sure, precision in quantitative planning was equally important.

The deficit in government planning was in both quantitative and qualitative terms. A more damning critique of the unrealism in planning and programming was that:

> plans were more matters of elucidating pleasant ends than setting out the means of achieving them… in the absence of mechanisms to implement these, the plans amounted to not much more than elaborations of how paths to the desired ends would look if they occurred, but offered little help with making them occur… (Stoneman, 1988: 53).

From the TNDP to ESAP, from Zim ASSET to TSP, planning displayed glaring shortfalls and a lack of realism. The absence of a genuine political will to implement and review plans were conspicuous.

Several trends whose genesis can be traced to the 1980s relate to scarcity of investment flows and the decline in the pre-eminence of manufacturing. The underlying reason for lack of new investment can be traced to deeper tendencies of stagnation in the productive sectors of the economy including manufacturing. This made a decisive break with Rhodesian-era structural racism in business and banking extremely difficult (Bond, 1998: 164). Both domestic and foreign investment would be insufficient in the next decades seriously affecting the pace of growth.

A deeper factor in limited investment was insufficient trust in the new government whose rhetoric initially about socialist intentions, and later about property rights, did not increase its credibility. Over-accumulated capital flowed out of the manufacturing sector into financial markets. In the mid-1980s, this tendency was given free reign contributing to a long-term crisis of stagnation (ibid. 142). This explained the stagnation in manufacturing and growth in the financial sector, and the subsequent rise of powerful international and local financial interests in policy setting.

We can sum up the factors that derailed the strategies and plans crafted in the 1980s. First, a number of policy blunders were made. Immense pressures were generated as a result of hasty liberalisation of foreign exchange laws. This resulted in outflows of payments and remittances jumping from USD72 million in 1980 to USD206 million in 1982. As a consequence of this policy shift, net foreign assets declined from USD178 million in 1980 to negative levels in 1982, with the debt service ratio increasing thrice to about 30% by 1983 (Kadhani, 1986: 108).

In retrospect, the opening of the economy in 1980 exposed it to a hostile global market, raising dependence on the export of primary commodities that tended to be unstable in price. Additional pressures had come from luxury imports such as cars, and a focus on external markets at the cost of failing to develop an impoverished domestic market in rural areas (Cliffe and Stoneman, 1989: 163-4). To be sure, Zimbabwe's economic elite had regular access to foreign exchange for certain types of luxury consumption; this could have been redirected more rationally.

A valid argument could be made that it was not the lack of foreign exchange during the 1980s, but rather the surplus of foreign exchange in the wrong hands and wrong sectors of the economy that most adversely affected the manufacturing industry (Bond, 1998: 173-74). Some caution would have been necessary before rapid liberalisation soon after independence. While it is possible that the new but inexperienced government did not fully understand the consequences, there was subsequently no evidence that useful lessons were drawn from these policy oversights in later years.

Second, lack of clarity on industrial strategy was another weakness in the 1980s. The co-ordinating capacity of the state left much to be desired especially in defining an industrial policy. The overall development strategy of the 1980s was one based on what was termed the least common denominator of radical and reformist proposals for development (Gordon, 1984: 128).

There was clearly tension between investments in social services and those in industrial and infrastructural sectors. By committing the government to relatively heavy spending in social services, recurrent expenditures skyrocketed. The avoidance of hard choices exacerbated the problem, meaning that the 'cost of avoiding political conflict was the loss of control over expenditures' (ibid.).

In concluding this section on the 1980s, the progress in the two sectors of social development, and land resettlement of small farmers stand out. The political commitment of the new government was clear earning it some deserved legitimacy amongst the population. The achievements in the education sector were indeed impressive with primary school enrolments jumping from about 800,000 in 1979 to 2.2 million in 1985, and secondary school experiencing a dramatic six-fold increase from 79,000 in 1979 to about half a million in 1985 (Chung, 1988: 129).

However, sufficient thought was not paid to employment opportunities for the school leavers. As one educationist observed, the unresolved question was whether the investment in education and training was balanced 'in terms of ensuring that school leavers would be able to find employment once they had completed their studies' (ibid.). The broad question was also whether the curriculum was geared towards solving problems faced by the society, and whether there had been sufficient investment in expanding the economic base so as to create sufficient jobs. The answer to these questions would be negative for the 1980s and the forthcoming decades. While literacy would rise above 90%, and the numbers of secondary school as well as university graduates reach impressive levels, most would become unemployed or migrate to other countries. There should have been a strategy to synchronise education investments and growth in the economic base. This was an instance of success devalued by economic stagnation.

Early progress in land reform in the 1980s is now conventionally overlooked in the shadow of the fast track reform of the 2000s. Yet that phase of land reform should not be ignored. Land redistribution through resettlement achieved a modicum of success through substantially improved yields in the 1980s. An evaluation mission observed that the majority of families resettled had benefited considerably through increased opportunities for income generation, and the availability of services such as health and education (ODA, 1996). Initially skeptical analysts (Kinsey, Deininger and Hoogeven, 2000) changed their position in face of mounting evidence that land resettlement had helped beneficiaries to increase their level of household income significantly. Although less than half of the original target of 162,000 households were resettled by the end of the 1980s, the resettlement programme had notched some success. Limited political will after the expiry of Lancaster House provisions on land acquisition and the strictures of the 'willing seller, willing buyer' formula undermined whatever gains had been made in the 1980s.

By the end of the 1980s, a template had been drawn that would influence policy flip-flops in later decades. These included weak policy towards industrialisation, perpetual shortage of foreign exchange, meagre foreign investment, state impediments to growth of a black bourgeoisie, and absence of a co-ordinated developmental role by the state. These gaps would feature in later decades together with corruption and predatory tendencies.

2.2. Development in the early 1990s: the switch to Structural Adjustment

The recourse to adjustment in Zimbabwe's second decade of independence was an admission by the Mugabe administration that its development strategy in the 1980s had not been successful. Government debt had reached 71% of GDP by 1989, of which 36% was external (GoZ, 1991). As we observed above, private sector investment remained low at 10% of GDP. High fiscal deficit and a tightly regulated business environment deterred investors. Export growth at 3.4% per annum between 1980 and 1989 coupled with debt service repayments severely constrained the growth of imports. This in turn undermined utilisation of existing capacity and re-equipment of plants. A continuation of the policies of the 1980s was unlikely to generate sustainable growth, and such a development transition as had occurred in newly industrialised countries like those in East Asia.

The debate and consultations on whether to switch to a neo-liberal structural adjustment began around 1987 with the major voices for reform emanating from the private sector and IFIs. For its part, the World Bank (WB) argued that the import substitution programme that the government had inherited from the colonial state was exhausted, and that there was need to substantially improve investment incentives. The main private sector body, the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) was converted to this thinking, and to the need for trade liberalisation. In 1988, the Mugabe administration set up a Cabinet committee to examine all aspects of adjustment. It became convinced that the path to greater investment flows was through adoption of the measures advocated by the CZI and WB (Gibbon, 1995: 10).

The economic structural adjustment programme, known for its acronym ESAP, was a five-year conventional stabilisation programme with some features that promised trade and investment growth, as we observed in Section 2. For instance, it promised budget deficit reduction, fiscal and monetary reforms, trade liberalisation, deregulation of investment, labour and price controls as well as public enterprise reforms (including privatisation) (GoZ, 1991:4). Quite ambitious as well was the programme intention to eliminate direct subsidies and transfers to public enterprises by 1995.

Under ESAP, a process of trade liberalisation would be instituted to move from a state-administered, forex-based system to a market-based one. This measure and others were expected to contribute to greater investment inflows that were projected to rise to 25 per cent of GDP by 1995. Furthermore, the adjustment process would result in the creation of 100,000 new jobs in the formal sector between 1992 and 1995.

Although ESAP was sold as a 'home-grown' adjustment programme, the policy intervention and financing by the WB and IMF were considerable. Financing largely depended on the level of progress made in the implementation of the programme. However, most targets were not achieved. Some analysts (Bond and Manyanya, 2003: 32) observed that GDP grew at about 1% from 1991 to 1995 while inflation averaged more than 30%. Meanwhile, the budget deficit had remained stubbornly high at more than 10% during the ESAP period.

Most indicators seemed to point to a failure of ESAP adjustment measures. For instance, one analyst summarised the shortfalls as punitive interest rates and contraction in foreign investment, speculative surge in imports, and a technically deficient implementation owing to poor plan design (Gibbon, 1995:13). A major drought in 1992 threatened to derail ESAP because of significant food imports. Contingency planning had not been integral to the programme. On the whole, ESAP was distinguished for missing its many targets, and exposing the weakness of the adjustment model as a development strategy.

A study commissioned by the national labour centre, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) (1996: 14-15), observed that the immediate combined effect of ESAP and the 1992 drought had been stagflationary. To deal with inflationary pressures, monetary policy was tightened by keeping the rediscount rate high, with adverse consequences on private sector demand for credit. Central government debt more than tripled from Z$ 11 billion in 1990 to about Z$41 billion in 1995 while external debt rose from 41% to 52% of GDP by 1995.

Formal sector employment experienced decline instead of expansion during ESAP. Employment in the non-agricultural sector declined from 940,000 in 1991 to 844,000 in 1992 with many private sector employers shedding permanent employees in preference for casual workers (ibid. 15). By 1995, scores of thousands of workers had been retrenched from the public and private sectors. There was also a marked decline in real wages for the majority of workers.

In sum, the demand reducing consequences of the stabilisation measures under ESAP had far out-weighed the anticipated supply response (ibid.). The stagflationary outcome was a consequence of the inability of the Mugabe administration to restrain growth in money supply by failing to restructure expenditures and rein the budget deficit.

In its evaluation, the WB was candid enough to concede the unsatisfactory outcome of ESAP. In particular, the failure to sequence properly trade liberalisation and other measures such as setting up conditions for rapid expansion of exports early on, placed many domestic firms at a disadvantage and delayed the supply response (World Bank, 1995:11). This newly found wisdom on the part of the WB was an attribute of hindsight for it had been originally dogmatic about the need for a 'big bang' approach to stabilisation and adjustment. However, as in similar cases elsewhere of adjustment programmes gone wrong, it was the implementing government, not the IFIs, that picked the tab for the expensive blunders.

The Zimbabwe government was not agile and flexible enough to modify policy measures as adjustment was being implemented. For example, it was clear halfway through ESAP that many manufacturing firms were operating at a disadvantage in an uneven playing field as they contended with increased external competition while carrying a burden of tax, tariff and regional trade anomalies (ibid.). The net result of these anomalies was a much-weakened manufacturing sector by the mid-1990s.

With a few exceptions, state enterprises (generally termed parastatals) did not perform to expectation during ESAP. In 1994, the operating deficit of nine major enterprises amounted to 3.3% of GDP while in 1995, government inherited parastatal debts amounting to Z$4 billion. Persistent lack-lustre performance and large losses weighed heavily on public finances. This led to increased government debt through domestic borrowing and reduced availability of finance for private sector investment. In short, expectations about state enterprises reform were not met. In fact, they would continue to drain state coffers in later decades.

If there was a government review of ESAP at its end in 1995, it was not made public. If any lessons had been learnt from its implementation, they were not publicised. What took centre stage after 1996 was a new plan entitled Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST). Presented in 1998 as a successor to ESAP, it was meant to be a five -year plan. ZIMPREST targeted budget deficit cuts to 6.5 of GDP by 2001, inflation reduction to 5% by end of 2000, GDP growth of 6% per annum, and creation of 42,000 jobs (see Kanyenze et al.:40). For all its fanfare, ZIMPREST proved stillborn; that it did not take off was partly due to growing skepticism on the part of IFIs regarding commitment to reform by the Mugabe administration.

The failure of economic reform has been attributed to several factors. Technical factors such as wrong sequencing of the reform package, as we observed above. Perhaps the most realistic assessment was that failure was due to a combination of both technical and political factors. It was argued that implementation of reform was poor, and that ESAP programme designers misread and misunderstood the political environment in which they were operating (for example Simpson and Hawkins, 2018). The economic reformers assumed wrongly that politicians were committed to reform when in fact they were more interested in maintaining their monopoly on power than in development.

2.3. Development in the late 1990s: economic storm-clouds gather

Failure to implement economic reforms in the 1990s created social and political resistance especially during the latter part of the decade. Reacting to retrenchments and erosion in wages, labour organised major strikes between 1996 and 1998. Both public and private sector workers organised prolonged strikes, and began to challenge the legitimacy of government policies that were impoverishing, instead of cushioning them during reform. Yet in the mid-1990s, labour did not necessarily pursue a radical agenda. The most that they sought was a re-enactment of a social contract and a regular tripartite forum to discuss socio-economic affairs with the state and organised business. The principal labour federation, the ZCTU pursued a moderate agenda during the mid-1990s in the hope that the Mugabe administration would reciprocate.

However, due to the economic crisis and growing unemployment, the Mugabe administration found its popularity slipping to low levels even amongst its own base, the war veterans. Under the mercurial leadership of Chenjerai Hunzvi, the war veterans demanded entitlements for having fought in the liberation struggle. They pursued a demand for gratuities and pensions relentlessly during the greater part of 1997. Their demand for a payback did not take into account the likely consequences for an economy that was already in the doldrums after a failed reform package. Although he had been overwhelmingly re-elected in the 1996 election, Mugabe seemed to have panicked after a siege by war veterans. By conceding to their demands, Mugabe paid out Z$420 million to the veterans that had not been budgeted for. A proposal for a war veterans' levy to raise this amount was rejected by ZANU-PF itself, business and labour. However, the economic consequences were that on Black Friday in November 1997, the Zimbabwe dollar was significantly devalued, setting a chain reaction throughout the economy. The budget deficit immediately shot up to 12.5% of GDP.

Further inroads into government coffers would follow in 1998 with Zimbabwe's intervention in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Zimbabwe's geopolitical ambitions would be expensive, at about USD300 million per year from 1998 to 2002. The strategic value of Zimbabwe's intervention was unclear but it was a major drain on the country's limited resources. Zimbabwe was unable to recoup the costs although some senior military officers and well-connected businessmen made windfall gains.

The late 1990s thus witnessed Zimbabwe's overstretch within the region at great expense at precisely the stage when its economy was at a very low ebb, and its relations with donors were beginning to deteriorate. As some analysts observed, this period represented a watershed:

> … all the while unemployment continued to mount, and public spending on health and education was cut. GDP growth was reversed in the 1990s to leave the country with per capita incomes in 2000 (in constant Zimbabwe dollars) that were 15 per cent lower than at Independence… Less than a quarter million jobs were created between 1980 and 1998. The percentage of the total population employed in the formal sector fell from 14 per cent in 1980 to 11 per cent in 1998. Poverty deepened and a chronic crisis of un-fulfilled expectations developed… (Simpson and Hawkins, 2018: 77).

It was not an accident that food riots exploded in 1998 in several urban centres. A response to a deep erosion of incomes, they could not be repressed by the police on their own and the army was drawn in, perhaps for the first time since independence, to suppress urban riots.

As Zimbabwe's second decade closed, the country was on the brink of an economic precipice. Stagnation gave way to decline. How can this state of affairs be explained? The Mugabe administration's capacity to steer the economy in a positive direction seemed to consistently diminish instead of growing. The competence and skills of bureaucrats and technocrats seemed to be declining. Mugabe himself became more autocratic, if not authoritarian, as the decade drew to a close. As we will also observe in a later section, corruption became more widespread during the 1990s, undermining the economy and the system's legitimacy. Well before targeted sanctions were applied against the administration, the economy was in a poor shape.

In a more democratic environment, the 1990s would likely have generated electoral change in leadership in order to reverse the economic crisis. New policies and perhaps realignment of relations with donors would have occurred. Perhaps a new social contract would have been negotiated with organised business, labour and civil society. In an authoritarian setting such as Zimbabwe, this was blocked. Even so, a constitutional pressure group, the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) would be established in 1997 to advocate for a people-driven constitution. By 1999, a new opposition party mainly drawn from the labour movement would be formed under Morgan Tsvangirai. However, manipulation of the electoral process through intimidation, violence and rigging ensured continued tutelage by Mugabe while constitutional reform was stalled. The stalled development process and mismanagement by the Mugabe administration would enter a new era of the decade of the 2000s when both the economy and politics would experience an implosion.

Several unresolved issues illustrated lack of empathy in the Mugabe administration towards the black business class. While white business was viewed as a competitor and racial in outlook, there was no decisive attempt to integrate black business into the economic mainstream. Instead there was a tendency to view black entrepreneurs as both a business and political threat, hence concerted attempts to block their rise except when they were dependent on state patronage (see accounts of Strive Masiyiwa on the 1990s, and Edwin Moyo on the 2000s). The former would later become one of the richest businessmen in the country after his telecommunications firm expanded internationally; he recalled how ''the police regularly called him for interviews' in an orchestrated campaign of state harassment (Masiyiwa, undated; Moyo, 2016).

The hostility to black business frustrated entrepreneurship that could have provided opportunities for growth and employment openings. If supportive packages had been systematically provided to black business, it was possible that the class could have grown in numbers and scope by the 1990s.

As we will observe at length in a later section, land reform would take central place in development thinking in the post-2000 period. But the context would be quite different from the modest incremental approach of the 1980s and early 1990s. Land reform would be both an economic process and political project that yielded electoral gains for the Mugabe administration. The economic outcome was decidedly mixed: it allowed for black accumulation and wider distribution but also significant rupture in the economy that would result in a prolonged contraction, and continued de-industrialisation. We now turn to the development process in the (a) 2000s and (b) post-2013 period.

2.4 2000 to 2020: the lost development decades

If the first and second independence decades experienced unimpressive stewardship of the development process, the two decades beginning 2000 would witness contraction, decline followed by stop-start growth. As the Mugabe administration dug in using every authoritarian trick, the economy began to shrink precipitously. Perhaps the two biggest factors that dealt a blow to the economy, and therefore the development process broadly, was the fast track land reform, and the creation of hyperinflationary conditions in a context of declining investor confidence.

Fast track land reform was a knee-jerk response to loss of a referendum vote in 2000, and commercial farmers' support for the MDC party. This is not to argue that land reform was not overdue. Some sporadic land occupations spearheaded by small farmers had occurred in 1998 in Masvingo and Mashonaland East provinces. But some semblance of order had been restored subsequently.

The 2000 land invasions were different in scale, purpose and leadership. The scale was huge and nation-wide. Land reform had a dual purpose: to redistribute land to blacks, small and large farmers, and a political motive to shore up the lagging electoral fortunes of ZANU-PF. It was not an accident that the process occurred in a contested context of heightened political mobilisation and violence especially between 2000 and 2003. It was a context that ensured disorder, chaos, disruptions and absence of rational planning. The term *'jambanja'* was used to depict the coercive and unplanned land invasions. Since there have been extensive studies on that land reform, only a brief summary of its trajectory may be attempted here (see Cliffe, Alexander, Cousins and Gaidzanwa, 2011; Moyo and Chambati, 2013). Three phases may be identified. The first phase ran between the onset of the land invasions soon after the February 2000 referendum, and continued to build up to the parliamentary elections of June 2000. This was a phase in which there was neither an officially defined programme nor clear direction to the invasions. The elements of orchestration, coercion and violence against farmers, farm workers and opposition party activists were strong in this first phase.

The post-election period beginning in July 2000 marked a second phase in which the government for the first time defined the parameters of the FTLRP. The programme targets were specified and implemented at an accelerated 'fast-track' pace. The amount of land to be distributed increased from 5 million hectares to 9 million and then to 11 million hectares. The number of beneficiaries increased to 150,000 households under the A1 scheme, and 51,000 under the A2 model. This more expansive phase lasted between July 2000 and September 2001.

The third phase of *jambanja* ran from the last quarter of 2001 to 2003 even though the Mugabe administration had announced that the FTLRP had come to a close in August 2002. After 2003, land invasions continued intermittently, and seemed to peak at election time. Although these invasions have been of low-intensity nature, they mostly involved politicians, army officers and state bureaucrats seeking to increase their land holdings or acquire fresh and better-endowed land.

Our focus in this monograph is not so much on the narrative of the trajectory of the FTLRP but on its ramifications on the economy. Its disruptive impact has not been given the scholarly attention that it deserves. The lack of planning on how land reform could create linkages and synergies with manufacturing and other sectors robbed the country of a major opportunity for *a development transition*. Elsewhere, we observed that in the absence of a land reform that supported the growth of an agro-industry that supported creation of many jobs, and of increased linkages between agriculture and industry, there was little likelihood of a successful industrial transition (Sachikonye, 2012: 96-97). There was no strategy within the FTLRP to systematically nurture and maintain the agriculture-industry interconnections that had been built over many decades.

Policy makers missed an opportunity to set agriculture-industry linkages on a sustainable path by drawing more small farmers into production and diversification into small and medium-sized industries. The opportunity to enlarge the domestic market for various inputs such as seed, fertiliser, equipment, irrigation materials and consumer goods amongst smallholders were missed in the 1980s and 1990s. So was an opportunity to extend and consolidate backward and forward linkages between industry and smallholder agriculture in the 2000s. This would have been one path to break the dualism embedded in the Zimbabwean economy and society since colonialism.

For latter day land reformers, it is astounding that the planning of good practices in agriculture-industry linkages was not uppermost in their priorities. It was not as if there had not been such thinking in some quarters that increased demand in agriculture for industrial goods would result in an expansion of output in the manufacturing sector thereby increasing profits and savings or re-investible earnings to spur further expansion (ZCTU, 1996:17). The supply of cheap wage goods in the form of food and cheap raw materials from the rural sector would lower costs of production in the industrial sector, and reinforce productivity and output expansion. The increased demand for goods in rural areas would be used as an opportunity to promote decentralisation of industry to smaller towns and growth points. A symbiotic relationship between the two sectors would be strengthened while steadily demolishing dualism.

At the outset of land reform, over half of inputs into agriculture were supplied by the manufacturing sector while in the reverse direction some 44% of agricultural output was sold to manufacturing. Of this over 94% was supplied by the commercial farming sector, and the balance by small producers (Simpson and Hawkins, 2018:110). Inevitably, during FTLRP, the disarticulation of these inter-sectoral linkages and their ripple effects were felt widely and rapidly in the economy. For instance, between 2000 and 2008, value added in manufacturing declined by 62% (ibid.). While most focus was on the amount of land that was acquired for distribution – and it was impressive by any standards – the qualitative social and economic consequences for the largely agro-based economy were missed or minimised in the discourse on reform.

The economy was shaken at its core by the land disruptions, and would take decades to recover. As it was summed up:

> on the cost side, not only was there the damage done to the economy as a result of the severing of previously symbiotic linkages between agriculture and industry, a rupturing that was a significant contributor to the negative growth rates of the crisis decade, but also a weakening of the institutional fabric that will take decades to repair… (ibid.99).

The ramifications of the collapse of production during FTLRP are still playing out some two decades later. It is unfortunate that the land reform debate and policy had not put the inter-linkages at the centre of analyses. While positive in their contribution, the restoration of commodity production like tobacco, albeit after more than ten years, has not led to the recovery of the linkages to their original scale.

For the remainder of the economy, the 2000s were a roller coaster. Not only did it shrink by over 40% by 2008, it experienced a combination of acute shortages of key inputs like electricity, fuel and fertiliser amongst others. Foreign exchange scarcity exacerbated the shortages to the detriment of the economy. Hyperinflationary conditions were rampant in the 2000s becoming the highest inflation rate in the world at the time. From 57% in 1999, it accelerated to over 1000% in 2006 before climbing to 231 million per cent in September 2008 (Kanyenze, 2018:82). Economic instability was compounded by *ad hoc* measures such as quasi-fiscal operations of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ).

In economic policy design and implementation during the 2000s, the political factor loomed larger. One survey observed that:

> political imperatives took precedence over economic goals in exchange rate policy and pricing policies of parastatals. Economic policies seem to have been driven by the need to secure immediate and medium-term goals, while paying scant attention to collateral social and economic consequences of such actions… (UNDP, 2008: 211)

It appeared that economic decisions and programmes formulated after 2000 had a primary rationale of prolonging ZANU-PF's stay in office. The Mugabe administration's overall objective was to avoid what was colloquially termed 'regime change'. Sensing its vulnerability in forthcoming elections, it deployed two instruments. The first was extensive patronage that consisted of material incentives to retain its supporters and buy votes. The second was coercion against opposition supporters. In such a context, there was little likelihood of rational economic policies with a medium and long-term perspective. Even so, a number of plans with names such as the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) in 2001, the National Economic Revival Plan (NERP) in 2003, the Macroeconomic Policy Framework (2005-06) and the National Economic Development Priority Programme (NEDPP) in 2007 were abandoned soon after their launch. Clearly, there was little political will for their implementation.

Table 1: Zimbabwe's Economic Programmes, 1991-2020

Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). 1991-1995	An adjustment programme that involved stabiisation and reforms
Zimbabwe Economic Programme for Social and Economic Transformation (ZIMPREST) 1996	A follow up adjustment programme that was stillborn
Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) 2001	A recovery programme that ran concurrently with the Millennium Budget
National Economic Revival Programme.(NERP) 2003	This was a 12-month stabilation programme
National Economic Development Priority Programme (NEDPP). 2007	A short-term but ineffective recovery programme
Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy (ZEDS) 2008	A still-born economic strategy
Short-Term Emergency Recovery Programme 1.(STERP 1) 2009	This was a short-term recovery programme under the GNU
Short-term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP 11) 2009-2011	Also implemented under the GNU as a macro-economic policy and budget framework
Medium-term Plan (MTP).2011-2013	Medium-term plan under the GNU
Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim Asset) 2013-2018	Implemented by a ZANU-PF majority government
Transitional Stabilisation Programme 2018-2020	A stabilation programme designed and implemented under the Mnangagwa government

Source: *GOZ, various reports*

In the absence of medium- and long-term planning, the Mugabe administration resorted to *ad hoc* crisis management of the economy in the 2000s. In reality, the annual budget became the principal instrument of economic policy during this decade. Ministers of finance often had short tenure as the President sought greater influence on economic policy and national budget process. Not only were the above-mentioned shortages symptoms of the depth of the crisis, but so also were basic consumer goods scarcities. There emerged thriving parallel markets for basic commodities where prices were much higher than controlled prices. Ironically, the beneficiaries of price controls had turned out to be 'speculators and dealers, and not targeted vulnerable groups' (GoZ, 2003, Minister of Finance budget statement 14-15).

The ripple effects of the crisis included production of lower quality goods as producers were forced to 'shave' inputs in order to maintain profit margins, and loss of employment opportunities as companies downsized production. There was an increasing resort to informal methods of economic transactions such as barter trade, and the mortgaging of natural resources like land and minerals to certain countries including China and Libya in opaque deals.

This was the context in which Gideon Gono was appointed as Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) in 2003. He soon usurped the powers and authority normally wielded by a Minister of Finance. Thus the RBZ became a major player in a context in which there was a great deal of disdain of conventional methods of economic management, which were often derisively dismissed as 'textbook or bookish economics'. The RBZ justified its interventionism in these terms:

> where a national economy experiences real, persistent and unprecedented structural shocks and where those shocks transform the market economy into a bubble-driven casino economy as happened in Zimbabwe from 2000 to 2008, monetary policy must then necessarily do more by getting out of the traditional mandate toolbox in order to take into account the contextual factors on the ground from a pragmatic point of view… (Gono, 2008: 139-140).

Gono defined the mission of RBZ as adopting a deliberate policy to stimulate productive economic activities by providing concessional funding to key sectors, most notably agriculture. This meant devising 'extraordinary and innovative measures and interventions to stimulate economic activity, ensure food self-sufficiency, stabilise energy supplies, arrest further decline and rein inflation' (ibid. 145).

Table 2: RBZ Quasi-Fiscal Programmes, 2003-2007

Scheme	Purpose
Productive Sector Finance Facility in 2003	to assist firms in various sectors to boost production
Agricultural Sector Productivity Enhancement Facility (ASPEF) in 2005	to resuscitate the agricultural sector
Parastatals and Local Authorities Reorientation Programme (PLARP) in 2005	to remove structural and supply rigidities
Troubled Bank Fund in 2003	to assist distressed and solvent banking institutions with temporary liquidity support and
Basic Commodities Supply-Side Intervention Facility (BACOSSI) in 2007	To assist producers and suppliers in specific sectors to have access to concessional production-linked financial support for working capital requirements.

Source: *Gono, 2008*

The RBZ thus placed itself at the centre of virtually all major activities in the economy. It printed money and pumped resources to ailing sectors such as agriculture, parastatals and local authorities; extended support for health services including the fight against the 2008 cholera outbreak, and provision of basic commodities for rural and urban communities under the Basic Commodities Supply-Side Intervention (BACOSSI) programme (ibid.).

Although they required significant resources, these quasi-fiscal activities spearheaded by the RBZ were not a permanent solution to the decline. Second, it was mostly those who were politically well connected who had access to resources dispensed by the RBZ. Third, the mechanisms for transparency and accounting of these resources remained opaque. Finally, it was difficult to establish what was spent on each of the multiple quasi-fiscal programmes. Part of the amounts drawn from printing of notes fuelled an exponential growth of a parallel currency market that caused further distortions in the economy.

Evidence that RBZ expenditures were well beyond its resources was underlined by USD1,2 billion debts that it was saddled with by 2010. Before a new law was introduced in that year to pre-empt further auctions, the RBZ witnessed some of its assets being auctioned off in order to pay the debts accrued from its quasi-fiscal activities. This significant debt graphically illustrated that its quasi-fiscal activities had been ill advised and unsustainable.

2.5 Informalisation

The decade-long crisis caused significant de-industrialisation as well as capacity underutilisation that had sunk to about 15% in some sectors by 2008. Retrenchments were widespread. Combined with high unemployment, these developments contributed to a phenomenal growth of the informal economy. This segment of the economy was the fastest growing during the period 2000 to 2008 and afterwards. This informal economy absorbed retrenched workers and small entrepreneurs in vending, cross-border trade, currency trade, sewing, gold panning, construction and maintenance amongst others. However, most of the activities were part of survival and coping strategies at the low-scale end of the labour market in which incomes were often precarious.

Some analysts observed that the informal economy actually became the largest segment of the economy while the middle class disappeared, and inequality worsened with Gini coefficient measure rising from 0.53 in 1995 to 0.61 in 2003 (Kanyenze et al. 2011:45). The informal economy was estimated at about 60% of GDP in 2000 compared to an average of about 42% elsewhere in Africa. By 2013, about 84% of the country's employed population was in informal employment; Zimbabwe had become a nation of vendors (Mlambo, 2017: 107). This jump had followed a deep de-industrialisation process in which 4,610 companies had closed resulting in a loss of 55,000 jobs in the formal sector.

Despite its positive contribution to sustaining of livelihoods and employment, the informal economy has occasionally been a target of state harassment. Perhaps the most infamous was that in 2005 when Operation *Murambatsvina* (or Restore Order) was unleashed against informal traders and manufacturers in urban and rural centres. The political rationale behind the military-style operation was aimed at demobilising the opposition in urban centres where they had considerable support. The Operation had immediate and widespread economic and social consequences that shocked citizens and the global community prompting the United Nations to send a Special Envoy to investigate (UN, 2005).

One estimate was that the Operation put one million people and dependents out of work; about half of business activity at that time was lost from the informal economy worth about one billion US dollars. Over the decades, the uneasy relationship between the informal sector and the state has continued, constraining its unfettered growth.

2.6. The GNU interlude

The formation of a Government of National Unity in 2009 was a consequence of an electoral impasse in which the opposition MDC-T and MDC won a parliamentary majority, and Mugabe retained the presidency after a violent run-off in 2008. Brokered by Thabo Mbeki, the GNU proved an economic and political lifeline for the Mugabe administration and an almost bankrupt economy. Under the tutelage of a capable Minister of Finance who belonged to MDC-T, Tendai Biti, the economy not only recovered but also grew respectably between 2009 and 2013. This was achieved under a short-term emergency recovery programme (STERP) that sought to stabilise the macro-economy and micro-economy, to recover levels of savings, investment and growth (GoZ, STERP, 2009: 6). More broadly, it sought to lay a basis for a more transformative medium to long-term economic programme to turn Zimbabwe into a developmental state.

The economy responded positively to stimulus, dollarisation and a more disciplined stewardship during this GNU phase. Following rebasing, GDP growth climbed up by 5.7% in 2009, by 19.7% in 2010, and then by 14.2%t and 15.8% in 2011 and 2012 respectively. This dramatic recovery was buoyed by the mining sector, riding high on high global prices such that it became the leading export sector ahead of agriculture (Kanyenze, 2018:86). Inflation was tamed significantly at 3.7% in 2012. Investment flows improved. There was a rise of confidence during the GNU interlude in the context of dollarisation, and reining of government profligacy that had been a feature reflecting Mugabe's instincts.

However, the GNU interlude at five years was too short to permanently reverse Zimbabwe's decline. ZANU-PF sustained its profligate habits through creation of parallel income streams outside the national budget during this period. Revenues from diamonds, discovered at Marange in eastern Zimbabwe in mid-2000s, were diverted into ZANU-PF's coffers and military-linked companies. As some analysts observed:

> the exploitation of diamond resources rapidly led to the country displaying all the features of the resource curse syndrome. ZANU-PF grasped the potential for diamond revenues to be used to meet the needs of a ZANU-PF parallel government. Those needs ranged

> from self-enrichment by the military and the politically well-connected to the financing of party political campaigns and state-controlled media, and its support base of war veterans, youth militia and traditional leaders… (Simpson and Hawkins, 2018:211).

Hopes by the Finance minister to receive tax revenues of about USD600 million from diamond sales in 2010 to 2012 were dashed. The Treasury only received USD41 million, a revealing indication of the magnitude of leakages, and sophistication of the parallel revenue generating systems set up during the GNU.

That the recovery could not be sustained was quickly revealed when the GNU ended in 2013 with ZANU-PF's landslide victory. With a two-thirds parliamentary majority, the party could afford to ignore the opposition. However, such restraint as there was in competent economic management evaporated with the Mugabe administration assuming power again in 2013 to steer economic policy. What the Biti era of economic management under GNU had demonstrated was that it was possible to create a turn-around in development provided the relevant toolbox of measures were judiciously applied. Even so, this was a fragile recovery because the 'greatest lesson from Zimbabwe was the danger of subordinating economic policies to political expediency' (Biti, 2015:22). This was what was resumed after the 2013 election victory of ZANU-PF.

2.7 The Post-2013 economic downturn

Economic policies in the aftermath of the election signaled a return to the overspending and murky dealings within the Mugabe administration. Restraint was removed with a return to rampant patronage that fuelled expenditure and flip-flop policies that discouraged investment. As before, an ambitious development plan was hastily cobbled together in 2013. Termed the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim Asset), the plan sought to provide a framework for steering the economy during the following five years. It was based on four strategic clusters namely (1) food security and nutrition; (2) social services and poverty reduction; (3) infrastructure and utilities and (4) value addition and beneficiation (GoZ, 2013). As in previous plans, there was no realistic funding and implementation path mapped out. Its adoption when its predecessor termed Medium-Term Plan (MTP) covering 2012 to 2015, was still in midstream implied that the MTP was abandoned before its expiry (Kanyenze, 2018: 90).

Other analysts argued that with regard to Zim Asset funding, the administration showed 'signs of collective amnesia and apparent economic illiteracy against a backdrop of ZANU-PF's track record of economic mismanagement' (Simpson and Hawkins, 2018:343). This was exemplified by expansionary and obscure spending that followed. Economic growth slowed down in the 2014 to 2018 period. In addition, international commodity prices were also weakening with negative effects on export receipts. There was a return to the high budget deficits of the 2000s. From 0.1 per cent in 2012, the deficit shot to about 10% in 2017.

The priority for the Mugabe administration seemed to be to ensure that resources were flowing again in accordance with its regime maintenance objectives. In 2016, the Mugabe administration returned to slavish printing of notes or 'bond notes' that were reminiscent of the bearer cheques that it printed in the 2000s. There was a new burst of dirigisme in the RBZ's return to quasi-fiscal activities. In 2016, some supplementary spending for fuel, fertiliser, machinery and spares, wheat and grain was only possible through such quasi-fiscal activities. As it was pointed out:

> while the country experienced fiscal surpluses during most of the GNU period as a result of strict adherence to cash budgeting and fiscal discipline, after 2013 the spectre of fiscal indiscipline re-emerged,reminiscent of the previous decade… (Kanyenze, 2018:95)

Significant spending followed with massive amounts poured into what was termed 'Command Agriculture' programme. There was resort to issuing of Treasury Bills and RBZ overdrafts for these expenditures.

By 2017, the economy was under massive stress. Growth slumped from 4.5% of GDP in 2013 to 0.7% in 2016. The contribution of state-owned enterprises to the economy had declined precipitously from around 60% to 2 per cent, with 70% of the enterprises technically insolvent (ibid.). The level of debt was also a source of economic difficulty. It amounted to an estimated USD11 billion or 79% of GDP, of which about USD7 billion was external debt (ibid.). Attempts to negotiate with IFIs for better terms for repayment were futile. Foreign investment inflows came to a trickle during this period.

The economic conundrum in 2016 and 2017 contributed to growing unease within the military about its material interests and privileges. Factionalism within the ruling ZANU-PF escalated the unease leading to a coup in November 2017. While there was considerable euphoria for the military-assisted transition, the reality in the economic sectors did not amount to change. Although the rhetoric about 'Zimbabwe being open for business' received much play, there was no substantive change in policy.

However, a major attempt at an economic shift was the drawing of a Transitional Stabilisation Plan (TSP) in 2018 following the election of Emmerson Mnangagwa as president, and appointment of Mthuli Ncube as Finance Minister. Presented as a version of 'shock therapy' reminiscent of ESAP, implemented eighteen years earlier with painful outcomes, the TSP promised economic deliverance within two years. It was promised that:

> the realisation of the TSP short-term quick-wins for the economy will be underpinned by the adoption of, and strict adherence to, macroeconomic stabilisation policies that require painful trade-off and sacrifice. This is necessary to address fundamental challenges besetting the economy over the immediate term… (GoZ, 2018:7).

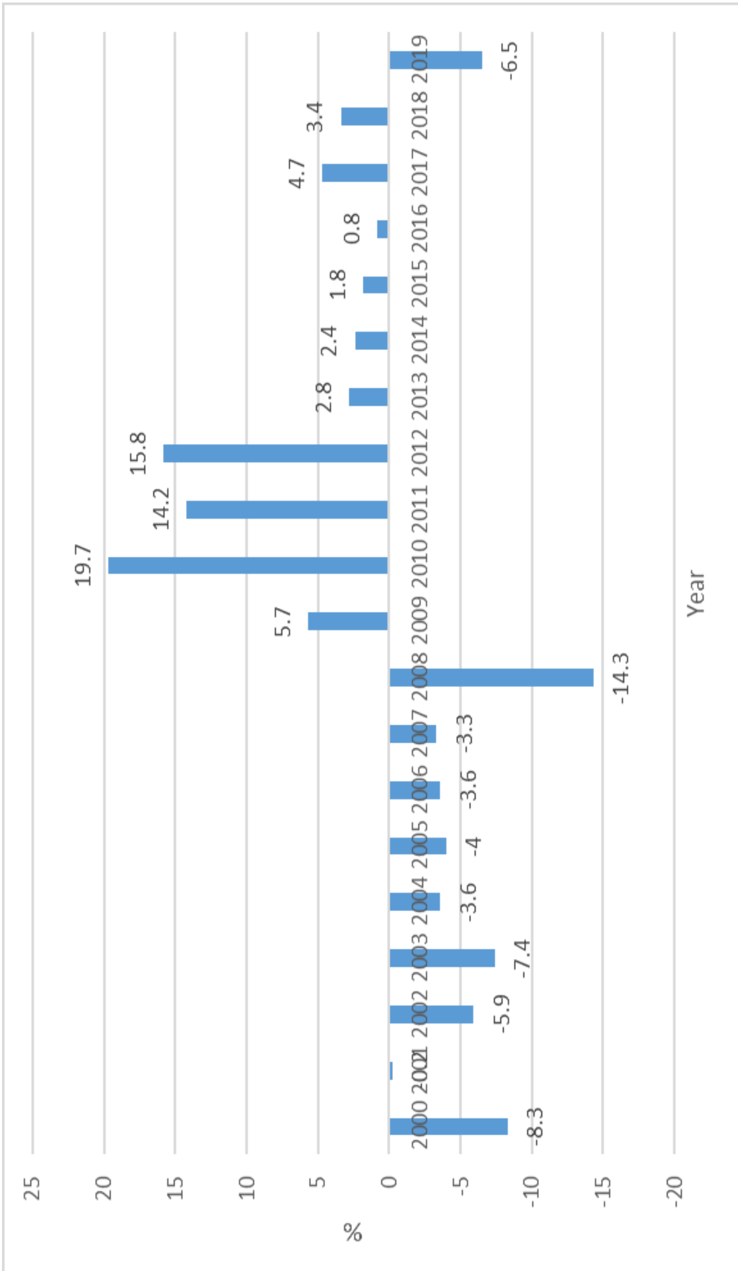
In addition, it was also pledged that government would undertake significant reforms such as ease of doing business and opening the country to international investors and financiers. The economy was projected to grow at about 9% per annum from 2019 to 2022 (ibid. 8). As in previous plans, this was an overly ambitious target that bore little resemblance to the realities in the country.

During the next two years, there was indeed considerable pain and sacrifice. There was a huge devaluation of the Zimbabwe dollar introduced in mid-2019. Incomes were slashed in real terms, while the cost of living skyrocketed. Industry encountered heavy knocks in a context of endless shortages of inputs and foreign exchange. By July 2020, inflation had reached about 837.8%. As in the 2000s, the economy was imploding again in 2020.

This assessment of the trajectory of development since 1980 would not be complete without some consideration of the structural changes in the economy. Drawing from observation of a respected economist, we can observe the following:

- The contribution of agriculture to total output declined from an average of 20 per cent during the period 1997-2008 to 10 per cent during 2009-2016; and agriculture exports which were 44 per cent of the total in 1999 had declined to 29 per cent in 2017;

Figure 1:Zimbabwe: Real GDP Trends, 2000-2019 (%)



Source: G. Kanyenze as derived from data from Ministry of Finance & Economic Development.

- Manufacturing's contribution to total output dwindled from 21 per cent in 1980 to 8.5 per cent in 2016 while manufactured exports which peaked at 41.4 per cent in 2003 plummeted to 9.5 per cent in 2017;
- The mining sector had its contribution increased from 5.8 per cent in the 1997-2008 period to 7.5 per cent during 2009-2016 (Kanyenze, 2018:103).

This evidence suggests that Zimbabwe had become a typical Sub-Saharan African economy based on primary commodity exports where agriculture and mining accounted for 88% of exports in 2017. As it was insightfully observed, 'instead of enjoying a "structural bonus" associated with industrialisation, Zimbabwe instead had experienced a structural regression' (ibid.). It had lost its inherited second-most industrialised country status on the Continent.

2.8 Development in post-2000, and sanctions

The evaluation of the development process in the post-2000 period would be incomplete without reference to sanctions applied against the country in 2002. Termed 'restrictive measures' or 'targeted sanctions' because they were applied against specific individuals in the Mugabe administration and a score of its enterprises, they were not a comprehensive set of sanctions against Zimbabwe's economy. Implemented by the US in 2001 and European Union in 2002, the 'targeted sanctions' were a penalty for human rights abuses, political repression and election rigging (US Congress, 2001). However, they did not amount to trade sanctions. Trade and investment continued.

However, the sanctions did cast a pall over Zimbabwe's credit worthiness and investment opportunities because the IFIs also cut their funding during this period. Zimbabwe's chances of obtaining favourable grants and loans, not to speak of balance of payments support, diminished. While it was disingenuous for Zimbabwean authorities to blame economic contraction on sanctions, it was also not an exaggeration that they had a negative impact on the economy to the extent that loans dried up and investment dwindled.

The strengthening of links with China under the 'Look East' policy in the 2000s was an attempt by Zimbabwe to diversify its economic relationships partly in response to the targeted sanctions. Clearly, the sanctions cannot be blamed entirely for economic crisis that would have persisted in their absence. But targeted sanctions deepened the crisis besides being a source of great irritation to the ruling elite.

2.9 COVID-19 pandemic, and development

This review of Zimbabwe's development process in the past 40 years would be incomplete if the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020 was not acknowledged. Perhaps the most devastating pandemic so far this century, the global and national ramifications are still working their way through various regions and countries. Its global reach and impact on trade, transportation, supply chains, migration and remittances amongst others have already begun to affect Zimbabwe whose state of preparedness was compromised by its fragile economy.

The economic and social impact of COVID-19 will be far-reaching in Zimbabwe. A country that was already experiencing contraction of 6.5% in 2019, the pandemic has contributed to further contraction during lock-downs on economic activities between March and May. The pandemic could not have arrived at a worse time. About half of the population (about 7 million) was already in dire need of food assistance while health facilities were overstretched.

Preliminary estimates indicated a decline in mining and agricultural production and exports (UNDP, 2020). Reduced merchandise trade would negatively affect growth, revenues and foreign exchange earnings. Sectors such as tourism would witness a large decline of about 80% of arrivals in the first half of 2020. Other effects of the pandemic included a decline in local and international remittances as a consequence of reduced economic activities in destination countries. This was a significant effect because remittances from the Diaspora amount to about 1 billion USD annually and account for on average 30% of the country's liquidity. This will adversely affect access to basic social services and food and increase vulnerabilities of households that receive remittances. In particular, the southern and western parts of Zimbabwe that traditionally depend on remittances from South Africa and Botswana will suffer from the decline (FEWSNET, 2020).

The informal sector experienced a longer lockdown from March to June, and some sub-sectors like small taxi operators did not resume activities till the last quarter of 2020. Travel restrictions and continued ban on privately owned public transport for rural-urban and inter-city routes were compounding challenges for the informal sector. Furthermore, informal cross-border trade drew to a halt thus adversely affecting many small traders dependent on such trade with South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique. One estimate was that cross-border movement at the Beitbridge entry port decreased by 95% between March and May (ibid). In sum, the disruption of informal sector activities severely affected rural and urban household incomes given the huge size of the sector.

What then is the scenario of the trajectory of the pandemic and its impact on Zimbabwe's economy and society? It is difficult to predict. The number of cases will certainly increase beyond the 1,000 mark reached in early July; the number of positive cases amongst returnees to Zimbabwe were outstripped by locally transmitted ones in the second half of the year. Lockdown measures continued into the third quarter of the year, and severely hamper economic growth.

Government response to the pandemic will be impeded by lack of substantial resources even though domestic and external donations have not been insignificant. Stimulus of ZWL18 billion for large and small businesses and social sectors was promised in the second quarter. The government faced a challenge in raising this financial resource.

Regional and cross-border trade will encounter restrictions and adversely affect both the formal and informal sectors. Revenues from trade will dwindle for operators and the central government. Employment losses will be felt widely in both the formal and informal sectors. The health and education sectors have encountered challenges. Access to personal protective equipment (PPE) has proved to be a big dilemma for health staff, teachers and students. Although local manufacturing of health equipment has been encouraged, shortages persist in medicines, testing equipment, ventilators and PPEs. The closure of schools and tertiary institutions of learning disrupted learning in the first half of 2020, and intermittent openings followed in the second half of the year. In sum, the pandemic will put a brake on Zimbabwe's social and economic development for several years.

2.10 Summary

This second part of the monograph has shown how complex Zimbabwe's development challenge was at independence. At the same time, the advantages of a developed enclave that made the country the second most industrialised on the continent were specified. It was explained that the political will to implement development plans and programmes was weak from the beginning, and that policy inconsistencies shaped economic policies during the 40 years. However, what remained consistent was a strong will for power retention at any cost by the Mugabe administration. It often was at the cost of good economic management, transparency and accountability, as we will observe in the next section of the monograph. Political considerations affected the outcome of development choices and outcomes.

Tendencies of corruption and predation that began slowly in the first two decades became stronger, more pervasive and retrogressive in the next two decades. They contributed to economic contraction and stop-start growth in the next two decades. Political polarisation during those decades was sharpened by economic deterioration and deep corruption that further inflamed political divisions and narrowing of democratic space, as we explain in the next section. The polarisation and factionalism contributed to a coup in 2017 as well as socio-economic protests and repression during the 2016-2019 period. Predation and poor governance compromised development.

3

Development, Corruption and the Political System

In 2019, Zimbabwe was ranked in the bottom third of corrupt countries in the world. According to the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (2019), it occupied the 158th position out of 198 countries. Zimbabwe is now one of the African countries where corruption has steadily increased in recent decades. Yet, during its first decade of independence, it was a country with low levels of corruption, but the scourge while existing had not become frenzied.

3.1 Corruption in the 1980s

Yet, as early as 1982, a major corruption scandal had blown up with the jailing of Samuel Paweni, for ten years for misappropriating grain relief worth about USD6 million. The businessman had bribed his way into winning a tender to transport drought relief throughout the country, and it was believed that high-placed government officials were also involved.[1] Systemic corruption took root towards the end of the 1980s.

There were other incidents reported in the course of the 1980s that should have raised levels of concern amongst the political leadership. In the private sector, several corruption scandals engulfed two banks, Zimbank and the Bank of Commerce and Credit (BCCI). It was observed that:

> Zimbank was the subject of a national scandal involving top politicians, and gross irregularities involving substantial amounts of foreign exchange, import licenses and other related malpractices. A white-owned shell company was also involved and 40 emergent businessmen were scammed. Some senior politicians were tainted by receiving some favours (Bond, 1998: 195).

The gist of the corruption scandal was the sale of their foreign allocation by emergent black business to white companies for a profit in an instance of petty accumulation. Emergent 'briefcase businessmen' were used by more established white business for access to foreign exchange which was in perennially short supply.

In a related instance, BCCI, an international bank, reportedly wormed

1 'Zimbabwe's litany of scandals ', *Financial Gazette*, 20 October 2016.

its way into the country's financial sector through bribing senior political leaders. When it collapsed in 1991, its global 'pyramid-scheme of deposit-taking, money laundering and rampant bribery of state officials imploded' (ibid.). The National Railways of Zimbabwe was one of the enterprises that sustained losses as a consequence.

However, these foregoing corruption sagas were dwarfed by the Willowgate car scandal of 1987-1988. The scandal was a classic case of abuse of a public position and office for private gain. Cabinet ministers and government officials misused their offices to profiteer from the purchase and re-sale at a higher price of luxury vehicles from the state-owned Willowvale car assembly plant. Although a government-appointed commission of enquiry found the concerned ministers and officials guilty of corruption, most got off lightly, with little more than censure from President Mugabe.

Significantly, the Willowgate scandal showed a growing web of interests between some politicians and the business class. The latter included white- and Asian-owned businesses as well as black and multinational businesses. As an analyst observed:

> the corrupting influence of power, untidy and grubby manipulation of accumulation, the trial and exposure and in one case a suicide …This process represented the almost ineluctable logic of the propensity of the political elite to accumulate at any cost; the ubiquitous neo-colonial denouement of the predictable petty-bourgeois project…(Raftopoulos, 1991:4)

More generally, this episode of widely publicised corruption was not only indicative of an emergent post-independence political economy of cronyism but was also a harbinger of more widespread corruption to come. By the beginning of the 1990s, corruption had extended its tentacles more widely in the form of bribery, extortion, embezzlement and government patronage.

3.2 Corruption in the 1990s

Clearly, there was a failure of leadership and institution building to address the growth of corruption during Zimbabwe's first decade of independence. Once it became clear that the penalty for participation in corruption was minimal, especially if one was a senior government official, the floodgates were opened. Mugabe's reluctance to deal decisively with corruption would encourage it to grow steadily thereafter. It is difficult to explain the reluctance – beyond sheer political expediency – to tighten his control over his party and government. Yet it led to the steady corrosion of institutions particularly due to their absence of accountability and transparency.

The mid-1990s were a turning point in the spread of corruption in the body politic and wider society. The austerity associated with ESAP created enormous hardship not least amongst civil servants and uniformed services whose salaries had been eroded considerably due to inflation. War veterans were another social group that was adversely affected. This was a broad context in which the belief and expectation spread that the government (or *hurumende*) should provide for these social groups as a payback for their contribution during the liberation struggle in the 1970s. This belief fed a growing sense of entitlement by these groups to government assistance and other resources. In their view, the government owed them both payback and upkeep. In their opinion, they saw the government as having unlimited resources that it should share with them. For its part, the political leadership in government did little to discourage this unrealistic and extravagant expectation.

It was this populist outlook and context that fuelled corruption that surrounded the administration of the War Victims Compensation Fund in the mid-1990s. The fund was viewed as a slush fund to which access was felt to be an entitlement. Those who did not deserve to draw from it did so. They included ministers and politicians, senior bureaucrats and military officials. Benefits were calculated on the basis of gravity of injury received during the liberation struggle. All the same, some who did not sustain any injury also claimed benefits from the fund. There had been huge pilfering of the fund to an extent that payment was suspended for some time in 1996-97:

> a massive ZWD 1.5 billion had been paid out between 1992 and 1997, much of it in dubious circumstances. Their culprits were said to include senior politicians, officials and their relatives' (Meredith, 2002: 134)

The looting of the War Victims Compensation Fund emboldened war veterans under the leadership of Chenjerai Hunzvi to demand larger pay back from the state through gratuities and monthly pensions. With about 50,000 veteran claimants, the total amount forked out by government was so huge, that there was an immediate run on the national currency in November 1997. The devaluation was so substantial that the economy would not recover but continue to deteriorate over the next decade.

As the 1990s drew to a close, worsening corruption, stagnant growth and rising social discord formed the background to Zimbabwe's military intervention in the DRC in 1998. While the intervention proved a major drain (it cost about USD300 million a year), it also provided new opportunities for accumulation and corruption by ruling elite primarily senior politicians, military officials and well-connected businessmen.

3.3 Corruption in the 2000s

The sense of entitlement to state-based resources deepened in the 2000s. Several factors combined to consolidate corruption-linked entitlement. The first related to acquisition of land, without paying for it, during the Fast-Track land reform in 2000. In one of the largest episodes of land reform, millions of hectares exchanged hands while about 4,000 white commercial farmers were sent packing, often with violence or threats of violence. Land acquisition by large and small black occupiers was justified in terms of re-possession of dispossessed lands expropriated at the beginning of colonisation, and the new laws introduced from 2000 to consolidate the transfer. As we hinted in an earlier section, the sweeping land take-overs opened sluice gates for corrupt dealings in land ownership.

In the absence of transparency of the redistribution exercise, the land reform process came to be riddled with corrupt tendencies. For instance, there was ownership of multiple farms by the powerful elite contrary to the one person-one farm official policy. As an analyst observed:

> when rude power is directing an accumulation strategy, contested meanings are found between conventions of property ownership that would see these acts as theft supported by violence, and a normative of restitution within the paradigm of patriotic nationalism where the acquisition of property from the rich whites is legitimated… (Bracking, 2009; see also the Utete Report, 2003).

Clearly, the primary accumulation that used land acquisition at little or no cost was a form of 'accumulation by dispossession'. It is arguable that the entire process was an instance of corruption, a process in which any resemblance of morality, justice and fairness was compromised. That the process gave momentum to widespread corruption as evidenced by Mugabe's family amassing over ten farms is generally clear. The process has also been termed 'spoils politics of accumulation' in which seizure of resources by an elite is viewed as non-cash payment for status. Since 2000, the state has used land as a resource to dispense patronage, and also used its seizure as a punitive measure against owners who challenge the ruling party politically.

The second arena in which corruption became institutionalised was the state-owned enterprises also known as parastatals. From about twenty at independence, the number of SOEs increased sharply to 76 in the 2000s (UNDP, 2008: 186). Created in multiple sectors, the enterprises were expected to generate profit or at least to break even. That has not been the case with the majority of SOEs. Their internal processes of recruitment, promotion and remuneration of senior staff depended on loyalty to the ruling party rather than their competence. SOEs were soon viewed as 'gold mines' by their chief operating officers (COEs).

Salaries and allowances reached staggering levels for management in the SOEs in the post-2000 period. In the GNU period, drawing on US dollar-denominated salaries and allowances pegged on earlier Z$ denominated salaries regardless of the performance of an SOE, the executives were amongst the highest paid earners in the economy. For example, the most notorious case was that of the CEO of the Public Service Medical Aid Society (PSMAS) who took home USD250,000 every month (ASCR, 2014). Some SOEs that paid huge salaries included Tel One and ZBC; some of them continued to pay such salaries while their low-level workers went for months without pay. Other SOEs such as the National Social Authority (NSSA) staggered from one corruption scandal to another. More SOEs like Air Zimbabwe and National Railways of Zimbabwe reduced their service to skeletal levels due to hemorrhage of their resources. These were cases of combined dysfunctionality and corruption.

Table 3:.Monthly Salaries and Benefits of State-owned Enterprises CEOs: some examples

Name	CEO's Salary	CEO's Benefits	Monthly Total
USD	**USD**	**USD**	**USD**
Public Service Medical Aid Society (PSMAS)	230,030	305,499	535,499
NETONE	10,126	33,567	43,693

Name	CEO's Salary	CEO's Benefits	Monthly Total
USD	USD	USD	USD
Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC)	15,030	22,050	37,080
Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe (IDBZ)	18,502	16,944	35.446
National Social Security Authority (NSSA)	13,328	15,824	29,152
Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC)	13,744	17,978	31,978

Source: ASCR, 2014.

No less an institution than RBZ expressed anxiety and discomfiture about the rising levels of corruption in the early 2000s. The box below provides a list of the main forms of corruption in 2005 as diagnosed by the RBZ. Between 2003 and 2008, it played an uncharacteristic interventionist role that overshadowed the Ministry of Finance. However, this did not prevent the RBZ from shady interventions that fanned corruption itself. Some of the interventions involved use of public resources in politically oriented measures that mobilised significant funds without adequate targeting, management, accounting and monitoring mechanisms.

From the extensive interventions, not only the public sector but the private sector as well was drawn into a web that was not immunised against corruption. No sooner had these various programmes and funds been established by the RBZ than loopholes were exploited for self-enrichment and aggrandisement by politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen (Gono, 2008).

As the Box (overleaf) shows, a summary of instances in various sectors demonstrates how both the private and public sectors were drawn into collusive corruption. Coming to a head between 2006 and 2008, its impact on the economy had dire consequences. The backlash against ZANU-PF in the March 2008 election was a clear message to the ruling elite that the economic conditions were unsustainable, and that pervasive corruption was not only excessive but also unpalatable.

Perhaps a project that symbolises the embedding of what might be termed institutionalised corruption is that represented by the Specialised

Box 1: Select Forms of Corruption, 2005

1. Payment of bribes to law enforcement agents by fugitives in order to have their economic and other forms of crimes quashed
2. Payment of bribes by traders – individual and corporate - to ZIMRA officials for underpayment of taxes and import duties, as well as under-invoicing of export shipments
3. Misrepresentation of facts by some Ministers with the effect of misdirecting public opinion and sentiment, which in turn created a false sense of security, particularly in the food and energy sectors
4. Outright diversion of resources from purposes for which they were provided into own use. This included productive sector funds, foreign exchange, and other support in kind such as machinery and equipment, which was being diverted to kick-backs and bribes
5. Smuggling of precious minerals and basic commodities including sugar, grain, cooking oil, soap, and many others which are sold into regional economies on the strength of bribes being paid to inspectorate arms of Government to turn a blind eye to the leakages
6. Flouting of tender procedures and biased awarding of contracts even to costly suppliers and contractors on the back of patronage, kick-backs and bribes
7. Patronizing and wasteful publicity and advertisement campaigns by parastatal and municipal sectors aimed at swaying government policy into condoning their under-performance
8. Nepotism in key sectors and institutions where efficiency norms were set aside for considerations other than productive efficiency and
9. Insider dealing, for instance on the Stock Exchange as well as 'interested party effects' on formulation of key government policies such as the setting of producer prices

Source: *RBZ, 2005: 10-12*

Maize Production and Import Substitution Programme known as 'Command Agriculture' in short. Introduced in the 2016 agricultural season, the programme sought to expand maize production through contracting production to commercial farmers amongst A2 landowners. Each farmer received inputs worth about USD25,000 and was obliged to deliver at least

1,000 tons of maize to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). The special fixed prize for a ton was USD390.

Together with a Presidential Inputs Scheme, the programme had an implicit aim of ensuring plentiful food availability in the 2018 election year. It was not a coincidence that the prime mover behind the 'Command Agriculture' programme was the then Vice-President Emmerson Mnangagwa. The programme absorbed massive resources. As it was pointed out, 'it was a significant transfer of resources to politically important beneficiaries with the state incurring further debt as Treasury Bills were issued to raise the necessary funding' (Simpson and Hawkins, 2018: 365). Contracted producers included politicians, businessmen and military officers. Indeed, the programme became militarised with senior officers deployed to oversee its implementation. The outcome of the programme was not impressive. By mid-July 2017, only a fraction of the forecast two million tons had been delivered to GMB.

Owing to the opaque implementation and outcome of Command Agriculture, a parliamentary committee conducted hearings into the matter. Amongst its findings was that a sum of about USD3 billion was unaccounted for.[2] A sub-contracting company, Sakunda Holdings, that supplied input supplies on behalf of government claimed that the amount spent was USD1,1 billion. What was significant was that a diagnosis by parliament's Public Accounts Committee established that orders were given at the Ministry of Finance to process payments to 'various shadowy entities'. A Ministry's Accountant General, Daniel Muchemwa, conceded that the Command Agriculture programme was done without proper laid-down accounting procedures (ibid.). In sum, the programme was riddled with irregularities that suggested corrupt dealings that resulted in several billions of USD apparently disappearing without trace.

3.4 Predatory tendencies of the state

In a broader sense, the absence of accountability by state ministries and SOEs revealed a state that had become institutionally mired in corruption within systems that were both murky and predatory i.e. a political economy that is better understood within models of spoils politics and predatory accumulation. A continuum exists in which states move from redistributive paternalist policies to kleptocratic predatory dictatorships (Bracking,

2 'Zimbabwe Government restructures the Command Agriculture financing model'. *All Africa News*, 19 September 2019.

2009:35). Within that continuum, Zimbabwe features as a predatory state with institutionalised corruption.

Bratton and Masunungure (2010) have argued that while development coalitions seek to deliver public goods and exercise state power with restraint, predatory coalitions rely heavily and narrowly focus on extraction of resources for factional or personal gain. According to this perspective, when Mugabe pardoned his party allies, first involved in corruption in 1988, and subsequently, he signalled that the rule of law and accountability would be sacrificed to predation, provided it was accompanied by party loyalty. Consequently, the state was reduced to a predatory one 'for a parasitic class of political leaders, bureaucrats and theatre for primitive accumulation' (Mandaza, 2014). The SOE sector became an agency for the politics and economics of patronage.

The basis of predation was set when Zimbabwe's political leadership gave priority to the consolidation of state power by installing party loyalists in the armed forces, civil service and local government (ibid.). Predatory leaders rely on coalitions. In Zimbabwe, the top echelons of ZANU-PF and state have always been deeply fused with leadership from military and intelligence backgrounds, a legacy of the liberation struggle. However, as governments mismanage the economy, and as patronage resources shrink, so the political elite tends to coalesce around a smaller and smaller set of players.

The deepening of corruption is explained by the structure and orientation of a predatory coalition of politicians and bureaucrats, military and business elites that cut across public and private sectors. Unfortunately, its orientation was not towards a broad national development project, but towards one both narrow and self-serving. This needs to be explained.

The objective of this myriad of elites was not to employ assets and capital acquired from other social groups for investment, e.g. the proceeds from newly confiscated farms and other properties were not productively used to generate re-investment to improve farm productivity and output. Surpluses were not directed towards improvement of infrastructure and its maintenance. Rents were generally directed not into domestic investment but expatriated. While the economy received relatively meagre foreign investment, proceeds from corruption and other forms of accumulation were channeled out of the country through various forms of money laundering i.e. illicit capital outflows were estimated at USD500 million annually.[3]

3.5 Politics of patronage

However, it would be useful to refer to the politics of patronage in influencing the discussion of the development in the African context. Political parties that have achieved electoral success over the decades had two strategies for party building and creation of electoral support:

> a reliance on individuals who already had considerable local followings, and the use of clientilist ('patronage') politics to bind notables to the party and local voters to the candidates. In essence, voters were offered collective material benefits (roads, schools, clinics, water, etc.) for their votes, while candidates and notables were offered individual benefits (cash, credit, land, access to licenses etc.) (Allen, 1995:304).

Political mobilisation thus rested on clientelist politics in which local and regional power brokers were incorporated into national political movements, and electoral support was exchanged for access to state resources (Szeftel, 2000). Citizens were thus integrated into electoral politics on the basis of the access to public resources that political competition afforded.

Zimbabwean politics have not been an exception. A close perusal of elections during the period from 2000 to 2018 show that clientelism was an important feature despite allusions to ideologies of liberation, anti-imperialism and democracy by respective contending parties. Some of the key resources that featured during election campaigns included access to land and food (in the 2000, 2002 and 2005 elections); to jobs and livelihood opportunities (in the 2008 election); and to mining and informal economy opportunities, credit and housing stands (in the 2013 and 2018 elections).

When a state lacks resources to deliver 'development goods' necessary to satisfy mass expectations, popular disappointment exerts pressure on party faction leaders to intensify their demands for an increased share for their region or support base. Those who cannot deliver are replaced. For example, during the 2000 and 2008 elections, a considerable number of ruling party candidates were thrown out, and in the 2013 election, some

3 'Illicit capital outflow estimated at USD500 million annually', *The Herald*, 14 December 2015.

opposition candidates also lost due to their failure to meet the electorate's socio-economic expectations.

Incumbent parties draw upon public resources to gain electoral advantage. In the Zimbabwean context, ZANU-PF has amassed considerable experience in profitably exploiting state resources to its advantage. It has used old-fashioned clientelism especially in rural areas where traditional chiefs represent an important pillar of authority. Chiefs are conduits of public resources for distribution in rural constituencies. The resources range from land, agricultural inputs and food to infrastructure and various services that bind local constituents to them. This explains why chiefs and other local elites are viewed as crucial gatekeepers in the electoral and development processes.

3.6 Political System and the ruling 'civil-military coalition'

What are the principal features of the political system in which the rise and decline in economic development has occurred in the past 40 years? What bearing has the system had on the trajectory and tempo of the development process? A survey of Zimbabwe's development experience would be incomplete without assessing how the political system has evolved and shaped thinking about development.

At the dawn of independence in 1980, the political framework was defined by the Lancaster House Constitution that provided for a parliamentary system under a prime minister and a ceremonial president till 1987. It was a framework that permitted opposition parties to thrive in an electoral system that required regular elections. This formal side of the political system could be described as a type of competitive authoritarianism. In such an authoritarian system:

> although elections are regularly held… incumbents routinely abuse state resources, deny the opposition adequate media coverage, harass opposition candidates and their supporters and in some cases manipulate electoral results… (Levitsky and Way, 2002:53).

ZANU-PF, the largest party in parliament, soon accumulated significant powers and control over state institutions including the security forces and media including radio and television.

Although a nominally democratic system was installed, it quickly came under tremendous pressure as a consequence of a civil war in the Matabeleland provinces and parts of Midlands between 1982 and 1987.

The military and other security forces were deployed in a conflict that fanned a great deal of terror and casualties. Up to 20,000 people mostly civilians were killed in a conflict that left a residue of bitterness and trauma (CCJPZ and LRF, 1997). That turmoil during the first decade gave impetus to the inception of authoritarian and militaristic tendencies that would grow in latter decades. This broad trend was not slowed by the merger between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU parties in a Unity Accord in 1987.

By the close of the decade, Zimbabwe had adopted a presidential system. Robert Mugabe was inaugurated as executive president in 1987. Exercising extensive powers as an Executive President, augmented by some constitutional amendments in later years, allowed him to accumulate more authority. However, it is debatable whether a powerful presidency necessarily resulted in better governance. Indeed, rumblings of political discontent and revulsion against corruption were heard during the 1990 election. There grew spontaneous opposition to the conception of a one-party state system that Mugabe sought to introduce after the 1987 party merger (Sachikonye and Mandaza, 1991). Edgar Tekere who had broken away from ZANU-PF contested under the banner of his party called Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). Until the 2000 election, ZANU-PF easily won elections partly because it had tight control of the electoral process itself, and partly because the opposition movement was fragmented.

From the mid-1990s, stirrings of opposition from civil society against the growth of authoritarianism began to change the political atmosphere and tone of debates. In particular, the labour movement grew to become the focus of social and economic protests during and after ESAP whose austerity was painfully felt far and wide in society. As we have observed in a section above, a movement was inaugurated around 1997 to advocate for popular participation in constitutional reform. These stirrings were a harbinger of a broader political movement against Mugabe’s autocratic tendencies.

As we observed elsewhere, the trajectory of authoritarianism had long-term repercussions on intraparty democracy, interparty relations, and more broadly, on political values (Sachikonye, 2017). A tendency toward intolerance and a propensity to use violence against political opponents became defining features of post-independence politics in Zimbabwe. To this intolerance was added a proclivity toward a personality cult around Robert Mugabe. As a consequence, instead of a nationalism imbued with broad democratic values and practice, a resilient variety of authoritarianism emerged.

The correlated political culture reflected a drift toward intolerance, exclusivity, authoritarianism and violence. The emphasis that nationalism placed on unity at all costs – and the concurrent subordination of organisations such as trade unions and churches to this imperative – gave rise to intolerance and shift to a 'commandist' state (Ranger, 2003).

In addition to nationalism, the experience of the liberation struggle between 1964 and 1979 had a profoundly lasting seminal effect on the outlook of the ruling elite. Two key factors reflected this impact. The first was the belief that resolving political questions was the exclusive domain of the liberation movement. The second was a strong notion of entitlement to holding political power ever since independence. An additional impediment to the establishment of a democratic polity has been authoritarian militarism, a major characteristic of the liberation movement. Scant attention to individual and civic rights was exacerbated by a context in which the liberation process itself was fraught with intense intrigues, factionalism and violent purges. The liberation war itself was significant in other aspects:

> it gave birth to a coalition in which civilian and military elements were in periodic tension over political leadership…a tense atmosphere encouraged a polarised outlook among leaders in which the political world was starkly divided between a small circle of trusted confidantes and a hostile landscape full of implacable enemies… (Bratton, 2014:28).

The ZANU-PF party and state leadership in the post-independence period used the sacrifices made during the liberation process as the ultimate justification for their own political and economic entitlement. As liberators, they claimed to own Zimbabwe in the fullest sense of the term, namely that the country belonged to them, and to no one else (ibid.). For longer-term significance, they traced political legitimacy not to universal political liberties and open elections:

> whose procedures, results and validity they readily dismiss, but to an armed victory in a liberation war. Thus the leaders of a vanguard party have won not only a right to rule in perpetuity; they are also entitled to seize the nation's wealth as they see fit … (ibid.).

This largely explains why political and military leaders are among the wealthiest in Zimbabwe's ruling elite.

Like in other countries that underwent armed liberation in southern Africa, there was a process of fusion of the ruling party and the state in Zimbabwe. The fusion took form of party cadres being appointed to key positions in state institutions ranging from the civil service to the military and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). There was a strong belief that the party was superior to state institutions like government. The ministers of government and civil servants received orders from the ruling party. Articulating this position, Mugabe claimed that ZANU-PF was more important than the government and the Central Committee above the Cabinet: 'because ministers derive their power from ZANU-PF… in the future, there will be no separation of the party from state organs…'. [4]

The structure of the Zimbabwean party-state system made it difficult to disentangle it, still less to ensure accountability and transparency in state institutions.

The Zimbabwe experience of fused party-state structures is reminiscent, with caveats, of structures in formerly communist states of eastern Europe, and of contemporary China. Prior to their dismantlement in eastern Europe, the doctrine of supremacy of the party in a context of one-party state reigned supreme. ZANU-PF sought to replicate the ideology and structure of the party-state, hence the creation of a 'Central Committee' and a matching 'Politburo'. It is significant that none of these party organs are reflected in the national constitution that makes their 'supremacy' contradictory in relation to the latter. The conventional concept of party puts it outside the state: parties are, at most, groups that occupy government for certain periods of time. This is different from the Zimbabwean context where they have become part of the state and its resource-allocation process. As we saw in an earlier section, this has deep implications for accountability.

The party-state structure has developed various centres of power. Some revolve around factions of the ruling party and around the Presidency itself. The balance of power and influence between the different factions became unstable in the post-2013 period as Mugabe became advanced in age, and his spouse emerged as a major political player in her own right. Earlier in the 2000s, the two main factions in ZANU-PF coalesced around Solomon Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa, who both possessed unassailable

4 'No separation of the party from state organs', Robert Mugabe on ZBC News, 18 February 1984.

liberation war credentials. Both had amassed considerable wealth over the years, and had extensive networks in the military and intelligence forces.

The contest between the two factions sharpened in the build-up to the 2008 election and afterwards. The Mujuru faction was suspected of being lukewarm in its support for Mugabe's re-election, and was believed to have surreptitiously backed Simba Makoni's presidential bid. Mugabe countered this by appointing Mnangagwa as chair of the increasingly powerful Joint Operations Command (JOC) that spearheaded the run-off election campaign in which a great deal of violence was meted out against the opposition MDC-T. Subsequently, Mnangagwa was appointed Minister of Defence while the Mujuru faction was marginalised. The fortunes of the latter suffered a permanent blow with the suspicious death of Solomon Mujuru in a mysterious fire accident in 2011, and the sacking of Joyce Mujuru from her Vice-President position in 2014.

The early 2000s appeared to have been a turning point in the attitude of the military towards political power. Abandoning professionalism and non-partisan approach, the military openly declared its support for Mugabe in the 2002 election:

> we (the JOC) wish to make it very clear to all Zimbabweans that the security organisations will only stand in support of those political leaders that will pursue Zimbabwean values, traditions and beliefs for which thousands of lives were lost in pursuit of Zimbabwe's hard-won independence, sovereignty and national interests…[5]

In a show of assertiveness, JOC warned that the presidency was 'a straightjacket' whose occupant was expected to observe the objectives of the liberation struggle.

In the 2008 election, the military became the 'king-makers' when Mugabe lost during the first round; it is widely believed that the military played an active role during the second round that was riddled with considerable violence. By agreeing to be installed by the military in 2008, Mugabe became beholden to it in future.

The drift towards a military state henceforth became more explicit. Having restored Mugabe's fortunes through campaigning and violence, the military proved to have capacity to become kingmaker, and potentially king in the future. Of huge significance was that the military was neither

5 Statement of Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) Commander, Vitalis Zvinavashe, 9 January 2002

a neutral or professional actor as stipulated by the 2013 Constitution. It viewed itself as key foundation stone of the party-state, and a player in any

Table 4: Governance by Police and Militarised Operations

Operation *Sovereign Legitimacy*, 1998	This was a military operation in the DRC to shore up the Kabila government. Zimbabwe was part of a SADC intervention force
Operation *Murambatsvina,* 2005	It was an operation 'to drive out filth' or 'restore order' in urban and rural centers
Operation *Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle*, 2005	This was a housing programme set up in the wake of Murambatsvina
Operation *Maguta*, 2005	It was organised to oversee increased production of food crops
Operation *Sunrise*, 2006	This was aimed at curbing hyperinflation
Operation *Chikorokoza Chapera*, 2006	This was a campaign against small miners and panners
Operation *Dzikisai Mitengo (Reduce Prices)*, 2007	It was an operation aimed at shops and supermarkets to force them to reduce prices
Operation *Mavoterapapi (how did you cast your vote*), 2008	This was a retributive campaign against those that had voted for opposition candidates in 2008 election
Operation *Hakudzokwi (You will not return*), 2008	It was a bloody response to small artisanal diamond miners at Chiadzwa
Command Agriculture, 2016	This was a military-linked programme to finance commercial farmers who produced maize for delivery to GMB
Operation *Restore Legacy,* 2017	It was a military operation in which Robert Mugabe was toppled from office
Operation *Chikorokoza Ngachipere,* 2020	This was an operation against the Mashurugwi, violent gangs of small miners

Source: various GoZ reports

political succession. This self-conscious and self-interested mission of the military distinguishes it from that of its counterparts in neighbouring countries that also underwent liberation struggles: Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. However, it is a mission that poses some challenges. The capacity and credibility of Zimbabwe's military to steer the state progressively in political and economic matters is questionable. The question raises the issue of its method of governance, particularly its predilection to resort to force where mediation and compromise are necessary.

In sum, in this militarised state, some structures are more powerful than others. Such is the case with the Joint Operations Command (JOC) whose profile grew significantly in the post-2000 period. According to a former Cabinet Minister, JOC, not Cabinet nor the politburo, is the pivotal authority in Zimbabwe:

> yet JOC is not a statutory or constitutional entity. JOC is the centre of state power in Zimbabwe. It is the system. JOC's pivotal role is particularly pronounced during elections. This is because of the obvious reason that elections are strategically important for deciding who gets into power, or stays in power, or gets out of power, when and how… (Moyo, 2019:28)

Other institutions have also confirmed the central role of JOC in political and economic affairs vis-à-vis Cabinet (UNDP, 2008). The secretive body was mooted to have planned Operation Murambatsvina (in 2005), and the revival of Mugabe's political fortunes after his electoral loss in the first round of the 2008 election.

Zimbabwe's party-system is thus a complicated one despite the clarity of its Constitution adopted in 2013. The balance of power and checks between various arms of the state is more theoretical than real. The Office of the President and JOC have accumulated enormous powers especially in the past fifteen years. The power and ambitions of the military should not be underestimated.

3.7 Politics and elections in a fragile democracy

Zimbabwe's party system is adversarial. As we observed in an earlier section, Zimbabwe had a dominant-party system under ZANU-PF until 2000 when a vibrant opposition movement emerged under the MDC. Since then, there has tended to be a party system dominated by two or three parties. The ruling party has the status of a premier dominant party followed by the main opposition parties, MDC-Alliance and MDC-T. Its pre-eminence is rooted in its powerful role within the party-state system, as we observed. By its proximity to state institutions, it takes advantage of them to strengthen its electoral position.

There is a strong streak of 'winner takes all' syndrome amongst political parties. Not only does the ruling party view itself as the party that ushered independence, it also sees itself as the defender of that independence and the state. Political change through electoral victory by a different party would be unsettling, and therefore 'feared' as a threat to the ruling party and state.

As we have already observed above, after more than a generation in power, the ruling party and state institutions have become closely entwined. The electoral system itself has historically been imbricated in the party-state. To the extent that state institutions participated in running the electoral system, to that extent the latter system inherited features and shortcomings of those institutions. If we pitch our discussion at this level of realism, we can see the source of the deep-rooted structural shortcomings of the electoral system.

More broadly, it is not just an issue about systemic structures. It is also about the wider political culture. The above-mentioned adversarial and ideological approach has frustrated the growth of a tolerant political discourse and practice. The adversarial and intolerant discourse is disseminated not only in state-owned media but in some of the private media as well. It is a political context in which, with a few exceptions, there tends to be 'a dialogue of the deaf' often leading to stalemate and rise in suspicion and distrust.

For more than two decades after independence, Zimbabwe did not have an independent election commission. However, since its establishment in 2004, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has often been mired in controversy. There is generally little trust in its operations by opposition parties and civil society organisations (CSOs). Viewed as being more accommodating to the ruling party, ZEC has been tainted due to the staffing of its secretariat most of whom are believed to have come from the military and intelligence services. For example, the head of ZEC secretariat in 2020 was a former military officer. Furthermore, its autonomy is compromised by its dependence on the state for the bulk of its funding.

Perhaps ZEC's lowest point was its handling of the 2008 election whose legitimacy of outcome was widely questioned. While progress has been made in building its capacity and professionalism, the credibility of

ZEC in organising the 2018 election process was severely tested. On the part of most opposition parties, there were genuine fears of rigging in the July election. It was unfortunate that such fears and mistrust cast a shadow over some notable progress and milestones that ZEC had achieved in the previous two years. First, it had succeeded in introducing the biometric voter registration (BVR) system resulting in 5.4 million getting registered for the 2018 election. The registration campaign had reached far and wide, notably amongst young voters. An estimated 40% of registered voters were below 35 years.

Second, consultations between political parties and CSOs during the registration process had strengthened co-operation between these groups. Nevertheless, the authoritarian environment of Zimbabwean politics continued to cast a dark shadow on the electoral process. The killing of six protesters who demonstrated against a delay in release of the results on 1 August confirmed the harsh context. ZEC on its own could not transform that environment; it thus continued to operate under many constraints in a difficult context. The systemic environment that breeds mistrust, fear and polarisation affects the credibility of the electoral body.

In sum, the credibility of Zimbabwean elections since 2000 has been widely questioned. Not only has the transparency of the electoral process been low, intimidation and violence tend to increase during campaigns and post-election disputes. For instance, approximately 30 people were killed in the 2000 election campaign. More were killed in the 2002 and 2008 campaigns, with the latter witnessing about 200 deaths. During those elections in which violence was not as widespread as in 2013, there were nevertheless significant levels of psychological intimidation and fear amongst voters, especially in rural areas.

Important contributions to knowledge and understanding have come from election observation reports and electoral analysts. They come from mildly critical reports such as those of the SADC Parliamentary Reform report to the candid European Union's Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) Report (SADC Parliamentary Forum EOM, 2018; European Union Observation Mission, 2018). Both reports agreed on the naked bias in state media against opposition parties during election campaigns, and the need to introduce fairness in coverage. It was observed, for instance, that there was acute polarisation in election coverage, and that there was a 'continued trend of bias by the ruling party in the coverage of elections as was observed during the 2013 election' (SADC Parliamentary Forum EOM, 2018).

The EU EOM report added that to enhance confidence in the electoral process, the independence of ZEC was paramount. Furthermore, there was need to introduce legal measures to mitigate the abuse of incumbency and abuse of state resources; and campaign finance regulations should be introduced to enhance accountability. On the whole, the EU EOM report concluded that an uneven playing field, intimidation of voters and trust had undermined the pre-election environment.

The Motlanthe Commission which probed the post-election violence in August 2018 strongly recommended that electoral reforms, including the development of information communication technology (ICT) to among other things, enhance the transparent and expeditious announcement of results. Particularly, opposition parties have viewed delays in announcement of election results with suspicion and concern. For his part, a former Cabinet minister, Jonathan Moyo had little doubt that the 2018 election was rigged by the military; it had full control of the electoral machinery to ensure that they directly manipulated ZEC's administrative and technical processes. The MDC-A candidate, Nelson Chamisa, disputed the election outcome claiming that he won the presidential vote. Zimbabwean politics has been bogged in that election outcome controversy since 2018. With deep levels of mistrust about how the electoral process is managed, democracy in Zimbabwe remains very fragile.

3.8. Constitutional reform

This assessment of the political system would be incomplete without some observations on the constitutional stalemate and progress that Zimbabwe has experienced over the past 40 years. As we have already observed above, the Lancaster House Constitution that operated between 1980 and 1990 was a product of compromise reached during independence negotiations in 1979. There were fourteen amendments to it before a process of reforming the Constitution began in the late 1990s. As always, a golden opportunity for an inclusive dialogic process for a major national reform was wasted.

An autonomous process within civil society in 1997 began to agitate for constitutional reform under the aegis of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). Having become a pressure group, the NCA sought to organise a constitutional debate in a way that allowed 'broad-based participation' and 'popular scrutiny' (NCA, 1998:8). In response to the pre-emptive start, the Zimbabwean government in 1999 appointed a Constitutional Commission largely drawn from Parliamentary representatives, but also from other sections of society to undertake constitution making.

There were thus two parallel processes to constitutional reform: one undertaken by civil society, and the other by government. Neither of the two processes carried sufficient legitimacy nationally and internationally. With the benefit of hindsight, a lack of consensus on the modalities of the reform ensured that parallel processes were doomed to failure. A government-sponsored referendum in February 2000 witnessed a dramatic rejection of the constitutional draft compiled by the Constitutional Commission. Although the NCA developed its own constitutional draft, it went nowhere. For the next ten years, the stalemate caused by the failure of the parallel processes ensured that constitutional reform was stalled.

Could any wider lessons be drawn from the constitutional reform process? The first lesson is that if a process is seriously contested and flawed, it will be difficult to devise a constitution that stands the test of time, and create an acceptable contract between a government and its people (Austin, 2009). It was of crucial importance that all major stakeholders (or at least a substantial majority) should have agreed to a constitutional reform path before its implementation. If a consensual and inclusive approach had been taken, the path would have provided an opportunity to Zimbabweans to take a deeper, calm and sober look into the key questions that define their body politic and shape their political configuration (CDD, 2000). This was a missed opportunity to reach a historic political settlement that would have constituted the basis upon which the way forward would have been charted. This was a sentiment later shared by Morgan Tsvangirai who headed the 'no' campaign against the government-sponsored draft, and reflected a decade later that:

> with the benefit of hindsight, we could have handled our opposition to constitutional reform and the referendum campaign with greater care and political sensitivity to avoid a result that spawned more of a curse than a blessing. We should have carefully examined the 'morning after', thought through the scenarios, and prepared fully for the consequences… (Tsvangirai, 2011: 261).

A second lesson from the constitutional reform process was that engagement of international actors in the process had been contentious, if not intrusive. This explained Zimbabwe's schizophrenic political environment 'where the language and attitudes of liberal democracy vied with slogans of anti-imperialism, sovereignty and militaristic discipline' (Austin, 2009:85). Constitutional reform should be primarily a national responsibility, even in a globalised world.

A third lesson was that until the advent of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in September 2008, there had not been a broadly shared and solid agreement on guiding principles for reforming the Lancaster House Constitution. It was agreed that the process would not be directed by the President, but by a Constitutional Parliamentary Committee (COPAC). Despite some challenges, it was COPAC that steered the process successfully culminating in a draft approved with 93% of the vote in a referendum in 2013.

However, it is significant that in the 2013 Constitution, the powers of the President remain undiminished. It retains the executive presidency, which has power to appoint and dismiss public figures, including Cabinet ministers, ambassadors and security chiefs, as well as declare war and states of emergency (see Sachikonye, 2013). The President is entitled to absolute immunity from prosecution for any acts of commission or omission while in office; after leaving office, he can plead that such acts were committed 'in good faith'. There was a strong push by ZANU-PF to retain this type of 'imperial presidency', and against the retention of the position of prime minister. More progressive were new provisions that introduced a mix of electoral systems, the first past the post (FPTP) and proportional representation (PR). Through the PR system, there was affirmative action through a quota for 60 women representatives in the next ten years. Finally, a provision for devolution enabled disbursement of resources for provincial and local development.

The principle of constitutionalism would not be observed for long. Some seven years after the Constitution came into force, major revisions that appear to be retrogressive have been considered by Parliament at the behest of ZANU-PF. Brought before Parliament, the far-reaching amendments seek to curtail its oversight role over international treaties signed by government. Second, the constitution allows the President to appoint vice-presidents instead of running mates who seek election. This undermines an important principle in relation to succession. Finally, public selection interviews for judges would be scrapped, and the President is endowed with greater powers in the appointment and promotion of judges. These amendments appear to be retrogressive in their undermining of principles of separation between the three branches of the state.

In sum, constitutional reform is not a panacea. The interpretation of the Constitution and alignment of existing laws to it is paramount. The level of respect and consistent application of the Constitution are vital. In a fragile democracy such as Zimbabwe, the Constitution should not be tampered with willy-nilly.

The Constitution was violated during the 2017 coup that unseated Robert Mugabe and paved the way to the ascendancy of Emmerson Mnangagwa. Despite official rhetoric that it was 'a military assisted transition', the coup did not silence a debate about its unconstitutional nature, and the possible implications of its precedence. That there was resort to military intervention to bring about leadership succession in the ruling party showed weaknesses in the political system. It also raised wider issues about the stability and legitimacy of that system, and the potential threat of future intervention. A legal scholar raised these issues observing that Mugabe's removal was the first of kind in Zimbabwe where a president was literally forced to resign by military action:

> the framing of the removal as a coup matters because it sets a precedent with potential to haunt the nation. The fact that it was condoned keeps alive the possibility that it could happen again… .[6]

The fragility of the Zimbabwean political system, especially the unstable checks-and-balances between different branches of the state, was exposed. An additional worry would be the possibility of infighting over ruling party leadership in future. For instance, possible future rivalry between Mnangagwa and Vice-President General Chiwenga could stoke fears of yet another military intervention.

3.9 Summary

The narrative in this third part has displayed the consequences of political intervention, centralisation of power and patronage on the development process. It showed that Zimbabwe, despite relegation to a low-income status, is a relatively wealthy country. Annually, it experiences leakages of USD 2 billion consisting of illicit flows and foregone custom duties as well as leakages from the smuggling of precious metals like gold and diamonds amounting to more than USD1 billion. These outflows amounted

6 'How the coup impacted our constitutional order', *Zimbabwe Independent,* 17 November 2018.

to a significant loss to the economy. If the same amount were productively invested in the economy annually, it would make a significant difference for the country's fortunes. It could also reduce the amount of the country's debt substantially.

In the last stages of writing this monograph in 2020, the law courts were hearing cases of corruption of at least two Cabinet ministers, several senior police officers, a former police Commissioner-General and several city council administrators. These corruption cases were but a snapshot of rot in Zimbabwe's public institutions. They reinforce the observations in this section that the development process has been undermined, even reversed, by extravagant misuse of the country's wealth, resulting in fabulous wealth for the few, and poverty and deprivation for the many.

Development and democracy cannot thrive in such conditions. The development impasse and political stalemate should be broken. In the concluding part, some broad recommendations are offered for consideration as Zimbabwe looks forward to its next decade.

4

Agenda and Concluding Reflections

This last part of the monograph on ‘Elusive Development, Fragile Democracy’ recaps the broad issues that it has implicitly raised about the structural relationship between development and democracy. This in turn relates to the wider theoretical discourse on the sequencing of the two processes, and indeed to the character and role of the developmental democratic state (DDS) in the processes.

4.1 Planning and Implementing development

What lessons can be distilled from this extended assessment of Zimbabwe’s development process in the past 40 years? Amongst the lessons is that planning for development is pivotal. Without a development plan to act as a compass, a country goes astray. When that happens, it resorts to reactive *ad hoc* crisis economic management. Since 1980, Zimbabwe has not crafted a development plan that it has fully implemented. The two plans drawn up in the 1980s were shelved rather than actively implemented.

After 1990, the government dropped any commitment to five-year development plans. There has been no classical five-year plan with clear objectives and targets with implementation plans. Instead *ad hoc* plans have been written and quickly shelved to make way for more of the same.

This absence, if not disdain of development planning, deserves some explanation in view of successful use of plans in other developing countries including Botswana, which started out as a poor neighbor in 1966. As a leading exponent of the Botswana development model described the process:

> the formulation of the National Development Plan (NDP) involved a complex process of consultation with each Ministry and within the Economic Committee of Cabinet (ECC). The annual recurrent budgets were linked to the long-term planning process through the annual development budget that allocated finance for projects in the plan. We saw planning as an ongoing process. Each year ministries would bring proposals for new projects to be considered by Parliament. If approved, the projects would become part of the

> NDP. The plan was submitted to the National Assembly for public debate, possible amendments and ultimately approval. Our planning process was a very public process (Masire, 2006: 151).

This planning model was absent in Zimbabwe. Whatever plans were formulated tended to be *ad hoc* plans by ministry bureaucrats who did not ensure commitment to them by the political leadership.

It is an indictment on the latter that it did not engage fully in the planning process, and ensure a public debate on the plan contents at various levels including in Parliament. Consequently, there was no buy-in for the plans right from the beginning in the 1980s. Zimbabwe missed an opportunity to devise and utilise an instrument, a Plan that could have acted as a compass for the country's development. In retrospect, it is no coincidence that the country has been rudderless in the past 40 years in development terms. When this monograph was being completed, the National Development Strategy 1 for 2021 to 2025 was published (GoZ, 2020). Clearly not described as a Plan, its shared some characteristics of priority sectors and targets. It had not been an outcome of extensive consultation within government departments, still less with the private sector. It is still early to predict its likely outcome.

4.2 Convergence of development and democracy

An underlying interest in this study has been the issue of the relationship between development and democracy in a developing country context. There are no hard and fast rules about this: in some instances the two processes intertwine, in others they do not. This relates to a wider debate on whether an authoritarian approach to development is much more effective in producing positive results than a democratic approach (Zenawi, undated; Kanyenze, Jauch, Kanengoni, Madzwamuse and Muchena, 2017; Milanovic, 2020). The East Asian tigers and China are often touted as countries that took an authoritarian approach to development with great success. Authoritarian development laid foundations for subsequent democratisation in Taiwan and South Korea. China proclaims to be a communist one-party state system, and scoffs at democracy. Will it eventually democratise or remain an authoritarian system? Perhaps only time will tell.

In the African context, the cases of Botswana, South Africa, Ghana and Mauritius, amongst others, suggest that it is possible to avoid an authoritarian path to development and democracy. The question why authoritarianism has not necessarily contributed to development, let alone rapid development, in Zimbabwe is worth pondering. As the study confirmed, the authoritarian road to development seems to have failed. Could a more democratic and inclusive road have succeeded in generating development in the past four decades? It might have.

The examination of the political system showed glaring deficits in governance that impeded growth of a robust and transparent economic system. Given the restiveness in Zimbabwean society and vigilance of the international community, the authoritarian road is no longer an option even though some elements within the state view the Chinese and Rwandese models in high esteem.

4.3 Forging a Developmental Coalition

A developmental coalition seeks to deliver public goods, to exercise state power with restraint and to respect human rights. It is an inclusive coalition to the degree that the state collaborates with the private sector and other social interests in forging development policies. In practice, the state bureaucracy provides competent policy design and implementation, retains the confidence of the political leadership, and consults these business and social interests on a regular basis. Like the absence of a National Development Plan, such a coalition has been conspicuously absent in Zimbabwe.

Why did the Mugabe administration fail to construct an effective and sustainable development coalition for the more than three decades that it was in power? It would not have been easy to forge one soon after independence in the context of the legacy of racial division that had excluded the majority from active participation in business. A culture of consultation and dialogue with established white interests was not promoted, despite the co-option of some white agricultural interests into the Cabinet during the first decade. At the same time, no conscious policy appears to have been designed to cultivate black business interests so that they could become a significant force in the economy. As an analyst observed, in the 1980s, the ceiling on black economic advancement:

> was ironically a function of state programmes in key sectors which favoured white capital…The Mugabe government neglected – if not directly opposed – the development of a class of indigenous, black industrialists. The reason for this paradox was that the governing

> elite reckoned that the wellbeing of the national economy and their personal livelihood depended on the continued success of the inherited industrial machinery… (Bond, 1998: 154).

Yet it would have been sensible to nurture black business as strategy of affirmative economic action and possibly as a way to reduce the overwhelming power of white and multinational interests. This inexplicably did not happen in the 1980s.

Some analysts (Masunungure and Bratton, 2010:8) observed that Mugabe himself resisted face-to-face dialogue with business leaders, and that when an administration was not well-schooled in the basic principles of economics or empathetic to the mindset of business, there were strict limits to the realisation of a developmental state. An ideological factor might have been at play. The Mugabe administration had started out in the 1980s espousing socialism, and encouraged the bashing of business both white and black. Perhaps a more convincing explanation of the lukewarm-ness to black business was Mugabe's uneasiness with the possibility of a successful black business that could develop into a rival centre of power and patronage, and threaten its monopoly on patronage networks that fed its support base. Other analysts concurred that the lack of an effective indigenisation policy 'served the interests of the ruling class who perceived authentic indigenous businessmen as a threat to their economic and political ambitions' reinforces this argument (Raftopoulos and Compagnon, 2003:16). It was not until the 2000s that Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment legislation was introduced to promote landed and other interests. Even so, the primary purpose was to shore up ZANU-PF's electoral base; in the post-2017 period, some of its provisions would be diluted to encourage foreign investors to come in.

Other attempts to develop a possible development coalition were half-hearted. This was the case with the weak National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF) set up in 1997, and the Presidential Advisory Council in 2018. A National Economic Council (NEC) envisaged under the GNU was never established. Zimbabwe lost opportunities to develop vigorous business associations that would make strong input into development policy. As some analysts concluded:

> had Zimbabwe's leaders chosen to build on the legacy of a strong and capable state to expand and reorient an already diversified economy, Zimbabwe would have registered broad-based economic

growth and social development (Masunungure and Bratton, 2010:1).

But in opting to prioritise political control and self-enrichment, a predatory coalition instead of a developmental coalition emerged. The former coalition bears responsibility for Zimbabwe's stagnation and decline.

4.4 Durable political settlement

This monograph has shown not only how democracy continues to be weak and threatened but also how deep polarisation persists between political parties. Clearly, the 1979 Constitution and the independence settlement proved inadequate for a stable polity and reconciliation. The 1980s experienced divisive politics and region-based *Gukurahundi* violence. An early attempt at an inter-party Government of National Unity collapsed in 1982. As we observed, the 1990s witnessed growth in authoritarianism that undermined trust and confidence in the political system against the background of an increase in corruption.

It would take more than a decade for some consensus to be reached between the main political parties to reach an agreement on a compromise Constitution in 2013 after an initial failure in a referendum rejection in 2000. While this landmark in 2013 represented important progress, the end of the GNU in the same year signaled a return to polarised interparty relations. The divisive political discourse culminated in a return to violence and a disputed electoral process in 2018. The legitimacy of the electoral process has long been a contentious issue while authoritarian structures and tendencies have been identified as major obstacles to the construction of a more inclusive and accountable political system.

Zimbabwe needs to craft a broad-based, inclusive and durable political settlement. Experience during the last 40 years indicates that the electoral process and its outcomes are only a partial solution to deeper national and social issues of division, exclusion and authoritarianism. But what do we understand such a political settlement to entail? A political settlement is a common understanding, initially among elites, about the organisation and exercise of power. Settlements run the gamut from exclusive, benefitting a select group of elites, or inclusive, representing a broader set of interests (Bratton, 2014). Since power determines the distribution of resources, political settlements establish who gets what, when and how (Laswell, 1936).

Zimbabwe needs to build upon previous partial settlements, the independence and 2013 constitutions, and the positive elements of the GNU of 2009-2013. These should be expanded to include consensual proposals expressed through initiatives for a national dialogue and even a national transitional authority. Such a broad settlement should guarantee inclusion, incentives, fair balance of power, credibility and ownership. The settlement should be embedded in effective and strong institutions.

4.5 An effective Social Contract

The pursuit of broad-based sustainable development and democracy requires not only a political settlement but also an effective social contract. There have been persistent calls for a durable social contract since the 1990s in Zimbabwe. Paradoxically, most such calls have not been from the state or ruling party but from organised social interests principally business and labour. These interests recognised quite early that a negotiated social contract would provide a valuable framework in which to resolve issues such as working conditions, wages, pensions, investments and social spending. In the perspective of one prominent labour leader in the 1990s, it was imperative for business, labour and government and political authorities to change attitudes towards each other:

> in a way that allows national interests to subordinate narrow interests. Government needs to look beyond the next election. Business needs to look beyond the next election. Labour needs to look forward beyond the. next bargaining round… (Sibanda, 1996).

The social contract discourse was given expression in the Kadoma Declaration of 2003. However, the absence of commitment on the part of the ruling party and government ensured that a social contract was not implemented despite the setting up of an institutional framework in a Tripartite Negotiating Fund (TNF). The TNF was moribund for nearly two decades until it was resuscitated in 2019. Even so, it remains moot whether the state is sufficiently ideologically and technically committed to the implementation of the tripartite social contract. Furthermore, to be more inclusive, a social contract should embrace other social forces beyond the tripartite framework.

Some analysts have argued for what they term a resilient social contract defined as a dynamic national agreement between state and society, including different groups in society, and on how they should live together (Mawowa and McCandless, 2018:2). Such a social contract includes:.

> the distribution and exercise of power, and how different demands, conflict interests and expectations around rights and responsibilities are mediated over time through different spheres and mechanisms… (ibid.)

Zimbabwe needs to craft such a social contract through refining and expanding the scope of the current framework. The development process would benefit immensely if that enlarged social contract would earn sufficient legitimacy for a national renewal alongside a political settlement. The dividends from improved social cohesion and institutional thrust from a developmental coalition operating within a democratic framework would be immense.

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