

**A Critical Analysis of the Role of the Movement for
Democratic Change (MDC) in the Democratisation
Process in Zimbabwe from 2000 to 2016**

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Abstract

The thesis provides a critical analysis of the role of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in contributing to processes of democratisation in Zimbabwe from 2000 to 2016. The MDC was formed in 1999 and it became the most important opposition party to the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980. During this period, though, the MDC also entered into a coalition government with ZANU-PF under the Government of National Unity (GNU) from 2009 to 2013. In characterising the Zimbabwean state as a semi-authoritarian regime with a defiant ruling party, the thesis identifies and examines the significant challenges faced by the MDC in seeking democratisation, including within the realms of electoral, constitutional and legislative change. At the same time, the MDC suffered from significant internal problems including major splits, with the original MDC becoming MDC-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) in 2005. In focusing on the MDC and democratisation over the entire course of the party's existence, the thesis is able to identify any important differences between the pre-GNU period, the GNU period and the post-GNU period. As well, it is able to consider the changing relationships between the MDC and the pro-democracy forces from which it first emerged, namely urban civil society and trade unions. The thesis concludes that the effectiveness of the MDC in bringing about democratisation has been highly uneven across the realms of electoral, constitutional and legislative change, and that any changes are necessarily tentative and subject to reversals given the ongoing semi-authoritarian regime in which the ruling ZANU-PF party has in effect fused with the state. Though there has been some evidence of democratic transition in Zimbabwe under the influence of the MDC (and MDC-T), more far-reaching democratic consolidation remains elusive. The fieldwork for the thesis is in large part based on a qualitative research methodology, involving key informant interviews, observations, primary documentation, and participation in political rallies and public lectures.

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Acronyms

ART- Agenda for Real Transformation

AIPPA – Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

AU – African Union

BANC – Bulawayo African National Congress

CCJP – Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace

CDF- Constituency Development Fund

CIO – Central intelligence Organisation

CISOMM – Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism

COPAC – Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee

COSATU - Congress of South African Trade Unions

CSOs – Civil Society Organisations

CYL – City Youth League

CZI – Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries

DP – Democratic Party

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

ESAP – Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

EU – European Union

FTLRP – Fast Track Land Reform Programme

GAPWUZ – General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GNU – Government of National Unity

GPA – Global Political Agreement

IMF – International Monetary Fund

JOMIC -Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee

MDC-M – Movement for Democratic Change - Mutambara

MDC – Movement for Democratic Change

MDC-N – Movement for Democratic Change - Ncube

MDC-T – Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai

NANGO – National Association for Non-Governmental Organisations

NCA – National Constitutional Assembly

NDP – National Democratic Party

NGOs – Non Governmental Organisations

ONHRI – Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration

PF-ZAPU – Patriotic Front – Zimbabwe African People’s Union

POSA –Public Order and Security Act

SADC – Southern Africa Development Community

SRANC -Southern Rhodesian African National Congress

SROC – Standing Rules and Orders Committee of Parliament

UANC – United Africa National Congress

UDI – Unilateral Declaration of Independence

UN – United Nations

UNDP- United Nations Development Programme

USAID – United States Agency for International Development Government

WB – World Bank

ZCTU – Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

ZANLA – Zimbabwe National Liberation Army

ZANU-NDONGA – Zimbabwe African National Union – NDONGA

ZANU-PF – Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

ZDERA –Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act

ZEC – Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

ZESA – Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority

ZIMRIGHTS – Zimbabwe Human Rights Association

ZIPRA – Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army

ZUD – Zimbabwe Union for Democrats

ZUM – Zimbabwe Unity Movement

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

Over a number of years now, questions around democracy and democratisation in Zimbabwe have been hotly contested in both academic and public discourses. As part of these questions, the role of opposition parties in seeking to bring about democratisation in the country has been also brought to the fore. In this light, this thesis seeks to critically examine the role of one particular opposition party, namely the Movement for Democratic Change, in processes of democratisation in present-day Zimbabwe.

The structure of this introductory chapter is as follows. In the next section, I set the context for the thesis in terms of the importance of studying opposition parties and democratisation. I then outline the thesis objectives and the theoretical framework for the thesis, before discussing in detail the research methodology underpinning the thesis. I end by outlining briefly the content of the ensuing chapters.

1.2 Context of Research

Since the attainment of political independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean polity and society has experienced a significant democratic deficit, with a pronounced authoritarian streak marking state politics under the dominance of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), the ruling party since 1980. While numerous opposition political parties have existed in Zimbabwe since independence, only from the late 1990s with the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has there been a major challenge to the rule of ZANU-PF. The MDC was established in 1999 out of the urban civic and trade union movements. It must be noted that the MDC split in 2005 to the extent that the party adopted a new name, that is MDC-T (MDC-Tsvangirai), to distinguish it from the breakaway called initially MDC-Mutambara. Because the thesis focuses on the MDC – and specifically MDC-T – from the time of its formation to now, I use the name MDC with reference to the party before the split in 2005 and the name MDC-T with reference to developments subsequent to the split.

The scholarly literature on Zimbabwe in large part accepts that there has been a close-knit relationship between the ruling party and the state since independence, such that it is possible to speak about the party-state nexus (Kaulemu, 2004; Masunungure, 2009). A prevalent authoritarian trend has existed simultaneously and this has been certainly noticeable since the formation of the MDC. This trend is embodied in many ways in the character and practices of the party-state. This is despite the fact that the country successfully underwent a

democratic transition in 1980 when the Zimbabwean polity held its first competitive multi-party elections, and even though there have been regular national elections ever since. Hence, any opposition political party – including the MDC – emerging in Zimbabwe has to contend with what is in effect a semi-authoritarian state and all the challenges which come with this when seeking to deepen democratisation in the country. In this sense, though Zimbabwe has at times transitioned towards democracy, any meaningful evidence of democratic consolidation is scarce. But the MDC claims consistently to be vigorously countering authoritarianism in trying to restore and reinvigorate democratic processes in Zimbabwe, and to be doing this reasonably successfully. The thesis seeks to critically analyse this persistent claim. It does so by focusing on the early years of the MDC, that is before the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009, during the GNU from 2009 and 2013, and then after the GNU period.

The study of oppositional political parties, whether in Zimbabwe or elsewhere, is of importance since parties often play important roles in pursuing democratisation in polity and society (Bartolini and Mair, 2001; Mozaffar et al., 2003; Sachikonye, 2005; Matlosa et al., 2007; Salih, 2003; Salih and Nordlund, 2007; Randall and Svåsand, 2002a, 2002b; Dix, 1992; Crotty, 1993). To quote Schattschneider's dictum, "modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties" (Schattschneider, 1942:1). In this regard, significant research on parties arose in the light of the so-called 'third wave' of democratisation which started to sweep across numerous polities in sub-Saharan Africa during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Carbone, 2007; Salih, 2003; Sachikonye, 2005; Ake, 2000; Bratton and van de Walle, 1992; Rakner and van de Walle, 2007; Lynch and Crawford, 2011; Ihonvbere, 1997b). However, most of the published literature tends to focus on an analysis of parties in power, or ruling parties, and in a way which often seeks to show the continuities between state rule in colonial and post-colonial Africa (Southall, 2014). In this context, Southall cites how, in line with the Rhodesian regime's action against any threat from anti-colonial opposition, "Mugabe's ZANU-PF has engaged in vicious domestic repression of the MDC" (2014: 334). As Rakner and van de Walle (2007:2) noted nearly a decade ago, "there are remarkably few studies of opposition parties in contemporary Africa". When opposition parties in Africa are studied, there is a tendency to focus on their flaws and not on their sustained efforts in entrenching democracy (van de Walle and Butler, 1999).

In the case of Zimbabwe, a reasonable amount of literature exists on political parties even since the formation of the MDC, but again the focus tends to be on the ruling ZANU-PF party and its machinations in retaining power in the face of multiple economic and political

crises. There seems to be an academic fixation with examining the ruling party and its modes of state power, now reduced conceptually to ‘*Mugabeism*’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015:4) further notes, “[h]ow Mugabe as an individual was produced historically and politically might be the ideal entry point in understanding *Mugabeism*”. As well, much literature on democratisation in Zimbabwe has concentrated on the role, agency, influence and contribution of civil society organisations in seeking democratisation (Chitanga, 2009; Mudzengi, 2007; Magure, 2009; Diakonia, 2014). In large part, this has mimicked broader African literature (Olukoshi, 1998).

Fortunately, studies of the MDC as an opposition party have emerged over the past decade (Zamchiya, 2013; Booysen, 2014; Maroleng, 2004; Makumbe, 2006). These studies are important but, even when combined, they do not provide an overarching analysis of the party’s contribution to democratisation in Zimbabwe. For instance, they seem to be concerned primarily with democratisation in terms of electoral contestations and results (based on a minimalist understanding of democracy as electoral democracy), and thus fail to incorporate a fuller sense of processes of democratisation into their analyses. This amounts to what Schmitter and Karl (1991) term the ‘fallacy of electoralism’. In adopting a maximalist, or wider and deeper, notion of democracy and democratisation, this thesis seeks to contribute to the prevailing literature by offering an intensive examination of the MDC and democratisation. This involves treating the MDC as a political formation immersed within a multiplicity of socio-political processes, and framing its involvement in democratisation in terms of the interlinked notions of the transition to, and consolidation of, democracy.

This thesis also seeks to go beyond the existing literature on the MDC by considering more fully, compared to this literature (Aeby, 2015; Raftopoulos, 2006; LeBas, 2011; Kagoro, 2003; Sachikonye, 2011a; Makuyana, 2014), the internal processes and practices of the party. This is critical to avoid treating the party as – analytically – a black box, as the capacity of the MDC in furthering democratisation in Zimbabwe depends quite importantly on its willingness to pursue democracy internal to the party, or to practice what it preaches. Existing accounts of the MDC offer truncated narratives on the internal politics within the MDC, whereas this thesis provides ‘thick descriptions’ of the party’s internal dynamics.

The MDC makes for an interesting and useful case study of opposition parties and democratisation in Zimbabwe, though any conclusions deriving from this study of the MDC are not necessarily applicable to other opposition parties in the country, past or present. It certainly has certain peculiarities, most notably the fact that it is the most formidable political opposition to have emerged in post-colonial Zimbabwe and it has been able to withstand the

test of time in terms of remaining on the party-political scene. The MDC is a party that has offered stiff challenges to ZANU-PF's one-party dominance under semi-authoritarian conditions, with authoritarian tendencies even becoming more strident to forestall further advances by the MDC and MDC-T. Indeed, it was able to defeat the ruling party in national elections, at least during the March 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections. Further, it has also served in government during the period of the GNU, which brought upon it new opportunities and challenges in pursuing democratisation.

1.3 Thesis Objective

The main objective of the thesis is *to critically analyse the role of the Movement for Democratic Change in contributing to processes of democratisation in Zimbabwe from 2000 to 2016*. The secondary objectives include the following:

1. To trace, explicate and determine the ways in which the MDC party has contributed to the promotion of democracy in Zimbabwe, and the challenges the party has faced in doing so.
2. To identify and clarify the linkages between the MDC on the one hand, and civil society organisations and external f/actors on the other hand, and the ways in which this interface contributed to overcoming democratic deficits in Zimbabwean society.
3. To investigate and understand the internal functioning of the MDC (including its splintering into different fractions) and the implications of this for the party's pursuance of democratisation.
4. To analyse how and why the Zimbabwean state has remained largely undemocratic and with significant authoritarian tendencies, as well as examining the ruling party's involvement in hindering processes of democratisation.
5. To studiously explore and understand any differences in the contribution of the MDC to processes of democratisation between the pre- and post-GNU periods on the one hand, and the GNU period on the other (when the MDC formed part of the Zimbabwean government).

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The thesis, broadly speaking, draws upon the very substantial literature on democratisation. In doing so, I offer a critical examination of modernisation theory which is quite prevalent in this literature. I seek to understand the Zimbabwe party-state first and foremost through a semi-authoritarian analytical lens (Olcott and Ottaway, 1999), a point which in-itself highlights the

importance of pursuing democratisation but also the challenges any opposition party is likely to face in processes of democratisation. In this respect, I diverge from claims often made in the Zimbabwean literature that the party-state is purely authoritarian (Ruhanya, 2014; Sithole and Makumbe 2001; McCorley, 2015). The notion of semi-authoritarianism allows for a recognition of the existence of certain spaces, no matter how limited, in which democratisation may be opened up by opposition political parties. It also allows for sensitivity to inevitable trials and tribulations experienced by oppositional parties in confronting the existing party-state.

In further theoretically framing the study of the MDC and democratisation, I draw upon the broader literature on political parties and party-systems in Africa (Doorenspleet, 2003; Salih, 2003; Mutizwa-Mangiza, 2013; Sanches, 2014; de Jager and du Toit, 2012). The notion of a party-system, and the diverse ways in which political parties interact and relate to each other, facilitates an understanding of the ways in which party competition and conflict – within a semi-authoritarian polity – condition, inhibit and promote the emergence, development and consolidation of democratic processes as well as the emergence and survival of democracy.

These analytical approaches are framed more abstractly within power cube theory, as developed by Gaventa (2005) as, ultimately, the quest for democratisation is rooted in power differentials and struggles. This theory speaks about different modalities of power and the spaces and places in which these forms of power are expressed and enacted. For instance, it facilitates an identification and understanding of the visible and invisible forms of power deployed by intransigent ruling parties to block democratisation, while also showing how opposition parties make spaces or enter spaces into which they are invited, as part of their struggles in pursuing democratisation.

Combined, it is hoped that this theoretical schema makes a valuable contribution to the existing literature on opposition parties and democratisation with particular reference to the MDC in Zimbabwe.

1.5 Research Methodology

In this section, I provide an overview of the research methodology and methods underpinning the study of the MDC in Zimbabwe, including how the evidence was collected and analysed as well as the challenges and ethical issues involved in the fieldwork. In the words of Ahuja (2001:353), research methodology is “the science of methods which contains the principles and standards employed to guide the choice, structure, process and use of methods as directed by the underlying paradigm”. More generally, Leedy and Ormrod (2001:41) define research

methodology as “the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project” (see also, Kothari, 2004:8; Barbie, 1998:89).

Research methodologies are grounded in more abstract philosophical commitments pertaining to epistemology and ontology. Ontology relates to the question: “What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108) and thus it entails identifying “how things are, how things work” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108). In other words, ontology involves claims about what can be said to exist in the world or to constitute reality. Epistemology asks, given the character of reality: “what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108). This involves a quest into the ways of becoming to know reality, through such modes of analysis as understanding and explanation.

This raises important points about research methodology. Though recognising the existence of a reality existing outside the meanings given to it, the thesis has a strong focus on how people make sense and understand the world around them. This implies that ‘meanings’ constitute a crucial part of reality, and that any inquiry must be sensitive to grasping analytically these meanings. Because of this, the thesis falls very loosely within an interpretive sociological paradigm, but one which avoids idealism. In this respect, it tends to fall outside the positivist paradigm which tends to claim that reality exists completely independently of meanings, and that there are simply differing interpretations of an objective reality. As a result, I do not seek to establish causal relationships. I do however privilege the notion of conditioning, rather than causality. This relates to debates about structure and agency. In this regard, I argue that structures condition agency. Agency is rooted in prior meanings given to the world, and these meanings mediate therefore the relationship between structure and agency. At the same time, agency has a feed-back effect on structures.

From a structuralist point of view, then, I examined how structures, such as the political economy of Zimbabwe and the semi-authoritarian character of the polity, condition (and structure or regulate) in various ways the agency of the MDC in seeking to bring about democratisation. Likewise, the agency of the MDC is one condition (out of many) which shapes processes of democratisation in Zimbabwe. Conditions may enable or disable (or promote or constrain) but, consistent with my claims about the importance of meaning, these conditions are always subject to being defined in particular ways which then affect the kinds of agency pursued. For example, the prevailing crisis in Zimbabwe, though having an objective existence (as manifested in high rates of unemployment and so forth) is understood by the MDC by way of the meanings it gives to social facts. I therefore seek to avoid claiming causal relationships,

such that structure causes the MDC to enact agency and that MDC agency causes democratisation in any direct and unmediated manner.

In this light, discourse analysis was used in trying to establish and make sense of political meanings that the MDC gave to developments within Zimbabwe. This I did for instance with reference to party policy and programmatic texts, speeches, seminars, radio and newspaper interviews, press releases and statements in order to make sense of both written and spoken texts and their implications for why the MDC acts the way it does both within the broader polity but also in relation to its internal dynamics. Hancock et al. (2009:13) observe that, in studying texts through discourse analysis, the interest is in how discourses present a specific worldview and are structured to be persuasive. Understanding written and verbal texts as discourses facilitates a recognition of how political claims are framed, produced, reproduced, challenged, contested and resisted.

1.5.1 Research Methods

For purposes of clarity, it is necessary to provide a definition of what a research method entails. As defined by Grix (2004) and Ahuja (2001), methods refer to tools or instruments used in data collection in any research project. Data for this study were collected using various qualitative research methods. Though the prevailing secondary literature on the MDC was drawn upon, the bulk of the study is based on the use of primary documentation and participant observation and as well as interviews with relevant MDC leaders and activists, civic actors and informed academics.

I carefully triangulated all the data collection methods in order to ensure the validity and reliability of data. In fact, I was able to deploy methodological triangulation, which entails the use of more than one data collection source or method (Farmer et al., 2006:377; Della Porta and Keating, 2008:34). As Dear (2008:74) notes, triangulation refers to the use of a “toolbox” of various sources of methods. Complementing these methods also helped in bringing consistency, rigour and depth to the study. In this regard, my fieldwork employed, on a substantial basis, qualitative research modes of inquiry.

The study involved an extensive collection, review (both textual and content) and analysis of relevant primary documentation (O’Leary, 2010) including grey literature. This incorporated documentation emerging from the MDC, the state (including parliamentary debates and GNU reports), civil society groups, research institutes (such as Afrobarometer and Freedom House) and the media (print and electronic – such as radio media). I gleaned for data

related to my study from this diverse pool of documentation and used textually-based discourse analysis in examining it, including interrogating and reflecting upon it (O’Leary, 2010).

This study drew heavily on semi-structured interviews with key selected informants including experts (academics), civil society actors, trade unionists, officials and supporters of the MDC party (as well as other informants from the other MDC factions, or informants who have broken away from MDC-T). I used an interview schedule for these interviews (see Appendix I). This schedule contained mainly two sections – one that covered the internal aspects of the MDC party, and the second one covering how the MDC influenced democratisation processes. I conducted a total of fifty-one interviews (see Appendix II). Each interview generally took around 45 minutes to one hour depending on the generated interest of the respondent to the subject as well as the amount of detail each respondent could provide on the subject of inquiry. During the interview process, I tape-recorded as well as took notes; however five interviewees refused to be tape-recorded. In line with social science research ethics, I first sought verbal consent for any tape-recording of interviews.

I privileged the use of the semi-structured interview technique with key informants since most of the targeted respondents were aware of certain developments unfolding in the pro-democracy movement and in the MDC party in particular. Such thinking resonates with O’Leary (2014:191) who holds that the key informant method enables the researcher to work with experts and insiders who wield specialised knowledge and are privy to what is going on in the subject area under study. In one incident, one respondent, Japhet Moyo (the current secretary general of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union), when asked for an interview requested that I put the questions in writing which I subsequently did.

I chose the semi-structured interview method in particular, primarily because it involves open-ended questions which enabled exploration of the topic in-depth. This method also provided room for probing and follow-up on interesting points raised by respondents. As O’Leary (2014:218) notes, one advantage of such an approach is that it enables the researcher to generate all the intended data as well as interesting and unpredicted data that might arise (O’Leary, 2014:218). O’Leary (2014:218) further asserts that “semi-structured interviewers can start with a defined questioning plan, but will shift in order to follow the natural flow of conversation. Interviewers may also deviate from the plan to pursue interesting tangents”. In this context, I also managed to follow up – during the interviews – on interesting issues raised by the respondents especially on the contribution of the MDC in influencing democratic reforms when the party became involved in the coalition government (2009 to 2013).

Additionally, I made use of observations and participated in public lectures. This involved drawing upon observations on how MDC party activists, officials and supporters act out their politics. Marshall and Rossman (1999:107) note that observation is “a systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours and objects in a social setting chosen for the study”. Throughout the entire fieldwork, I employed both overt and covert observation techniques in order to glean data for this study. Overall, the observation method involved what Moyo (1992b) refers to as observing “things, as they are – things as they present themselves”. My observations stretch back to the year 2010, when I first participated in the Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC¹) as a Rapporteur representing the MDC party. The very fact that I was able to attend internal MDC party meetings and interact with MDC officials helped me to get somewhat of an insider’s perspective on the internal functioning of the party. Scholars argue that the success of any research study depends on access to the setting and to the subjects who will provide the sought after data (Shaffir et al., 1980). In my case, participation in the COPAC constitution making process and the frequent visits to Harvest House (MDC headquarters) gave me some access to the research subjects, including their narratives and practices.

During the course of this study, I attended numerous MDC-T political and prayer rallies and campaigns both in Harare, Bulawayo and in Manicaland province as a participant observer. This helped me in obtaining a thorough observation, introspection and analysis of the MDC-T’s political discourses, political messaging, culture and political practices. At the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis in 2007 and 2008, I was involved in the Save Zimbabwe campaigns (organised by the church, civil society and political opposition) in Zimbabwe. From 2012 onwards, I attended and took part in public lectures organised by Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition and the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI) as well as the lecture series hosted by Southern Africa Political Economy Series (SAPES) Trust. Such platforms enabled me to get disparate perspectives on the broader political developments that were unfolding in Zimbabwe, developments which were also related to this topic. In 2012, I participated in public events such as the Working People’s Convention held at Raylton Sports Club in Harare by the Zimbabwe Social Forum. Such spaces were helpful as they reflected upon the challenges facing the pro-democracy forces in Zimbabwe. (See Appendix III for full list of observations and participation on my part).

¹ COPAC was a body comprised of Members of Parliament across the political divide and civics, and during the GNU it was the body which was mandated with conducting a nationwide outreach programme to collect people’s views on the new constitution.

1.5.2 Sampling, Validity and Reliability

Sampling is a process of selecting a sub-set of a population for the purposes of either drawing statistical inferences or observations from that particular sample. This study utilised the purposive and snowball sampling method, which is a random method of sampling, as I sought to target certain informants with specialised knowledge. In this regard, I made no attempt to select a representative sample. In the main, my informants were elite-members of the MDC and other organisations rather than rank-and-file members, but some low-ranking activists were also involved in the study. Hence, my sample is not representative of the overall MDC party membership (or of other groupings such as civil society) and I make no claim to this effect at any time. This was also done deliberately because in many ways, as the thesis shows, the MDC and its pursuance of democratisation (including with the GNU) entailed elite-driven processes and practices. Thus this top-down analysis, so to speak, does capture many key dimensions of the story of the MDC and democratisation, but it is not the full story. The study of the MDC, as a case study, is also not representative of other opposition parties in Zimbabwe, though the analysis of the MDC in this thesis illuminates many political processes which likely are highly suggestive of trends in other parties.

I targeted groups which were relevant to the thesis topic, such as the MDC, state, civil society and so forth; with MDC and former MDC members being of particular importance. As the study was a longitudinal one, I developed a list of possible key informants for over a long period of time. This entailed purposeful sampling of a targeted population (Egan and Lancaster, 2005:136). I then carried out the fieldwork based on snowball sampling. Bryman (2004:100) observes that with the snowball approach “the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and uses these to establish contacts with others”. Given the political sensitivity of the topic, snowball sampling was important in terms of accessing and establishing relationships of trust with informants. However, I sought to break the snowball sampling into cycles, discontinuing one cycle and then starting another, to avoid being referred to others within small socio-political circles. I discontinued the interviews with informants once I realised that I was not obtaining any important new insights, thus realising that the evidence was becoming saturated. On this basis, I believe I obtained sufficient evidence amongst at least party elites (and former MDC elites) to offer solid conclusions about the MDC and democratisation.

In terms of validity, the key question is “the extent to which a study investigates what it claims to investigate” (Gibbert et al., 2008:1466), or the way in which (and degree to which) the research in fact accurately detects and measures what it purports to study (Denzin and

Lincoln, 1994). My particular concern is with construct validity and, in chapter two of the thesis, I offer an extended discussion of the key concept of democratisation and ways in which it can be understood and ‘measured’. Additionally, in order to realise construct validity, I embarked on data triangulation (as indicated previously), so that I could obtain multiple indicators of the practices of the MDC and its involvement in processes of democratisation (Yin, 1994) and cross-check evidence across research methods.

Reliability refers to the extent of consistency of a research instrument in measuring a construct across time and space. Thus reliability speaks to whether the same data collection methods can be used and still yield the same finding or results over multiple times (repeatability of findings) (Yin, 1994:33; Laws et al., 2003:417). As Bhattacharjee (2012:56) writes, reliability is “the degree to which the measure of a construct is consistent or dependable”. In terms of my actual fieldwork, I uniformly administered the same interview questions to my study respondents in order to ensure consistency in evidence collection. Further, in conducting the study, I designed the research questions in a clear and non-ambiguity manner so that data collection methods would yield consistent findings. There are strong grounds for concluding that, with the same data collection instruments, I would still obtain similar findings and make similar conclusions.

1.5.3 Data Analysis

In terms of qualitative research, data analysis refers to the process of how researchers sort, categorise, analyse and present data according to specific themes (Laws et al., 2003: 382). In this study, the process of data analysis proved to be an iterative one, rather than a fixed one. In fact, I did not wait for a specific period to commence before engaging in data analysis. Forthcoming and emerging data was analysed as the fieldwork progressed. During the fieldwork (data collection) in the research process, I also undertook tentative forms of data analysis. In large part, the two processes ran concurrently. Thus, in the entire research process, I stood guided by Leedy and Ormrod (2001:2) who observe that the process of data analysis is always a recursive, iterative and dynamic one. In this study, the process of analysing data involved going back and forth to the evidence as collected. As such, at the end of each fieldwork exercise, I would transcribe, collate, classify, code, sort and group my data into different main thematic units. I specifically sought out salient and recurring (sub)-themes, patterns, differences and similarities in data. The thematic classification was refined throughout, so that the themes were only finalised near the end of the fieldwork.

In analysing data for this study, I did a thematic content analysis. This involved looking for specific variations as well as similarities in data patterns among the interviewees, as well as with reference to the documentation collected and my notes based on observation and participation in the field. For instance, I divided my data into two important categories. One category focused on the internal aspects and functioning of the MDC, while another was more concerned with external issues and thus the role of the MDC in democratisation processes in the wider polity. I also sought to categorise the evidence historically, in separating out evidence relevant to the pre-GNU, GNU and post-GNU periods. In doing so, I was always cognisant of my main and subsidiary objectives. In many ways, the thematic (and chronological) categorisations provide the basis for the arrangement of the empirical chapters on the MDC in the thesis.

1.5.4 Ethics and Challenges

Under this section, I discuss ethical considerations and dilemmas taken into account during the research process. This study strived to guarantee the safety of the respondents/participants by ensuring that no physical harm was directed against them. In particular, where requested, I have desisted from identifying particular key informants who appear as ‘anonymous’ in the thesis. Given the sensitivity of the investigation, most notably on the internal workings of the party ethical concerns needed to be prioritised (Matelski, 2014). Those informants named in the thesis were comfortable in having their identity known.

In conducting the study, I strived to obtain prior informed and voluntary verbal consent from potential participants before embarking on the research process. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, some informants at first agreed to participate and later opted out of the process. Such respondents included two officials from ZimRights Association and three from Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition as well as five current MDC –T legislators. As Wax (1980:275) observes, the process of seeking informed consent is a negotiated, lengthy and continuous process. In my case, an official letter provided by my thesis supervisor from Rhodes University also helped in building confidence in some respondents (see Appendix IV).

At the onset of the study, I was fascinated with collecting data through social media platforms and networking sites, for example, Facebook and Twitter. My interest was triggered by the intense and polarised debates amongst members of the MDC-T party on these social sites. These fascinating debates became more interesting during the time when the party was entangled in the debates over leadership succession. In an article titled “But the data is already public: On the ethics of research in Facebook”, Zimmer (2010) articulates dilemmas faced by

researchers in dealing with data gleaned from social media (particularly Facebook). In the end, I abandoned collecting data through such spaces due to several ethical dilemmas, namely issues to do with consent, respect of privacy and how to anonymise data gleaned from social media.

The study suffered from numerous practical limitations and challenges which include, but were not limited to, the sensitivity of the topic and problems in accessing data. My fieldwork ‘officially’ spanned the period from mid-2013 to late 2016. Unfortunately, by the year 2014, the MDC party had passed resolutions to gag its elected members and party officials from discussing internal party issues with the media, researchers and the entire ‘outside world’ without official authorisation and consent from the top echelons of the party. In light of this, it also became difficult to access data on the internal proceedings in the party from party officials.

In cases where party officials consented to be interviewed, they exercised extreme caution and selectivity in their narratives. They chose to ignore and filter out certain topics and views during the interviews and highlight others, possibly because of fear of being misquoted and then becoming victimised. Magure (2009:20) refers to such a process as ‘self-censorship’ by respondents. This was due to the ongoing intra-party tensions and contestations taking place during the study period.

The deeply-divided character of the party in fact posed many dilemmas. This is succinctly elaborated upon by one respondent who enunciated that:

*Gift your research is relevant and interesting but it is difficult to get responses from the officials here. The party has been highly factionalised. Our recent 2014 congress affected party unity and cohesion. Everyone now fears being associated with researchers focusing on internal party issues. Research on the same is now being viewed as sensitive.*²

However, in mitigating this research dilemma, I devised other ways of collecting evidence. For instance, this involved attending public lectures, which on many occasions comprised politicians representing the main political parties in Zimbabwe. I also dwelled much on personal observations, review of grey material and the review of primary and secondary data. Thus, I strived to meet the objectives of the study by collecting data through ‘proxy’ means (as explained earlier).

The position of a researcher who is directly immersed in the subject of the research, as I was, at some point in time has an influence on research outcomes either directly or indirectly. Mason (1996:6) uses the term reflexive research to describe how “researchers should

² Interaction with an MDC-T party official at Harvest House (party headquarters) Harare, 2015.

constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process and subject these to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of their data”. Other scholars contend that reflexivity helps in answering epistemological questions such as “what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108).

In this regard, I was involved in the constitution-making process in Zimbabwe in 2009 and 2010 as a Team Rapporteur representing civil society. However, the Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC), as the body responsible for writing the new constitution under the GNU, conscripted all the civics to represent and work under the MDC-T party (as I have previously alluded under section 1.5.1 above). In spite of such a working relationship with the MDC party, I sought to exercise an objective detachment (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108) from the events and processes that unfolded in the party.

My previous relationship and interaction with the party, as the subject under investigation, did not affect the objective analysis of this study. Rather, such positioning enabled me as a researcher to gain an insider perspective on how the party operated (in other words, to peer into the black box so to speak).

1.6 Thesis Outline

The thesis comprises of the following eight chapters, which are chronologically organised as follows: chapter 1 which is the current one. Chapter two discusses the theoretical framework underpinning and informing the study on the role of the MDC party in the democratisation processes in Zimbabwe. Chapter three traces and analyses the historical development of opposition politics in post-colonial Zimbabwe, prior to the emergence of the MDC. Chapter four concentrates on offering a discussion on the broad political economy of Zimbabwe, particularly in the 1990s, and shows how this set the conditions for the rise of the MDC. Chapter five to seven provide the case study of the MDC and democratisation. Chapter five offers an historical overview of the MDC party’s formation, as well as its ideologies and political diversity, and considers the role of the MDC in influencing Zimbabwe’s democratisation using the electoral, legislative and constitutional spaces during the period from 2000 to 2008. Chapter six turns to later developments around these themes of democratisation, in relation to the GNU period from 2009 to 2013 and then the post-GNU period. Chapter seven examines the internal functioning of the MDC-T party, notably in relation to democratic processes within the party, and the implications of this for democratisation in the wider Zimbabwean polity. Chapter eight, as the last chapter, draws together the various threads of

arguments made in the entire thesis in the context of the thesis objective and theoretical framing.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMING: DEMOCRATISATION AND OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE FACE OF SEMI- AUTHORITARIANISM

Democracy is a word that resonates in people's minds and spring from their lips as they struggle for freedom and a better way of life. It is the word whose meaning we must discern if it is to be of any use in guiding political analysis and practice (Schmitter and Karl, 1991:75).

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framing for the thesis, and for thus understanding and analysing the role of the MDC in processes of democratisation in contemporary Zimbabwe. The chapter proceeds as follows. I first examine debates around the concepts of democracy and democratisation, and situate this discussion within global debates appearing in the democratisation literature. The literature on democracy and democratisation is vast, such that the critical review of this literature uses broad brushstrokes but in a manner which is pertinent specifically to the case study of Zimbabwe. Amongst other things, this entails making the distinction between the transition to democracy and the consolidation of democracy. In drawing upon the democratisation literature, I then go on to detail the theoretical framework adopted in the thesis, including 'power cube' theory and analytical reflections on semi-authoritarianism and the political party-system. I conclude by suggesting the relevance and implications of the theoretical discussions in the chapter for understanding oppositional party politics in Zimbabwe in the face of a semi-authoritarian regime.

2.2 Origins and Conceptualisations of Democracy

The democratisation literature is characterised by a vast array of competing normative conceptions of democracy. It is pertinent to first offer a brief history on the debates around the origins of democracy before attempting a definition of the concept. In this regard, this section discusses the historical origins or roots (etymology) of the concept of democracy drawing upon diverse scholarly claims. Ample academic literature provides differing interpretations and claims on where and when democracy originated.

It is significant to note that a great majority of these studies seem to locate the roots of democracy historically in the ancient Greek/Athenian city where democracy was conceived as a "form of government" (Huntington, 1991:5; Held, 1996:1). This literature also points out that Athenian philosophers envisaged *demos* as meaning people and *kratos* as meaning rule or

power (Ake, 2000; Nwauwa, 2003; Held, 1996). It is from this perspective that democracy has generally been conceptualised as ‘rule by the people’ (Sørensen, 2008; Held, 1996). It is however worth noting that the contemporary conception of democracy has since moved away from envisaging democracy as ‘rule by the people’ (the minimal procedural view). The more recent extended conception perceives democracy through the broader liberal lens. This involves viewing democracy as a basis for incorporating and safeguarding civil and political rights (or liberties) as well as more strongly emphasising the downward accountability of government to citizens (Diamond, 1996, 1999; Kaldor and Vejvoda, 1997). The Athenian type of democracy also elicited criticisms stemming from the fact that it was not based on adult universal suffrage and it excluded marginalised social groups like women and slaves from participating in public affairs (Tilly, 2007). The then Greek model of democracy only allowed for the direct participation of privileged males (Machakanja, n.d.; Held, 1996).

Further, despite much scholarship locating the origins of democracy in ancient Greek states, there exists a significant body of scholarly literature by several African scholars who claim the contrary. This body of scholarship argues that pre-colonial Africa had its own specific type of representative and participatory system of governance (African or non-Western forms of democracy) which resonated well with Africa’s own socio-economic and political context, specificities and realities (Ake, 1991; Nwauwa, 2003; Machakanja, n.d.; Uchendu, 2000). This is what Clapham (1993:424) terms as the “indigenous traditions of democracy”. Such claims are evident in a growing body of Africanist scholarship as well as in non-Western literature more broadly, thus not focusing on Africa necessarily (Sen, 1999). This literature seeks to show that democracy originated in non-Western societies. Sen (1999) thus posits that it is at best inaccurate and at worst misleading to suggest that democratic practices are rooted inherently in the realm of Western societies, as other societies such as India have a long tradition of democratic processes.

Africanist literature contends that, before the encroachment of imperialism, tribal communities exercised their own systems and forms of both representative and direct democracy. Examples include the processes through which communities removed, elevated or elected their own traditional rulers, as well as ruler-ship of kings and chiefs by consent through a system of checks and balances (Nwabara, 1979; Khapoya 1998; Ayittey, 2010; Kwesi, 1995; Bradley, 2005; Ake, 1991, 1993). Viewed from this perspective, Western-style democracy was exported to, and imposed upon, non-Western society as part of the colonial ethnocentric political project (Lipset 1998: xiii). However, Clapham (1993) goes on to underlie that pre-

colonial Africa's democratic tradition should not be overly romanticised as there were also autocratic elements within pre-colonial African societies.

Apart from the debates on the origin of democracy, there has also emerged discussions around the universality of democracy in the democratisation literature (Sen, 1999). More specifically, a particular form of democracy – based on the Western liberal notion – has tended to gain traction worldwide, despite alternative renditions of democracy and governance more broadly being pursued and practiced at times. It is noticeable how non-Western countries, including in Africa, have embraced (or at least claim to abide to) the Western liberal type of democracy. As Dahl (1989:313) observes, “[n]ever in recorded history, have state leaders appealed so widely to democratic ideas to legitimate their rule”. As further noted by Sen, liberal democracy has become the “dominant belief in the contemporary world” (Sen, 1999:2). This is in spite of the deep and wide ranging criticisms by scholars of liberal democracy, particularly when conceptualised as part of a Western-driven neo-liberal agenda globally focusing on good governance, which tends to dominate and regulate nations in Africa and elsewhere to their own disadvantage (Abrahamsen, 2000).

The study and conceptualisation of democracy (both as an idea and a practice) has grown significantly over the last few decades, with studies centring on ancient Greece, the collapse of the Roman empire, Medieval England (era of the Magna Carta), the American Revolution, the French Revolution and democratic restructuring over the last couple of centuries. Undoubtedly, democracy as a concept is one of the most debated and contested ones in political sociology, with numerous debates and controversies existing. This vast body of literature is also beset with lack of conceptual clarity on what democracy actually entails. For instance, in a review of one hundred and fifty studies, David Collier and Steven Levitsky identified 550 sub-types of democracy (Collier and Levitsky, 1997).

In fact, within the prevailing literature, there is a whole range of different sub-types and typologies of democracy, and all sorts of adjectives used to qualify what is meant by the concept, such as ‘pseudo’, ‘delegative’, ‘liberal’, ‘participatory’, ‘illiberal’, ‘electoral’, ‘social’, ‘direct’, ‘representative’ and so forth (Joseph, 2003; van de Walle and Butler, 1999; Zakaria, 1997). As Bratton and Mattes (2001) assert “democracy has motley meanings” (Bratton and Mattes, 2001:457). In the broader literature on democracy and democratisation, some scholars even raise important questions around the quality of democracy thereby raising specific questions on whether there exists what can be termed as ‘good democracy’ (Morlino, 2004). Within the democratisation literature, “some insist that democracy is necessarily a dichotomous concept – a state is either democratic or not” (Kekic, 2007:1). Others would argue

that democracy must be understood more along the line of a political continuum. Below I refer to some of the specific notions appearing in the existing literature, particularly those which are of some relevance to this thesis.

2.2.1 Minimalist View of Democracy

Reference is often made to a very minimalist view of democracy. The most minimalist definition is that which conceives democracy in formal procedural terms as an “institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote” (Schumpeter, 1947:269). Schumpeter’s well-known and early study on what is in effect a proceduralist ‘elite’ conception of democracy has been quite prevalent in the literature. For example, in his seminal work, Huntington (1991) conceives democracy as “a political system in which the most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote” (Huntington 1991: 7). A further minimalist/procedural definition of democracy is that provided by Przeworski et al. (1996, 2000) who view democracy through the lens of two key principles, that is, political contestation (or competition) and participation.

Such views have however elicited criticism from other scholars. A regular criticism, for instance from Dalton et al. (2007), is that this perspective equates and reduces democracy to electoral processes. The emphasis on elections as a barometer for measuring democracy is what has been termed as the ‘electoralist fallacy’ or the ‘fallacy of electoralism’ (Karl and Schmitter, 1991; Karl, 1990). In the words of Friedman, the electoralist fallacy refers to “the assumption that elections are a sufficient measure of democracy” (Friedman, 1999:825). Empirical evidence though shows that polities do not become democracies simply by the mere conducting of regular competitive elections. Rather, democracy goes beyond the routinised multi-party contested elections. In recent years, some scholars even highlight that “not all regimes that are based on contested elections may be called democratic” (Cheibub et al., 2010:6).

This also means that the minimal formalistic definition of democracy is not an adequate predictor or yardstick for purposes of classifying political regimes as either democratic or not (Beetham, 1994b). This definition views democracy through the lens of the existence of public institutions and principles which overlooks the significance of non-public displays of power, and these are also crucial for considering whether democracy is in fact effective and functional (Welzel and Inglehart, 2008; Beetham, 1994b). Overall, the minimalist notion is simply not wide and deep enough to capture the existence or not of democracy in practice.

Despite the aforementioned shortcomings of the minimalist view of democracy, proponents of this view still privilege the use of such an approach primarily because it enables an easier operationalisation and measurement of democracy. This has led scholars like Qadir et al. (1993) to conclude that “[i]n social scientific circles the minimalist/formalist delineation is most often adopted, if only for the sake of elegance and the ease of operationalisation” (Qadir et al., 1993:416). In defending the formal (procedural) conception of democracy, it is claimed that this enables – based on analysing electoral competition and participation – a clear categorisation of countries that are democratic against those that are not and those that lie in-between, in the ‘grey’ zones (Huntington, 1991:7-8).

As Collier and Levitsky (1997:433) assert, the procedural definitions of democracy such as the one formulated by Schumpeter are “minimal in that they deliberately focus on the smallest possible number of attributes that are still seen as producing a viable standard for democracy”. Broadening the Schumpeterian definition, one eminent democracy theorist, Dahl (1971), identified seven key benchmarks that are necessary as a basic definition of a modern democracy, in what he refers to as ‘polyarchy’. These include:

Freedom of expression, fairly regular, free and fair elections • freedom of association (for instance, the right to form and join autonomous associations interest groups or political parties). Universal adult suffrage • the right to contest for public office • Access to alternative sources of information free from monopolisation by either a single group or the government • Freedom of association • control over governmental decisions by the elected officials (Dahl, 1971, 3-20; Dahl, 1998b, 85-86; Dahl, 1989:221).

Dahl’s conception of formal democracy incorporates basic civil liberties, implying that democracy should in principle guarantee inclusivity, freedom from repression, and the active participation of the citizenry in democratic processes in an autonomous and informed manner (Diamond, 1996). Such attributes highlighted in Dahl’s polyarchival formulation of democracy, which broaden the minimalist conception, are essential in highlighting the role and agency of the MDC in pursuing democratic change in Zimbabwe. But even richer notions of democracy exist.

2.2.2 Substantive Conception of Democracy

The past decades have witnessed a proliferation of scholarly studies that envisage democracy based on a more substantive view (Qadir et al., 1993; Beetham, 1994b). Scholars who privilege the use of a substantive conception of democracy contend that democracy does not only exist, or even necessarily exist, because of the availability of institutional factors and procedures

(Beetham, 1994b; Kaldor and Vejvoda, 1997). Rather, deeper democracy, as Gaventa (2006) argues, goes beyond the bare existence of such institutions as it considers non-institutional factors as well. Hence, Qadir et al. (1993:416) claim that the substantive, or maximalist, view of democracy takes into consideration issues around “redistributive socioeconomic reforms, broadened popular participation, social justice, and human rights”. There are significant overlaps between the minimalist (procedural) definitions and the maximalist (substantive) definitions of democracy (Usul, 2003) but the latter does not simply complement the former; at times, it in fact undermines the validity of the minimalist claims.

Though mindful of the significance of institutional mechanisms for democracy to thrive, advocates of the substantive view contend that institutions can only be effective for the functioning of democracy if they aid in, and are consistent with, the realisation of underlying democratic values and culture (Knutsen, 2011). As well, though institutional mechanisms may exist officially, in practice they may be dysfunctional or even ignored and side-lined. As Diamond reminds us, “democracy is not just a system in which elites acquire the power to rule through a competitive struggle for the people’s vote, as Joseph Schumpeter defined it” (Diamond, 1999:2). The main shortcoming of the procedural definition of democracy is that, while a country – such as Zimbabwe – might hold periodic elections based on multi-party democracy as provided for in the constitution, the power within the polity may not be fully embodied in the electoral mechanism, if at all. Undemocratic processes, procedures and practices, existing within different spaces, might in the end heavily outweigh any institutionalised democratic attributes.

Advocates of the substantive view of democracy principally argue that a functioning democracy involves fully entrenching liberal democratic values, attributes and practices throughout the polity and society (Beetham, 1994a, 1994b, 1999). For Zakaria (1997), then, even Western liberal democracy is not only about the freeness and fairness of elections, as it is also about respect for the rule of law, protection of fundamental liberties of assembly, speech, property and religion, as well as the separation of the arms of the state – judiciary, legislature and executive. As well, it is about ensuring that, ultimately, the state is not simply beholden to the party in power or sitting government in an instrumentalist fashion. Advocates of the substantive view thus stress the importance of the existence of various political processes in delimiting and unpacking what is meant by democracy, though also conceiving democracy in terms of outcomes (or products) (Welzel and Inglehart, 2008). As Diamond (1996) notes, democracy entails a multiplicity of processes or avenues: “Elections are not enough. Democracy, and especially liberal democracy, requires multiple avenues for ‘the people’ to

express their interests and preferences, to influence policy, and to scrutinise and check the exercise of state power continuously, in between elections as well as during them” (Diamond, 1996:3).

The reference to what happens in-between elections, including with regard to the exercise of state power, is crucial, and this is often the defining moment of the presence or absence of democracy. It is for this reason that Kaldor and Vejvoda argue that substantive democracy is not only a condition as it is also a “[p]rocess that has to be continually reproduced, a way of regulating power relations in such a way as to maximize the opportunities for individuals to influence the conditions in which they live, to participate in and influence debates about the key decisions which affect society” (Kaldor and Vejvoda, 1997:62). Furthermore, some scholars submit that, for democracy to be effective, it should go beyond civil and political rights to incorporate social dimensions such as social needs, social rights and social welfare (Marshall, 1992).

Criticisms of the substantive conceptions of democracy relate to the idea that they are vague, indeterminate and difficult to operationalise (Knutsen, 2011), but this should be considered more of a challenge than as an impossibility in making use of these conceptions. For this reason, for the purposes of the thesis, I lean towards the maximalist interpretation of democracy, particularly because my concern is with the MDC’s overarching contribution to democratic change in Zimbabwe. In the following section, I move on to consider theoretical and empirical debates on how to measure democracy.

2.3 Measuring Democracy

One of the key issues to generate debate and conflicting interpretations in the democracy literature is how to measure and operationalise democracy (Diamond, 1999; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Munck and Verkuilen, 2002; Vanhanen, 1997, 2000; Gastil, 1990). Karl (1990) quite rightly argues that the manner in which we define democracy has an effect on how we operationalise the concept. Operationalising democracy is thus difficult owing to the absence of a universally agreed-upon model of democracy (Munck and Verkuilen, 2002; Beetham, 1994a). In this regard, questions also arise on whether it is possible to measure democracy by assigning figures to – or quantifying – democracy given that it is essentially a qualitative notion. More generally, then, questions arise about the existence of precise indicators, attributes and criteria for measuring democracy (Munck and Verkuilen, 2002).

In the past decades, researchers have certainly shown an increased interest in measuring democracy (minimalist and substantive) through various indicators or variables. These include:

the Latinobarometer, Freedom House Index (FHI), the Index of Democracy of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the Vanhanen model and Polity IV datasets among others (Coppedge et al., 2011; Freedom House, 1993; Dalton et al., 2007; Welzel and Inglehart, 2008; Cilliers, 2016; Kekic, 2007). Among these, the most widely used is the Freedom House Index. In analysing whether or not a particular political regime is democratic or authoritarian, the Freedom House measure of democracy assigns scores ranging from: 1 (free; most democratic) to 7 (not free; most dictatorial) and it also includes another category: of 'partially free'. Despite its common use, scholars have vigorously challenged the Freedom House Index on the grounds of reliability and validity concerns (Knutsen, 2011). As Schneider and Schmitter argue, "the Freedom House Index is seriously deficient and distorted, especially when used to measure variation across regions or over time in the same country" (Schneider and Schmitter, 2004:60).

In addition to these shortcomings, some scholars argue that the Freedom House Index is subjective in its approach (Barro, 1999), flawed in terms of its methodology because of bias in the selection of variables, and marked by inconsistencies in coding (Munck and Verkuilen, 2002). Further, and as a broader criticism of democracy indexes, Papaioannou and Siourounis observe that: "Most polity indicators measure the level of political freedom and do not identify regime transitions. For example, the Polity and the Freedom House indicators by construction do not aim to distinguish democratic from autocratic regimes and thus are not well suited to study political transitions" (2007:2). Nevertheless, the Freedom House Index still provides comprehensive indicators in measuring at the very least electoral democracy (Norris, 2008), and a few indicators relevant to a maximalist conception.

Other indexes, including the Vanhanen and Polity IV models, focus more narrowly on procedural democracy. The Polity IV index developed by Jagers and Gurr (1995) highlights for example regulation of political competition, competitiveness of political participation and openness of executive recruitment. These writers examined the institutionalisation of democracy of 161 states from 1946 to 1994 using a two-scale dichotomy, either democratic or autocratic (Jagers and Gurr, 1995:469-482; Marshall and Jagers, 2002). Similar studies have been done using the Vanhanen index (Vanhanen, 1997). Both these indexes are said to have several shortfalls (Norris, 2008; Papaioannou and Siourounis, 2007), including involving a significant degree of subjectivity (Bogaards, 2007). Besides focusing on minimalist democracy, all of these indexes and models for measuring democracy are in large part rooted in positivist political science with a strong quantitative dimension to them.

The approach in this thesis is different. I adopt a maximalist understanding of democracy and one which conceptualises democracy as a fluid, ambivalent and fluctuating

process which cannot be neatly captured quantitatively. I do not seek to stop the process and measure democracy at one or more ‘stages’ in the process in a kind of synchronic analysis. My approach rather entails a diachronic analysis which seeks to identity the ebbs and flows of a process of democratisation as facilitated, or perhaps not facilitated, by the MDC. This of course does not mean the analysis is devoid of ‘measuring’ democracy but I use measurement loosely with reference to the quality of processes. And, as indicated, I adopt a maximalist conception. In this regard, I follow the general argument raised by Diamond and Morlino (2004, 2005) that we should measure democracy through the following broad indicators: participation, equality, rule of law, freedom, responsiveness, horizontal and vertical accountability as well as open and pervasive competition.

2.4 Understanding Democratisation

This section discusses what democratisation entails and how it is to be understood in the context of the present study. In this section, I provide a literature review of some of the global debates centring on democratisation. Like democracy itself, the concept of democratisation is extremely difficult to understand owing to the existence of a multitude of divergent definitions in the disparate literature. Generally, scholars envisage democratisation in the simplest of terms as the demise of an authoritarian regime and the rise of a democratic regime, which occurs in various overlapping phases and stages (Sørensen, 1993; Shin, 1994). Thus, democratisation involves “political changes moving in a democratic direction” (Potter, 1997:3). Grugel (2002:3) likewise posits that democratisation is a “transformation of the political system from non-democracy towards accountable and representative government”. As for Lewis (1997), democratisation is “the process by means of which democracies come into existence” (Lewis, 1997:12). The broad assumption is that a process of liberalisation occurs which culminates in the transition to a democratic regime, followed by the subsequent loosening of repressive restrictions and the expansion of individual and group rights involving processes of consolidation of a democratic regime (Huntington 1991; Shin, 1994).

In this regard, it is significant to underscore that democratisation is a process and, as with all social and political processes, it is not necessarily linear. There may be side-way steps along the way, and all kinds of divergent paths, with democratisation perhaps proceeding clearly in terms of certain indicators of democracy but not in relation to others. Democratisation, once started, may suddenly stop along the way and revert back to authoritarianism; or there may be a transition to democracy but with no consolidation of democracy. And, of course, the basis for identifying a process of transition or consolidation is

bound to be open to varying interpretations. These kinds of points are illustrated in some countries that transitioned to democracy during Huntington's so-called 'third wave' era of democratisation but later slid or rolled back into authoritarianism (resembling a process of going one step forward and two steps backwards). Because of this, Welzel (2009) argues that democratisation should be conceived in terms of how democracy endures and survives (Welzel, 2009:74-75).

In past years, the democratisation literature has witnessed key shifts in the theorisation of democratisation as the mere change from an undemocratic/non-democratic regime towards a democratic regime, to one which focuses as well on interactions between the state and society (comprised of citizens). (Tilly, 2007). For the purposes of this study, and consistent with the maximalist notion of democracy, I adopt a working definition of democratisation as a meaningful change from an authoritarian political dispensation towards the establishment of a democratic regime which involves – and guarantees in practice – the establishment of democratic institutions, democratic political culture and values, competitive and open political participation, good governance, deep and unhindered respect for civil rights and political liberties, and transparency and accountability, all within the confines of a formal liberal constitutional democracy (Collier and Levitsky, 1997:433-4). The existence of a formal constitutional democracy, to reiterate, does not necessarily entail democratic processes as these democracies in practice are often shallow and sleepy.

One of the salient features of the global democratisation literature is its diversity. This diversity is not only mirrored in the theoretical debates on democratisation at the global level but also in Africa. The sheer rise in scholarship centring on the democratisation process emerged in the wake of the so-called 'third wave' era of democratisation (Huntington, 1991). The study on democratisation has quite forcefully made a distinction between the transition to democracy and the consolidation of democracy, as two processes intertwined within democratisation. I examine first the question of transition, and consolidation later.

2.4.1 Transition and Democratisation

There is a great deal of competing explanations on how and why democratic transitions occur, or why they do not occur, i.e. failed transitions (Stradiotto and Guo, 2010; Guo, 1999; Luckham and White 1996; Suttner, 2004). These are based on studies around the world, including South America, Eastern and Southern Europe (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Linz and Stepan, 1996a; Biekart, 1999; Karl, 2005; Mainwaring, 1986) and (to a lesser extent) sub-Saharan

Africa (van de Walle, 2001; Bratton and van de Walle, 1992, 1997; Doorenspleet and Mudde, 2008; Osaghae, 2005).

One well-known and influential text in the transition literature is the ground-breaking work of Guillermo O'Donnell, Philip Schmitter and Lawrence Whitehead who, in 1986, produced a four-volume work entitled *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. In this seminal study, the editors together with the twenty-two contributing authors stress the role of elites (and the choices made by elites) as responsible for catalysing the transition from authoritarian rule to democratic rule (O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead, 1986). O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986:6), who remain the leading and influential authors in the scholarly field of 'transitology', define transition as "an interval between one type of political regime and another". In this regard, Stradiotto and Guo (2010) note that "a democratic transition is therefore the interval between an authoritarian polity and a democratic one" (Stradiotto and Guo, 2010: 9).

Early scholars of the transition paradigm also argued that it was possible for a polity to democratise because of a diverse range of behaviour, preferences, strategic calculations, choices, interactions, divisions (splits), bargains and compromises between various political actors and elites in a regime. For example, schisms between 'hard-liners' and 'soft-liners', with the balance of power shifting to the latter, were envisaged as a catalyst for the transition of authoritarian regimes towards democracy (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986:19). Often such accounts focused on political elites and their strategies, and this was subject to criticism because it underplayed the importance of external forces as well as ordinary citizens (or civil society) in bringing about democratic transitions. Hence, within the transition literature, there emerged arguments that regime transitions to democracy occurred merely as a result of pacts (agreements among the competing political elites) around, for example, how to distribute and share spoils, and how to share political office (Karl, 1990; Burton et al., 1992; O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). Another objection to the transition paradigm was its rather normative approach, with arguments not based on a solid empirical underpinning (Biekart, 2015:923; Munck, 2011:339).

Despite the problems in this set of literature, the transition paradigm shaped significantly the democratisation literature. This point is exemplified in the sheer bulk of scholarship on this paradigm (Biekart, 1999; Silander, 2005; Rakner et al., 2007; Di Palma, 1990; Karl, 1990; Linz and Stepan, 1978; Przeworski, 1991; Kitschelt, 1993). In fact, the literature grew in leaps and bounds since the publication of the landmark study by O'Donnell et al. (1986). As Rakner et al. (2007) observe: "This literature emphasised the importance of

decisions, ideas and the interaction among strategic political actors in bringing about transitions in ‘unlikely places’. This tradition stressed the uncertainty and possibilities surrounding transitions to democracy” (Rakner et al., 2007:9).

The emphasis then is on agency and process, with actors making strategic choices in situations of dynamic and shifting contingencies (Rustow, 1970) tending to “characterise most democratic transitions” (Whitehead, 1999:87). But the transition literature tends to focus on transitions to a minimalist democracy through the establishment of an electoral democracy (Doorenspleet, 2003).

Although the theoretical insights in the transition literature seemed to be useful in explaining empirical realities in Latin and South America as well as in Southern and Eastern Europe, much of the literature focusing on sub-Saharan Africa found some of the specific arguments less compelling. For example, elite pact-making did not seem as significant to processes of democratic transition (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997), such that “transitions in Africa seem to be occurring more commonly from below” (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997:83). Other writers have also claimed that the transition arguments do not neatly fit with the empirical realities of African polities (Ewald, 2013). As Geddes (1999) observes, the processes of democratisation are marked by variations across regions and even within regions, so that case studies become particularly important (Geddes, 1999: 117). At the same time, at least one critic argues that the transitional model has outlived its usefulness in terms of explanatory value (Carothers, 2002), in large part because current democratisation processes are not marked by clear transitions. In this sense, it has been claimed that the transition paradigm is “too teleological” (Mahomedou and Sisk, 2013:8). However, the notion of transition is not meant to mark, at least necessarily, a discrete stage in the democratisation process. If it is acknowledged that the process is marked by tentativeness and contingencies, then it is worth retaining some notion of transition ‘away from’ if not necessarily a ‘transition to’.

Additionally, some of the transition literature offers invaluable insights in examining and explaining the roles of non-state actors such as civil society organisations and trade unions in facilitating democratic transitions and outcomes (on the theme of civil society in Africa see for example Osaghae, 2005; on unions outside Africa, see Valenzuela, 1989). In a study by Collier and Mahoney (1995) focusing on Southern Europe and Latin America, there was evidence suggesting that the labour movement played a significant role in pushing for democratic transitions in countries in those regions. In Africa, the trade union movement also played a significant role in democratic transitions in countries that include but are not limited

to Zambia and Zimbabwe (Rakner, 1992; Nkiwane, 1998). In other studies (though not focusing on Africa), civil society groups were recorded as important in democratic transition, such as in Chile (if only by discrediting the Pinochet regime) (Bebbington, 1997; Lambrou, 1997). In the Philippines, a constellation of civil society-based democratic forces together with students and organised citizens successfully dethroned the Marcos Ferdinand regime in 1986 (Diamond, 1994).

As well, some studies focus specifically on the involvement of opposition political parties in challenging authoritarian regimes and whittling away at them, despite any restrictions and even repression they might experience in doing so (Stradiotto and Guo, 2010; Doorenspleet and Mudde, 2008; Bogaards, 2000:163). It is on this account that Haggard and Kaufman rightly point out that: “It is now impossible to formulate a theory of democratic transitions that does not explicitly address the strategic interactions between and within the government and opposition” (Haggard and Kaufman, 1997: 265). Too heavy an emphasis though on opposition political parties may end up leading to an analysis based on the agency and strategies of political elites. Nevertheless, the role of opposition political parties – and particularly the MDC – is central to this thesis, as is the recognition of the positioning of civil society and trade unions in democratic transitions. It may in fact be that, in certain cases, a particular democratic transition is marked by elite-driven processes.

2.4.2 Consolidation and Democratisation

This section discusses the debates around consolidation of democracy as articulated in the diverse literature on democratisation. The process of consolidating democracy speaks to how democracy is socialised, institutionalised and habituated within a national polity, such that there is no turning back so to speak. In the words of Valenzuela, “establishing democracy is one thing, while consolidating it is something else entirely” (Valenzuela, 2004:11). The literature on democratic consolidation is vast, with scholars focusing on it sometimes referred to as ‘consolidationists’ (Morlino, 1995; Valenzuela, 1992; Geyikçi, 2011; Schedler, 1998, 2001; Sandbrook, 1996; Dix, 1992; Suttner, 2004; Randall and Svåsand, 2002a, 2002b). As with transition and democratisation, consolidation is relevant to the thesis as it helps in exploring the role of the MDC (and civil society organisations) in pushing for the consolidation of a thriving democracy in Zimbabwe. In the same vein, this analytical lens of consolidation sheds light on the role of the incumbent (the ruling party and state elites) in pushing back and even seeking to block the consolidation of democracy, whether in Zimbabwe or elsewhere.

Linz and Stepan (1996b:14) define a consolidated democracy as a “political regime in which democracy as a complex system of institutions, rules, and patterned incentives and disincentives has become, in a phrase, the only game in town”. For these authors, democratisation as consolidation denotes the endurance of democracy, or the process whereby a polity which has now transitioned to democracy guards against democratic breakdown or erosion (O’Donnell, 1996:37). In a similar way, Diamond (1999:65) defines democratic consolidation as “the process of achieving broad and deep legitimation, such that all significant political actors, at both the elite and mass levels, believe that the democratic regime is the most right and appropriate for their society, better than any other realistic alternative they can imagine”. By some standards, it is quite likely that the most advanced Western democratic regimes, particularly from a maximalist position, fall short of any defined end point of democratic consolidation.

At the same time, in the literature, there are concerns around clarity on the specificities or particular characteristics of democratic consolidation, with different understandings in existence; for this reason, the notion has become an “obese concept” (Schedler, 2001:66). These different understandings, though, often simply entail different emphases because of various mixes of minimalist and maximalist attributes within a particular perspective. Through an extensive review of democratisation literature, Beetham (1994b:159-161) established that democratic consolidation is regularly seen as encompassing ‘the two election test’ (Huntington, 1991), that is, a definitive change from authoritarian to democratic rule based on at least two consecutive free and fair national elections, with the incumbent (and its social base) under the prior authoritarian regime accepting the electoral outcome. Other scholars highlight slightly different points; for example, democratic consolidation as entailing the “diffusion of democratic values, the neutralisation of anti-system actors and civilian supremacy over the military” (Schedler, 1998:91). Failure to respect the post-authoritarian (including post-military) regime by ‘anti-system actors’, and even seeking to undermine it, often takes place. The recent case of Gambia, in which Yahya Jammeh lost an election to Adama Barrow but challenged the transfer of power is a manifestation of this.

Linz and Stepan (1996b) refer to processes of consolidation involving behavioural, attitudinal and constitutional dimensions. Behaviourally, a regime consolidates democracy in a situation where political, social and economic actors all seek through a range of practices to entrench the fundamentals of democratic principles and values. Attitudinally, the democratic regime consolidates because, discursively, the general citizenry comes to believe that – even in times of major economic difficulties coupled with rising discontent with the government in

power – respect for the supremacy of democratic institutions and procedures is seen as the only suitable way of governance. Constitutionally, democratic consolidation entails that political parties, state actors and non-state actors are habituated to conflict resolution within the limits of the established laws, institutions, procedures as underpinned by the constitution (in a kind of social contract). In detailing these, it becomes abundantly clear why democratisation as consolidation is almost invariably marked by disputes, blockages and resistance. Political processes, including processes of democratisation, are rarely if ever rooted in consensus: indeed, conflict and struggle around power normally animate such processes.

Consolidation then is a complex and convoluted process which has its own specificities in each case of consolidation. All sorts of questions invariably arise in studying a particular case, including the following: how do we measure and identify the consolidation of democracy?; where does consolidation start and where does it end as a process?; and where, if any, is the dividing line between democratic transition and consolidation?. Some of these points are answered on the basis of the particular normative conception of democracy adopted and defended. My particular concern though is with process and, ultimately, any process of consolidation is never-ending as it is constantly being asserted in practice and resisted in practice, with processes of consolidation even transitioning back to authoritarian rule.

2.4.3 Democratisation in Africa

There exists a large body of literature focusing on Africa's democratisation, though not always couched in terms of transition and consolidation (Herbst, 1990; Joseph, 1997; Bangura, 1991; Barkan 2006; Mafeje, 1998; Venter 1995; Nyang'oro, 1999; Ihonvbere 1997a; Wiseman, 1995; Nkiwane, 1998; Ake, 1993, 2000; Sklar, 1983; Carbone, 2007; Rakner and van de Walle, 2007; Salih, 2003; Morgan, 1993; Young, 1999; Clapham, 1993; Ndegwa, 2001). This body of literature has grown to such an extent that some scholars have recently conducted a detailed assessment of the democratisation process in Africa spanning the period from 1990 (Lynch and Crawford, 2011). A point that warrants attention, however, is that this burgeoning scholarship on democratisation in Africa emerged principally as a response to developments which occurred during the 1980s and 1990s (the so-called 'third wave' of democracy phenomenon) as articulated by Huntington (1991). As observed by Osaghae (2005), much of this existing work on Africa tends to be read-off from (or simply applies) theoretical frameworks adopted from mainstream literature on democratisation in Latin America and Eastern Europe. Because of this, it is sometimes said to fail to come to grips with African realities.

In Africa, then, the events which crystallised around the fall of authoritarian single-party dominated and military regimes in favour of multi-party democratic regimes saw a marked rise in literature on democratisation (Salih, 2007; Sandbrook, 1996; Morgan, 1992). This literature chronicles for example the massive demonstrations by pro-democracy movements demanding economic and political liberalisation from the 1980s (Bratton and van de Walle, 1992, 1997; Decalo, 1992). The resulting wave of democratisation has been considered so momentous that it has been labelled as a ‘second liberation’ (Osaghae, 2005; Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1987, 1997), or a liberation under post-colonial conditions subsequent to the successful liberation from colonial rule in Africa. In this African scholarship on democratisation, it is generally accepted that the geo-politics of the post-Cold war era, most notably global neo-liberal restructuring, triggered a marked interest in support of Africa’s democratisation by the West (Ake, 2000:34; Decalo, 1992). Some of this work also explores in detail the role of external Western pressure and specifically of the international financial institutions (World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) in spearheading economic and governance reforms across Africa (Ndegwa, 2001).

However, this is not to imply that democratisation in Africa was designed and driven by external forces. A wide array of specifically African-centric scholarship has examined the linkages between civil society, political mobilisation and democratic aspirations in African states (Chazan, 1994; Rothchild and Chazan, 1987; Ake, 2000; Dorman, 2002). In the case of Nigeria, a study by Diamond established that civil society played an instrumental role in ensuring democratising pressure and democratic change (Diamond, 1992). Similar studies of for example Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin and Gabon also show how civil society initiatives such as through roundtables and national conferences helped in striking a compromise with military and autocratic rulers to reconsider and pursue democratic and civilian rule (Fatton, 1991).

One shortcoming of the existing African literature on democratisation is its relative neglect in examining the role of opposition parties in spearheading Africa’s democratisation – with only thin pockets of literature existing (Rakner and van de Walle, 2007; Teshome, 2009; Dolo, 2006). Yet, as Sandbrook contends, “opposition parties contribute to better governance when they expose counterproductive policies and abuses of power” (Sandbrook, 1996:75), such that any study which underplays their significance may be found wanting. More in-depth studies of oppositional parties and their significance to Africa’s continued democratisation processes are vital, and this thesis hopefully makes a contribution to this endeavour.

2.5 Modernisation Theory and Democratisation

In this section, I engage with modernisation theory in exploring how it might assist in conceptualising the process of democratisation, though simultaneously raising the problematic character of this theory for purposes of my analysis. Undoubtedly, modernisation theory has underpinned a considerable portion of the democratisation literature.

Modernisation theory is based on the ways in which socio-economic developments are said to enhance or impede democratisation, with the scholarly work of Lipset (1959) being particularly influential. In this regard, a plentiful array of disparate studies exists which focus on socio-economic development (measured through for example extent of urbanisation, per capita income, levels of literacy and education, and availability of communication technologies) (Lerner, 1968) and how it facilitates and sustains democratisation. There are many examples of this now voluminous corpus of empirical research (Cutright, 1963; Jackman, 1973; Bollen, 1979; Bollen and Jackman, 1985; Gasiorowski, 1995; Boix and Stokes, 2003; Przeworski et al. 1996; Przeworski and Limongi, 1997; Haggard and Kaufman, 1995; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck, 1994; Hadenius, 1992).

As their main assertion, advocates of the modernisation approach theorise that, in order for democracy to be first established and then for it to survive and endure, certain pre-conditions must exist in a particular society (Haggard and Kaufman, 1995). These pre-conditions relate to rising levels of socio-economic development (as per the indicators listed above), so that high levels of wealth, urbanisation and education condition the emergence, transitioning and consolidation of democracy. Any relationship between socio-economic development and democracy though has been hotly disputed. Thus, as early as the mid-1990s, it was claimed that modernisation's overall assertion has been "supported, contested, revised and extended, buried and resuscitated" (Przeworski and Limongi, 1997:156). In fact, as a general tendency, empirical enquiries within the modernisation approach have been inconsistent and even contradictory, with some case studies (seemingly) invalidating entirely the main assertion. Hence, many examples exist (such as in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s) in which authoritarian/military rule and significant rates of annual economic growth occurred simultaneously (O'Donnell, 1978; Silander, 2005). Notably, Lee Kuan Yew, the leader and former president of Singapore, advanced the notion that "authoritarianism was good at promoting economic development" (Sen, 1999: 3).

The study by Przeworski and Limongi (1997) set out to challenge Lipset's (1959) main thesis by arguing that economic development merely helps existing democracies to survive, but not to emerge. In other words, there is no necessary connection between economic

development and a polity's transition to democracy. However, for Geddes (1999:117), the criticisms by Przeworski and Limongi (1997) do not undercut modernisation theory per se and in fact involve a "revisionist confirmation" of it. The criticisms offered by Przeworski and Limongi (1997) seem though to be more fundamental, as they explicitly indicate that it is possible for democracy to come into existence regardless of the prevailing level of socio-development in a polity. As they say, "the emergence of democracy is not a by-product of economic development" (Przeworski and Limongi, 1997:177). This position was likewise collaborated by Przeworski (2004) by way of showing that economic development (specifically Gross Domestic Product per capita) did not have a direct bearing on prompting democratisation. In a critique of Przeworski and Limongi's (1997) conclusions about modernisation theory, Wucherpfennig and Deutsch (2009) argue that such conclusions are bold and overstated. Boix and Stokes (2003), in supporting Lipset's position, sought to reformulate it in an understated manner by claiming that socio-economic development increased the likelihood of a country undergoing a transition to democracy, so that it was not interpreted as a causal relationship.

At the same time, it appears that there needs to be a clear recognition that development and democracy at times are mutually conditioning (rather than seeing development as an independent variable and democracy as a dependent variable). Given these ongoing arguments and counter-arguments, it also might be more productive analytically to argue that "the relationship between economic development and democracy maybe quite complex and more context-dependent than initially stipulated" by Lipset (Bandelj and Radu, 2006:4). Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (2003) noted this, in contrasting the relationship between development and democracy in Latin America to other regions of the world. Therefore, the relationship between socio-economic development and democratic emergence/survival is subject to historical and spatial variation (Johannessen, 2009; Huntington, 1991:59).

In terms of geographical spread, the corpus of modernisation scholarship has tended to focus on particular geographical regions and even historical periods, with Latin America (Karl, 1990; O'Donnell, 1978; Mainwaring, 1989) and parts of Europe (Rueschemeyer et al., 1992) being particularly dominant. To date, fewer studies have been undertaken on sub-Saharan Africa (Masaki and van de Walle, 2014). In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, and southern Africa more specifically, it would be possible to identify many low-income countries which have made important strides along the road to democratic rule (as have other countries, such as India and Bolivia) (Hadenius and Teorell, 2005). In fact, the onset of the so-called 'third wave' of democratisation which swept across much of the sub-Saharan African polities tended to

challenge the notion of necessary pre-requisites to democracy. Examples include Benin, Kenya and Zambia amongst others (van de Walle, 2001). In a study conducted by Przeworski and Limongi (1997), it was shown that some of the 'third-wave' democratising countries ranked near the bottom of the Human Development Index (HDI). As the case of Zimbabwe will show, any linkages between development and democracy can be quite convoluted.

A sub-theme within the modernisation perspective is the question of economic underperformance or even crisis and the status of democratic rule. In a study, Diamond and Linz (1989) argued that deepening economic troubles increased the likelihood of authoritarian breakdown and a transition to democracy. Similarly, Przeworski and Limongi (1997) and Haggard and Kaufman (1995) established that economic crises heightened the likelihood of a breakdown of the existing democratic regime. However, Geddes (1999) arrived at the conclusion that all kinds of regime transitions, even democratic to authoritarian rule, occur during periods of economic depression(s). For sub-Saharan Africa, it has been enunciated that economic meltdowns facilitate the downfall of authoritarianism (including one-party) rule and offer the possibility of democratic transitions (Bratton and van de Walle, 1992). Again, the case of Zimbabwe tends to complicate matters, as an enduring economic crisis has not ensured significant processes of democratisation.

A significant contribution to the modernisation scholarship is a study titled *Beyond Modernisation Theory: Democracy and Development in Latin America* (Johannessen, 2009), which invigorated the issue of the middle class and democratisation. Through this study, Johannessen offers a critique of Lipset's hypothesis, which advances the notion that improved wealth triggers the creation of a strong middle class, with this class fomenting processes of democratisation and democratic stability (Lipset, 1959:83). Other scholars, such as Huber et al. (1993), shared Lipset's view, and added the importance of working class mobilisation as well in stimulating democratic reforms. Johannessen (2009), in his study of the middle class(es) in Latin American countries, demonstrated however that these classes often play a contradictory role vis-à-vis the democratisation process and hence the economic development-middle class-democratisation linkage is not inevitable.

In the modernisation literature, there also exists a strand of literature which argues that a particular political culture (or cultural development) is a necessity for the emergence and sustenance of democracy. Dahl (1998a) thus argues that democracy requires a political culture in which citizens value and respect democratic values, ideals and procedures. In this context, a significant sociological study by Almond and Verba (1963) established that, although economic conditions were essential or necessary for democracy, they were nonetheless not

sufficient, as cultural pre-conditions were also crucial. The assumption is that these civic values and beliefs generate a degree of mutual trust within (and between members in) a polity based on tolerance of diversity and the will to compromise and reach consensus. This speaks to the existence of a civil society often said to be rooted in autonomous associations and unbridled communication within the public sphere. One key study in this respect is by Putnam (1994) on Northern Italy.

Related to this are studies which highlight that certain values, cultures and beliefs are incompatible with democratic transitions (Huntington, 1991). Mainstream Islamic values especially in the Arab world are often times cited as inimical values to democracy (Huntington, 1993:18-19; Fish, 2002). In contradistinction to the above, the role of Catholicism (Catholic church) in aiding democratic transitions in Eastern, Central and Southern Europe is often underscored in the literature (Biekart, 1999; Huntington, 1991). However, recent events as exemplified in the Arab Spring saw heightened demands for democratic change unfolding in polities hitherto perceived as largely Muslim and impenetrable to democratic values and norms (Linz and Stepan, 2013). In fact, the unfolding of such events serve to suggest that the demand for democracy can emerge in any setting. Hence, as with the relationship between economic development and political democracy, the relationship between culture and democracy is considerably more complex than mainstream modernisation theory asserts (Welzel and Inglehart, 2008).

Undoubtedly, one of the most influential accounts of democratisation comes from Barrington Moore's (1966) study on social classes and their relationship to the emergence of democracy. Moore posits that democracy was prone to emerge in societies where the economic and social power of the landed aristocracy was in decline vis-à-vis to that of the bourgeoisie, and in a context where labour-repressive agriculture was not the sole dominant mode of production. He further maintained that the emergence of the bourgeoisie helped democracy to emerge as exemplified in his popular phrase "no bourgeoisie, no democracy" (Moore, 1966:418). Moore recognises though that, in some cases, capitalist modernisation leads to totalitarianism. Overall, this tends to involve a very Western-centric view of the pre-conditions of modern democracy. His thesis shows that modernisation theory is based on the fundamental premise that capitalism gives rise to democracy (or the equation of 'capitalism equals modernity'). But capitalism as an economic system is quite adaptable to different types of political regimes, with diverse forms of state/government currently existing under worldwide capitalism.

Modernisation theory is in large part rooted in a grand scheme of structural articulation (and even determination) between economy and polity (and culture), as well as a notion of linear change; and these are the sources of its analytical problems. At times, the theory is highly deterministic involving economic determinism, with economic factors causing (or tightly conditioning) political factors. Unless the fluid contingencies and autonomy of politics, and the strategic manoeuvres of subjects in politics, history and society are foregrounded, the complexities of democratisation are not properly and fully identified and analysed. In the end, the relationships between economy, culture and polity are simply not able to be captured by one grand theoretical schema. Simultaneously, the criticisms which arise from an examination of modernisation theory do provide pointers in seeking to understand cases (or failed cases) of democratic transition and consolidation in countries such as Zimbabwe.

2.6 Analytical Framework Guiding the Study

In the foregoing sections, I reviewed various concepts, theories and debates about the democratisation process. In the following sections, I outline and fine-tune the theoretical approach underpinning this study on the MDC. I first engage with the power cube theory as originated by Gaventa (2005).

2.6.1 Power Cube Theory

The power cube theory deriving from Gaventa (2005) is named as such primarily because it draws on three specific dimensions: different spaces of participation, different forms of power and their intersections, and different levels and places where even civic-led participation can occur. This three dimensional prism presents itself as a cube-like matrix. The power cube theory details the different forms and levels of power which exist, and how these interact, constrain, shape or promote civic participation in society. Though the power cube largely dwells on civic participation, I adopt this as part of my explanatory framework to analyse how different spaces and forms of power constrain or enable political participation (including of political parties). As such, I expand the power cube perspective to look at how power and spaces interact in constraining or enabling democratic politics. At the heart of the cube theory is the idea that power takes on different forms. But Gaventa (2005) also speaks of places and spaces (see Figure 2.1).

Places refer to the levels at which power operate, namely, global, national and sub-national levels, and how these different levels of power become intertwined and impact on each other. This means examining how political actors seek to influence policy decisions and

political developments at different spatial (in this case, place) levels, including diplomatic offensives, advocacy campaigns and strategic alliances. For my thesis, this involves analysing the MDC's use of such spaces (such as regional organisations in southern Africa, parliament or street-level demonstrations) in seeking Zimbabwe's democratisation.

Spaces entail arenas of – and for – political (or civic) participation. For Gaventa (2005), spaces are viewed as “opportunities, moments and channels where citizens [or political actors] can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships which affect their lives and interests” (Gaventa, 2005:11). The power cube framework speaks of different kinds of spaces, including those that are provided, created, closed, invited and claimed (Gaventa, 2005). In the context of this thesis, the concept of space (and the different kinds of spaces) facilitates an examination of how the ruling party in Zimbabwe seeks perhaps to monopolise, manipulate and close down specific spaces, and how the opposition party (MDC) seeks to create and claim certain spaces for purposes of furthering processes of democratisation. These are spaces then in which power is enacted, though not always successfully.

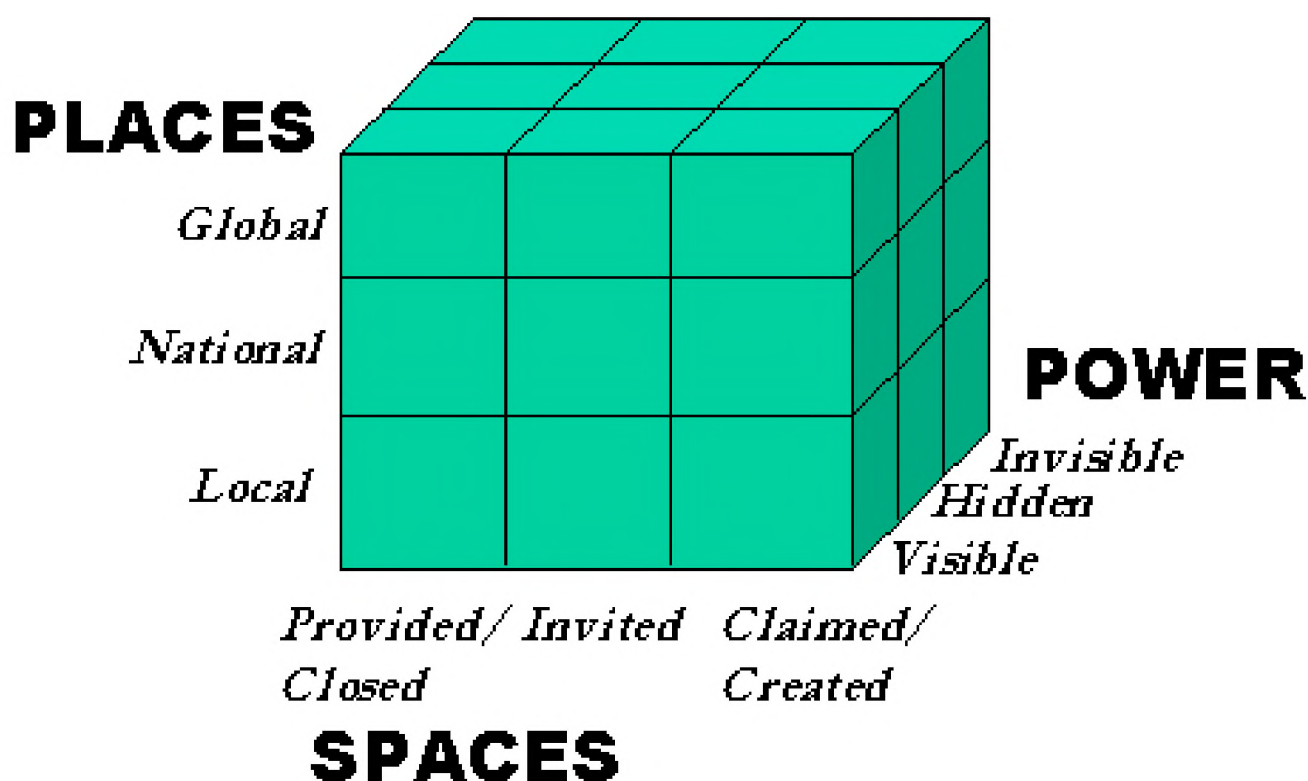
In examining the literature on power, Gaventa (2005) argues that, in order to embrace all manifestations of power, it is necessary to identify and distinguish between the following: power-to, power-over, power-within, and power-with. Within the cube theory, power-over is conceptualised as the “ability of the powerful to affect the actions and thoughts of the powerless”. Power-to entails “the capacity to act; to exercise agency and to realise the potential of rights, citizenship or voice” (Gaventa, 2005:10). Power-within is understood as the capacity of citizens (and, by extension, political parties) to acquire a sense of confidence and self-identity as well as some modicum of consciousness which forms a basis for political action.

Finally, power-with refers to “the synergy which can emerge through partnerships and collaboration with others, or through processes of collective action and alliance building” (2005:10). Gaventa (2005), as well as VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) who have adopted the power cube theory, also speaks of visible forms of political power (as imbued in formal structures, institutions and procedures) and invisible forms of power (acts of power which shape the ideological, emotional and psychological forms of participation among citizens, and political actors generally, in a society). Further, reference is made to hidden forms of power, with these entailing the role of powerful institutions and individual actors in defining and controlling what comes onto the political agenda, as well as referring to the political machinations taking place behind closed doors (Gaventa, 2005:15).

These distinctions are of specific importance for this thesis insofar as different political actors in Zimbabwe deploy these forms of power in weakening, counteracting and blocking

efforts at democratisation or, alternatively, in initiating, strengthening and consolidating democratisation. Power though is fundamentally relational rather than a ‘thing’ which is wielded by a political subject. Thus, the enactment of power entails the existence of a range of relationships, from complete consensus to outright conflict. Analysing how the political opposition in Zimbabwe (mainly the MDC party) has navigated through spaces in trying to usher in democratic reforms necessarily entails an understanding of its various relationships over time with the ruling ZANU-PF party, as well as with civil society.

Figure 2.1: Power Cube Framework



Source: Gaventa (2005:11).

2.6.2 Political Parties and Party-Systems

The power cube theory provides a broad analytical framework but it needs to be complemented by more middle-level theorising about political parties and party-systems (Duverger, 1959; Cox, 1997; Rae, 1967), particularly considering the particular focus of the thesis. Such theorising assists in understanding the role of parties, within a party-system, in pursuing democratisation within a polity. In this respect, Mainwaring and Scully (1995:4) define a party-system, as do other scholars such as Doorenspleet (2003), simply as “a set of interactions in the competition among parties”. However, there is no consensus on the dimensions, indicators and elements that can be empirically used in measuring the extent to which a competitive party-system has become institutionalised (Sanches, 2014). Several scholars use the concept of party-system as a lens to conceptualise and examine the relationship between individual political parties and how their patterns of interaction impact on democratisation (Sartori, 1976; Doorenspleet and Nijzink, 2014; Doorenspleet, 2003; Bardi and Mair, 2008; van de Walle, 2003; Bogaards, 2004, 2008; Gunther and Diamond, 2003).

This literature also focuses on analysing the rise, proliferation and consolidation of different types of party-systems, including in the context of the so-called ‘third wave’ era of democratisation. In Africa and elsewhere, this has involved some studies examining the transition away from single-party regimes, military regimes and hegemonic party regimes to – at least formally – competitive multi-party systems (Wiseman, 1995; Salih, 2001, 2003; Mutizwa-Mangiza, 2013; LeBas, 2014a; de Jager, 2009; Butler, 2009; Southall, 2014; Bogaards, 2000; van de Walle and Butler, 1999). Thus, a key emphasis within the party-system literature has been on the difficult transition to multi-party systems (Mainwaring and Torcal, 2005; Bogaards, 2008; Sandbrook, 1996). Also of significance within the party-system literature is the study of particular political parties, including opposition parties, with a stress often on party institutionalisation (Randall, 2006; Sanches, 2014; Geyikçi, 2011).

Scholars such as Randall (2006) claim that political parties play, or potentially play, a significant role in spearheading democratic transitions in particular. In a similar vein, many studies suggest that political parties make a significant contribution to the consolidation of democracy in a polity (particularly electoral and liberal democracy) (Dix, 1992; Lipset, 2000; Diamond, 1989; Geyikçi, 2011; Morlino, 1994; Pridham, 1990). In fact, Randall (2006:1) argues that “the vital contribution parties can make to democratic transition, and especially consolidation has become almost axiomatic”. However, some literature is more critical in arguing that parties are perhaps “a weak link in the chain of elements that together make for a democratic state” (Randall and Svåsand, 2002b:32).

In terms of the basic formulation of political party characteristics, the following functions are said to be performed by parties:

1. (Oriented towards the electorate)

Representation: expression of people’s demands; simplifying and structuring electoral choice

Integration: integration of voters into the system, political education

2. (Linkage-related)

Aggregating (and channelling) interests

Recruitment and training of political leaders

3. (Government-related)

Making government accountable: implementing party policy, exercising control over government administration

Organizing opposition and dissent (Randall and Svåsand, 2002a:4).

Many of these functions involve the relationship between parties and society, or the electorate; while others are the functions specifically of opposition parties or of the ruling party which forms the incumbent government.

The party-system literature discusses a number of important themes. For instance, Welfling (1973) pays attention to party institutionalisation in the sense of stability and adaptability. This, along with the institutionalisation of the party-system itself, has probably been the most reoccurring theme as it is seen as a crucial factor in ensuring the contribution of parties to democratic transition and consolidation (Sanches, 2014; Basedau and Stroh, 2008; Riedl, 2014; Mainwaring and Scully, 1995; Mutizwa-Mangiza, 2013). Questions about party-system institutionalisation entail the extent to which parties have stable roots within the polity; the legitimacy of parties in terms of advancing the interests of the citizenry; the degree to which citizens legitimately accept parties and elections as avenues of determining who governs; patterns of party interactions and regularity of party competition; and the depth to which parties are organised (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005). Other writers, such as Janda (1970), have focused on intra-party leadership and leadership renewal, organisational discontinuity in the form of party splits and mergers (Bogaards, 2007), and electoral stability or instability in terms of the capacity of parties to be ongoing competitors in successive elections (Sanches, 2014). The theme of party and party-system formation, evolution and development, which is also related to institutionalisation, also appears (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

The party-system literature though reveals and underscores several challenges confronting political parties including in Africa (Erdmann and Basedau, 2008). These include: weak institutionalisation (such as being inadequately rooted in society), high dependence on clientelistic and patronage networks, dearth of internal party democracy, ill-formulated party ideologies, fragmentation and divisions, and poor programmatic links with the people (Gyimah-Boadi, 2007; Bogaards, 2000; van de Walle and Butler, 1999; Nuvunga, 2014; Salih, 2003; Basedau et al., 2007). Such flaws, it is contended, affects the agency and capacity of parties (especially those in the opposition) in fighting for the establishment and consolidation of democracy, as will be seen in the chapters on the MDC in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, in the party-system literature, it is claimed that the way in which parties (in a party-system) interact and compete with each other impacts on the type and level of democracy which obtains in a polity. From the power cube perspective, this would also involve how forms of power become embedded in the relationships between parties.

Like the democratisation literature more generally, existing studies of party-systems seem to be concentrated in certain regions of the world, with Latin America, Eastern and Central Europe again receiving significant attention (Sanches, 2014). Comparatively speaking, fewer studies on party-systems in Africa exist (Mutizwa-Mangiza, 2013; van de Walle, 2003; de Jager, 2009; Sanches, 2014; Riedl, 2014; Bogaards, 2000; Manning, 2005). This relative gap in the literature exists despite the fact that individual African political parties have a deep, entrenched and varied history, even under post-colonial conditions. Such a history spans back to the 19th century which saw the existence of the first political party in Africa, the True Whig party in Liberia, during the 1860s (Basedau et al., 2007:9). It is in this context that, fifteen years ago, Randall and Svåsand (2002b:32) spoke about parties being a “weak link” for a democratic state, as quoted previously. What in fact they were claiming is that quick judgements should not be made on the relevance of parties and party-systems in aiding democratic transition and consolidation in the case of Africa.

Additionally, these authors were contending that the inadequate scholarly attention on the link between party-systems and democracy in African polities is due to the fact that African party-systems, or such systems as based officially on democratic principles, are still in their embryonic stages. Others, much more recently (Doorenspleet and Nijzink, 2014), also speak about a dearth of literature on the nexus between the party-system and democratisation within African studies. Sanches (2014) in fact claims that any overarching findings about the effects of parties on democratisation remains contested and inconclusive.

2.6.3 Semi-Authoritarianism

In order to use the party-system literature fully for purposes of this thesis, it is important to raise the possible presence of semi-authoritarianism in what appears to be a competitive party-system. This is particularly important because of characterisations of the Zimbabwean political regime, currently and in the past. For instance, a study by Salih and Nordlund (2007) classifies the Zimbabwean regime as having evolved from a one-party state to a dominant-party system (Salih, 2003). They further observe that Zimbabwe later changed into a two dominant party system, since the year 2000. Erdmann and Basedau (2007) claim that Zimbabwe was a dominant-party system (from 1980 to 1985) then became a dominant authoritarian party-system from 1990 to 2000. In a similar vein, other scholars classify the Zimbabwean state as a dominant-party system, given the traditional hegemony of ZANU-PF (de Jager and Du Toit, 2012), with a system with is additionally marked by significant authoritarian tendencies.

The existence of a one-party regime or dominant-party regime with authoritarian tendencies (or semi-authoritarianism) has clear implications for power relations within the polity and impinges on the content and conclusions of the power cube and party-system analyses.

In examining the different type of regimes which existed before the ‘third wave’ of democratisation in Africa and beyond, and those which emerged out of the ‘third wave’, it becomes clear that there is a range of regimes which cannot be purely classified under the Manichean dualism of either being fully authoritarian or fully democratic. These regimes are described by Diamond (2002) as ‘hybrid’ regimes. But most scholarly work (Olcott and Ottaway, 1999; Ottaway, 2003; Sondrol, 2007; Göbel, 2011) now pronounce such regimes as semi-authoritarian. Semi-authoritarianism is often associated with dominant-party and also one-party regimes. According to Pempel, a dominant party “must dominate the electorate, other political parties, the formation of governments, and the public policy agenda” (Pempel, 1990:4). In this context, civic groups and political parties are often subject to curtailment and even repression by the dominant party which seeks to undermine any political opposition.

Theorists of semi-authoritarianism assert that such regimes officially uphold and accept the features and tenets of liberal democracy, and claim that they are acting within the bounds of a constitutional democracy. These regimes offer an apparent form of democracy (as a facade) as well as having some form of legitimacy to the outside world and even to citizens within (Olcott and Ottaway, 1999). For instance, such regimes (controlled and dominated by one party) allow for the existence of formal democratic institutions and some level of (limited) civil and political spaces (Sondrol, 2007). But these regimes carefully design and regulate political opposition, contestation and competition in such a way that their hold on state power is not challenged effectively. Thus, semi-authoritarian regimes keep political opposition at bay through institutional, cultural, economic and political manoeuvres and tactics (Sondrol, 2007; Kasleder, 2011), and they do this often through very insidious forms of displays of power. As one of the most well-known and much cited scholars on semi-authoritarianism, Ottaway (2003:7) argues that “semi-authoritarian regimes are not failed democracies or democracies in transition; rather, they are carefully constructed and maintained alternative systems. If semi-authoritarian governments had their way, the system would never change”. If this is the case for Zimbabwe, then any opposition party (such as MDC) would confront major obstacles in trying to bring about democratisation. In reality, these regimes contain both democratic and authoritarian features and elements. But, as indicated, the dimension of authoritarianism is not simply an absence of democracy but an attempt to undercut democratic processes.

Despite the existence of some literature on semi-authoritarianism, Ottaway (2003:5) enunciates that “semi-authoritarian regimes have not received systemic attention”. There are only a limited number of empirical case studies of these regimes (Kasleder, 2011; Sondrol, 2007). Clearly, though, a focus on semi-authoritarian traits within polities would help in framing and analysing the rise of ‘hybrid’ regimes globally, including likely cases in Africa but also in Asia. Further work would also allow for a clearer identification and examination of what can and should be considered as the key characteristics of these regimes, which to date remain somewhat underdeveloped. However, semi-authoritarian regimes may take on quite different specific attributes such that a universal model may be problematic. Hopefully, this thesis will contribute to deepening our understanding of the challenges posed by these regimes to democratisation, particularly for emerging opposition parties.

2.7 By Way of Conclusion: Theorising the Zimbabwean Study

Throughout this chapter, I have sought at times to indicate the relevance of particular theoretical ideas to the case study of the MDC in Zimbabwe. I briefly here provide a more systematic account. It was highlighted that the concern of the thesis is with substantive and not simply electoral democracy. Democratisation is the process by which any form of democracy (whether defined in a minimalist or maximalist way) is established, with the literature often making a distinction between the transition to democracy and the consolidation of democracy. These though should not necessarily be seen as two discrete phases or stages, and democratisation itself should not be understood in linear terms: it is a highly complicated and convoluted process which takes place under specific historical and spatial conditions. This, I argued, is one of the key problems with modernisation theory’s rendition of democratisation. My particular concern is with the role of opposition political parties in processes of democratisation and hence I discussed the party-system literature which, for instance, raises internal challenges often faced by such parties. This was elaborated upon in the context of the notion of semi-authoritarianism, which implies that opposition parties engaging in democratisation processes are likely to face resistance from the prevailing hegemonic party. Finally, the power cube theory foregrounds the different forms of power in existence, and the spaces and places in which power is enacted. This theory provides the basis for a nuanced account of the ways in which the MDC party in Zimbabwe sought to bring about democratic reforms and the many problems it faced in doing so. The next chapter (chapter three) discusses opposition party politics in Zimbabwe historically.

CHAPTER 3: POLITICAL PARTIES AND OPPOSITION POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE FROM 1980 TO 1999

The only way to deal with a snake is to strike and destroy its head (Statement made in reference to the opposition party PF-ZAPU by Robert Mugabe) (Nkomo, 1984:2).

3.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a historical and thematic overview of the evolution and development of opposition political parties in Zimbabwe during the 1980 to 1999 period. The chapter begins by identifying and discussing a broad sweep of key themes pertinent to an understanding of the nature and state of Zimbabwean opposition political parties, and then goes to discuss debates around, and challenges to, attempts by the ruling party to establish a one-party state. It then considers the various ways in which the ruling ZANU-PF party has sought to undermine opposition parties, such as through repression and legislative measures. The problems faced by opposition parties are however not reducible to the machinations of the ruling party. The chapter thus ends by examining the internal weaknesses of opposition parties, including democratic deficits, organisational weaknesses and party fragmentation. Such external and internal factors, as we will see, are also of significance when it comes to later analysis of the MDC's efforts at democratisation.

3.2 Opposition Political Parties in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe

At the inception of independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean nation-state witnessed the sprouting of numerous opposition political parties of different sizes, forms, support bases, membership and ideological inclinations. Such a development contributed to the possibility of a multi-party democracy, through widening electoral choices, becoming firmly rooted in Zimbabwe. This is besides the fact that some of these emerging parties did not have sufficient clout to win a national election. Questions thus began to emerge about the significance of political parties as a pre-condition for democracy to emerge in the country under post-colonial conditions (Mandaza and Sachikonye, 1991). This resonates more broadly with Schattschneider (1942:1) who aptly argued that "political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the political parties". Despite the fact that Schattschneider's argument is plausible, its relevance and applicability to Zimbabwe remains contested. This is regardless of the fact that the Zimbabwean government has nearly always prided itself on

having a multi-party political system in place, even under conditions of the unchallenged dominance of the ZANU-PF party (or one-party dominance).

It is difficult to offer sweeping generalisations on the form and effects of Zimbabwean post-independence opposition parties owing to their diversity. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, they had several common features. Most of these opposition parties for example seemingly failed to advance democratic politics as they were often punctuated with internal democratic deficits. Zimbabwe's post-colonial parties also remained weak, fragile, fragmented and divided. This took place in a restricted context where there were limited institutional avenues for their emergence in the first place. In other words, opposition parties faced a Herculean task in pursuing and fighting for the consolidation of liberal and electoral democracy within a context of an entrenched one-party dominant authoritarian system (as exemplified by the dominance of ZANU-PF), and their capacities and effectiveness need to be assessed with this in mind.

Before tracing the genesis of opposition parties in Zimbabwe historically and thematically (in this chapter), I first offer a working definition of political parties. There are undoubtedly different definitions of political parties and party typologies drawing insights from various scholars. Nevertheless, in the relevant literature, a political party is essentially conceived as "an organised association of people working together to compete for political office and to promote agreed-upon policies" (Maliyamkono and Kanyongolo, 2003:41). In a similar vein, for Heywood (2002:248), a political party is a group of people pursuing the objective of winning governmental power through electoral means or otherwise. Salih (2003:3) provides a more critical perspective in conceiving of political parties "as instruments of collective human action and creatures of political elites – either politicians trying to control governments or government elites trying to control the masses". Hence, political parties (or at least the leadership) should not be understood as invariably altruistic. At the same time, as indicated in the previous chapter, expected roles of political parties include: the integration and mobilisation of citizens, formulation of public policy, aggregation and articulation of diverse interests, recruitment of political leaders and the organisation of parliament and ultimately of government (Bartolini and Mair 2001; Randall and Svåsand, 2002a).

In the context of Zimbabwe, it is significant to note that, at independence in 1980, the country was greeted with the existence of a 'spaghetti mix' of both organised and unorganised forms of opposition politics. This phenomenon spilled over into post-colonial Zimbabwe. Masunungure (2004:153) observes that the history of post-independence Zimbabwean opposition politics should be analysed in three different phases. In this regard, the origins and

development of opposition party politics in Zimbabwe can be categorised as follows: the pre-1987 Unity Accord era (which saw the domination of Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People's Union, or PF-ZAPU, by ZANU-PF); the 1987 to late 1999 era (with the birth of the MDC in 1999); and the contemporary epoch (of MDC's existence) since 2000. While the focus of this thesis is on the third phase, the MDC cannot be fully understood without an extensive analysis of the previous pro-democracy forces which emerged in Zimbabwe since the 1980 period.

Of course, earlier opposition parties existed in colonial Zimbabwe before independence. As was the case elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, so was the case in colonial Zimbabwe. The parties prior to 1980 included the National Democratic Party (NDP), Bulawayo African National Congress (BANC), the City Youth League (CYL), the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress (SRANC), and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). Though some of these parties were elite parties without a strong nationalist-populist politics, the 1950s witnessed growing militancy and swirling mass support from the populace which led to more clearly nationalist parties from the late 1950s and early 1960s. This shocked the Rhodesian regime, such that for instance the NDP party was banned in 1961.

It was after the banning of ZAPU in 1962 that the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) was formed (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Personalities who were instrumental to the formation of nationalist politics and parties include Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe, who assembled with others in Highfields (one of the oldest black townships in Harare, by then Salisbury) on the 8th of August 1963 to form ZANU. In this regard, scholars contend that ZANU was formed mainly as a result of the split within ZAPU due to internal differences (Sachikonye, 2005; Msindo, 2016). This development saw Ndabaningi Sithole for example parting ways with Joshua Nkomo (who remained in ZAPU). In the wake of such developments, ZANU emerged with leading members who included Herbert Chitepo, Leopold Takawira, Henry Hamadziripi, Mukudzei Midzi and Edgar Tekere. ZANU was likewise banned.

The two major liberation parties (ZAPU and ZANU), as nationalist movements, continued to organise, mobilise, articulate, voice and advocate for black people's national interests. This is exemplified through the formation of the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) by ZAPU and also the formation of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) by ZANU. Both were national guerrilla movements which played an instrumental role in fighting for Zimbabwe's independence through waging a protracted armed liberation struggle against the white settler regime from the late 1960s. It was out of the efforts

of these military wings that Zimbabwe ultimately attained its independence on the eve of the 18th of April in 1980.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Zimbabwe witnessed the emergence and proliferation of numerous opposition political parties. These parties, however, differed in their programmatic appeal and policy preferences (with disparate policies), ideological leanings, political strategies and geographical spread (Chigora et al., 2011; Sithole, 1993; Mandaza and Sachikonye, 1991). Though significant literature exists on many of these opposition political parties, there does not seem to be a reliable database as to the exact number of opposition parties which came and went in Zimbabwe up to 1999. In part, this is because many parties were ‘seasonal’ in the sense that they would spring up before an election and then disband soon after the election. This may be an expression of the existence of political entrepreneurship, whereby political entrepreneurs emerge looking for funds from supporters towards election periods.

This was particularly prevalent in the case of the 1995 elections. In the lead up to this election, small and loosely organised political parties (fringe parties) mushroomed. In the words of Makumbe and Compagnon, this election saw the emergence of “more than twenty political organisations claiming to be opposition parties” (Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000:10). However, these parties failed to consolidate themselves after the 1995 elections. It is thus difficult to give a full list of all the parties during this period, but they include some which existed prior to 1980, such as Rhodesian Front Party (RFP) (supported by the white minority) later renamed Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe, and Bishop Abel Muzorewa’s United Africa National Congress (UANC) which made a pact with the RFP in the late 1970s; and parties which arose during post-colonialism including Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) (formed in 1989), Democratic Party (DP) (1991), Zimbabwe Union for Democrats (ZUD) under Margaret Dondo, Forum Party for Zimbabwe (1993), Forum Party for Democracy (1994), Zimbabwe African National Union-Ndonga (ZANU-Ndonga) and Forum for Democratic Reform Trust (FDRT).

These and other parties existed even in spite of the fact that the Mugabe regime expressed clear sentiments and a strong desire for the establishment of a one-party state in the early days after Zimbabwe’s attainment of independence (Chigora et al., 2011; Mandaza and Sachikonye, 1991). In a sense, the rise and mushrooming of opposition political parties in post-colonial Zimbabwe needs to be understood within the general lens of power analysis. As Galbraith (1983:72) contends, where there is one dominant party continuously controlling the state (as in Zimbabwe), opposition parties are bound to emerge because “power creates its own resistance” (or forms of counter-power).

Of particular importance in this regard is the PF-ZAPU party, the main opposition to ZANU-PF under Joshua Nkomo in the early 1980s and in large part a regional Matabeleland-based party, which went into a coalition government with ZANU-PF in 1980. In 1982, any willingness on the part of ZANU-PF to constructively engage with Nkomo's party in an inter-party pact effectively collapsed after the discovery of arms caches on PF-ZAPU properties (Sachikonye, 2005:8). In the words of one eminent Zimbabwean historian, the arms cache discovery on the 6th of February in 1982 gave the state a 'legitimate' justification to use state power to crush opposition forces especially the PF-ZAPU elements (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

This purported discovery of arms caches on properties at Escort Farm and Hampton Farm (all owned by Nitram Private Limited) was disputed by Nkomo who claimed that the arms were planted by state intelligence personnel (see Nkomo, 2001). Whatever the source of the arms, the discovery stoked serious political tensions which saw Nkomo and his PF-ZAPU members sacked from the Zimbabwean Government of National Unity (GNU) which was formed in 1980. The sacking of Nkomo was followed by political bloodletting which played out in the *Gukurahundi* massacres – a Shona term meaning the first rains that washes away the chaff prior to the onset of the rainy season. *Gukurahundi* refers to the attacks on and murders of the predominant Ndebele civilians in some parts of the Midlands and in the Matabeleland region by Zimbabwean Army's Fifth Brigade during the mid-1980s.

Mugabe justified such acts of atrocities that claimed the lives of thousands of civilians as well as rendering others homeless as the only way to root out 'dissidents' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). At the height of this political persecution, Nkomo fled to London in 1983. Although such a conflict resulted in the massive loss of lives, it only ended when PF-ZAPU became incorporated as a completely subservient member in 1987 under the ZANU-dominated Patriotic Front (Chigora et al., 2011). After the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987, Mugabe created the Ministry of Political Affairs to facilitate the dissolution and amalgamation of Joshua Nkomo's PF-ZAPU into ZANU-PF. The merging of these major parties meant that Zimbabwe was left with no effective opposition party to fight and contend for power, besides the white opposition party. As one interviewee said:

The 1987 Unity Accord was in a way an attempt to establish a one-party state (Interview with Morgan Komichi, MDC-T Deputy National Chairperson, 6 January 2017, Harare). With this background in mind, I now turn to explore how the establishment of the one-party state was fought and defeated by several pro-democracy forces in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

3.3 Struggles against the One-Party State

Before proceeding to examine the role of broad opposition forces in fighting for a multi-party political establishment in Zimbabwe, and against a one-party state, I first clarify what I mean by opposition politics. In this study, I use the term opposition politics loosely insofar as it refers to the emerging post-colonial Zimbabwean civil society organisations, trade union movement, student movement, and mainstream opposition political parties. With reference to Zimbabwean history, it is often argued and correctly that it was not only the nascent political opposition parties that played a significant role in the defeat of the one-party state ideology and practice.

It was the collective effort of various opposition actors which fought vigorously for the liberalisation of the Zimbabwean political landscape (Sachikonye, 1991, 2005), including church organisations like the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Catholic Bishops (Dorman, 2001: 83). Thus, the desire to establish and legislate into existence a *de jure* one-party system by the ZANU-PF regime was defeated and crushed by numerous countervailing forces (Makumbe, 1991). Despite the various agendas of the different actors within the anti-one-party state ‘movement’, they were unified in their collective antipathy (opposition) to the one-party state. It should be borne in mind though that, technically speaking, Zimbabwe was (in practice) a *de facto* one-party state with the ending of PF-ZAPU in 1987.

During the early years of the first decade of independence in Zimbabwe, there were fiery debates on whether the country should adopt or abandon the one-party state agenda. This protracted debate, existing within both public and scholarly spaces, became particularly pertinent after the realisation that Zimbabwe was heralding towards a one-party state through formally establishing it as such (Mandaza and Sachikonye, 1991; Moyo, 1991; Sachikonye, 1991; Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000; Sithole and Makumbe, 1997). In this regard, (the then) Prime Minister Robert Mugabe made the famous remark in the mid-1980s that there was no other party except ZANU-PF that would ever rule Zimbabwe (Shaw, 1986:376).

The developments that occurred in 1987 capture very well the notion that ZANU-PF was bent on creating a *de jure* one-party state system in Zimbabwe. In 1987, two landmark constitutional amendments were introduced (Sachikonye, 2005). The first was Constitutional Amendment No. 6 which abolished the 20 parliamentary seats which had been previously reserved for and allotted to the white population. Secondly, the ZANU-PF led government introduced Amendment No. 7, though amidst growing resistance from some quarters within the ruling party. The amendment saw the creation of the office of the executive presidency, and

the doing away of a merely ceremonial president. In a way, such an amendment was meant to further entrench state power in the hands of one individual, Robert Mugabe.

It was in relation to these and other developments that the pioneering opposition political parties, including Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), and nascent civil society organisations that were already in existence, started to vigorously counter and reject the one-party state establishment. Commenting in particular on the contribution of ZUM towards the defeat and demise of a one-party state, Sithole (1993:35) asserts that “in 1991 the fixation with the one-party state anachronism was abandoned”. This was made possible through a broader coalition of civic society, intellectuals, students, the trade union movement and the legal fraternity (van der Walt, 1998:100-101), with the union movement (once a subservient wing of the ruling party) increasingly distancing itself from the ruling party compared to earlier years of independence. There was a resounding “vocalisation of opposition to the one party-state” (Nkiwane, 1998:98).

During this time, intellectuals from the University of Zimbabwe together with the student movement and the labour movement (Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, or ZCTU) became outspoken with regards to the ZANU-PF party-state’s desire to adopt and constitute a one-party state system. They argued that the adoption of such would be an insult and mockery for the generality of the Zimbabwean citizenry which was yearning for the entrenchment of a multi-party democratic system of governance after decades of colonial rule. Their position was also informed by developments in sub-Saharan Africa where, in countries such as Zambia and Tanzania, the one-party state was proving untenable. One interviewee from my fieldwork succinctly sums up the events that crystallised around the one-party state desire and intent in the following words:

When Mugabe became an executive president, he was bent on trying to create a one-party state and that did not find traction with a lot of groups in the country (academics, students and some of the general populace) and this gave rise to dissent where we see the rise of ZUM and Forum party [Forum Party for Zimbabwe] and so on, in an attempt to challenge this and we also saw the rise of the trade union movement as a voice against the one-party state (Interview with Mr Earnest Nyamukachi, MDC-T official, 7 October 2016, Harare).

Acts of opposition by organisations outside of the political party scene were important. But the one-party state agenda by the ruling party was also defeated through the participation of opposition parties in the electoral processes. In this respect, Sachikonye (2005) opines that (from the early 1990s) the one-party agenda was abandoned by ZANU-PF after ZUM (led by

liberation stalwart Edgar Tekere) won a considerable number of seats in the 1990 national elections.

The entry of ZUM into Zimbabwe's electoral landscape is credited for having broken the myth of ZANU-PF's invincibility during the 1990 elections when the country stood at the verge of becoming a one-party state (Sithole, 1993). In a study entitled *Voting for Democracy: A Study of Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe*, Jonathan Moyo (once a stern critic of ZANU-PF but now its key propagandist) refers to the 1990 election as a plebiscite in which Zimbabweans voted for multi-party democracy by choosing to vote for parties other than ZANU-PF (Moyo, 1992a). In relation to the above, one should note that, in order to undermine the emergence of strong opposition parties, ZANU-PF has allowed for the holding of competitive yet manipulated elections. Such a political ploy is akin in semi-authoritarian or competitive authoritarian regimes elsewhere across the globe (Levitsky and Way, 2002, 2010). In this context, I move on to explore certain ways in which ZANU-PF has sought to undermine the growth and development of post-colonial opposition parties.

3.4 ZANU-PF's Role in Undermining Opposition Political Parties

The ruling ZANU-PF party devoted much energy and effort in seeking to weaken, curtail and even annihilate opposition political parties that emerged in Zimbabwe during the 1980 to 1999 period, as was witnessed in the case of PF-ZAPU. In fact, the co-optation and assimilation of the PF-ZAPU party hook, line and sinker into ZANU-PF (through the 1987 Unity Accord) illuminates how post-colonial opposition politics were undermined in various ways by the ruling party (Sachikonye, 1991). Overall, ZANU-PF resorted to the use of various undemocratic means and strategies to reduce the capacity and influence of opposition parties.

In addition to this, as will be discussed later in the chapter, the opposition parties in existence were organisationally weak and highly fragmented, with deficient internal governance systems. A careful examination of Zimbabwean history reveals that post-colonial opposition parties had their own inherent deficiencies which often were unrelated to any machinations of ZANU-PF. This point relates to events in other countries elsewhere. For instance, in Venezuela, the opposition under the regime led by Hugo Chavez was weak and fragmented and the ruling party was strengthened by this (Weissblum, n.d.). In the context of Zimbabwe, the trend of fragmented opposition parties also existed in the post-2000 era despite the strength of the MDC compared to pre-2000 opposition parties.

Even for the 1980s and 1990s, the external and internal challenges did not totally destroy opposition parties, despite all the measures, strategies and efforts aimed at limiting and

containing opposition politics by ZANU-PF. In fact, it can be argued that the ZANU-PF regime allowed for the existence of numerous political parties in the *de jure* sense, and sought to curtail their effectiveness in *de facto* terms (Kriger, 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Thus, in reality, ZANU-PF was not fully committed to the establishment or entrenchment of a multi-party democratic political system. In this regard, ZANU-PF played the role of gatekeeper for new parties and actors through regulating the conduct of opposition parties. For instance, among other things, ZANU-PF succeeded in making it difficult for the existence of multi-party democratic politics in practice through the manipulation of electoral rules to its own advantage.

It was also involved in the use of brute force, denying access to the state media to opposition parties, and dispensing patronage to woo voters. In the end, the aim of ZANU-PF was to monopolise and flood the political arena with its own presence; hence disproving the constant claim by Mugabe that he was an ardent disciple of multi-party politics. In buttressing this point, it is worth quoting from Sithole and Makumbe (1997) who observe that “[e]ven though Zimbabwe has never foreclosed multi-party electoral opportunities, the power structure has limited such opportunities by maintaining and perpetuating a one-party psychology for the first eleven years of independence” (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997:123). During the first two decades of independence, it was hence difficult on the part of opposition parties to collectively deal with an increasingly entrenched, sophisticated, tried and tested ZANU-PF regime.

Since independence, the ZANU-PF party-state has been able to undermine the growth of a viable opposition by entrenching its electoral dominance on the Zimbabwean political landscape through different ways. Although many parties always existed, the playing field remained uneven as it was heavily tilted and skewed in favour of the incumbent (ZANU-PF) regime (Sylvester, 1995; Nkiwane, 1998). In this regard, Basedau (2007:111) notes that “the dominance of one party can give way to authoritarian [electoral] practices when government is not checked by strong opposition parties”. The ZANU-PF party for example had access to state resources, or used these resources inappropriately and in fact illegally, to dispense patronage (such as food aid and party regalia) in particular to the rural voters. This practice of clientelism gave the ZANU-PF party an unfair electoral edge over competing parties (Sylvester, 1995). It was this uneven playing field, and the many electoral malpractices that arose, which for example prompted the inchoate opposition political parties such as Abel Muzorewa’s United Parties (UP) and ZANU-Ndonga led by (former ZANU leader and stalwart) Ndabaningi Sithole to boycott the presidential elections in 1996 (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997).

Interestingly, Zimbabwe witnessed high voter apathy (or a poor voter turnout) during this period, especially in the 1990, 1995 and 1996 elections. In part, this voter abstention can

be attributed to the lack of a strong electoral competitor to ZANU-PF's electoral hegemony and the implicit recognition that the electoral result is a foregone conclusion. This though has been a broader trend within African politics where one-party dominance prevails, and it is a good indicator of the "low legitimacy of the party-system with the population" (Basedau, 2007:123). Nevertheless, important opposition parties did exist with some particularly prominent. Of importance in this respect was ZUM led by the firebrand Edgar Tekere who had been expelled earlier from ZANU-PF.

In the 1990 general elections contested by ZUM, ZANU-PF resorted to the use of fear and intimidation with respect to supporters of opposition parties (such as ZUM) which were branded as dissident parties meant to destabilise the state (Sylvester, 1990:383). Tekere, though heavily involved in the ZANU liberation struggle in years past, was considered in effect as a traitor and enemy of the state and nation, and as unworthy of respect. Indeed, in using populist messages since 1980, Mugabe had cleverly framed, portrayed and discredited opposition parties as illegitimate as they were not the authentic heirs of the liberation struggle and thus they were unfit to govern (Kriger, 2005). With reference to PF-ZAPU, ZANU-PF repeatedly claimed that voting for this party was tantamount to voting for war and declaring war on the state (Kriger, 2005).

3.4.1 State Violence

One of the crucial methods used by the ZANU-PF party-state, which requires specific attention, is the deployment of its monopoly on the use of violence to weaken opposition politics in post-independent Zimbabwe. In actual fact, post-colonial Zimbabwean politics have been steeped in political violence and terror and this of course stretches back to the colonial era (Masunungure, 2004; Kriger, 2005; Laasko, 2007; Makumbe, 2006). It therefore comes as no surprise that several scholars contend that the post-colonial Zimbabwean state inherited the legacy, structure and apparatus of political violence and terror systematically targeted at the opposition by the Rhodesian state (Ncube, 1991; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

Certainly, as indicated, members of ZAPU particularly since 1983 succumbed to savage state violence which was orchestrated by the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade mainly comprising of former ZANLA combatants (mostly Shona-speaking). The Fifth Brigade unleashed a reign of terror which witnessed the destruction of homes and the deaths of ZAPU members and Matabeleland residents in the early 1980s. As observed by Msindo, "in the first years of independence, weakening or destroying ZAPU became Mugabe's priority" (Msindo, 2016:158). Other incidents though illustrate the continuities of state-sanctioned violence in

post-colonial Zimbabwe, including the post-election violence in 1985 which resulted in the burning of houses and granaries of people perceived to be members of ZAPU, in areas such as Kwekwe, Zhombe, Ntobe, Lower Gwelo and Bindura (Ncube, 1991:164). The shooting of the then Organising Secretary for ZUM (Patrick Kombayi) in Gweru (in 1990) after he had contested the late (and top ZANU-PF heavyweight) Simon Muzenda's seat also attests to how violence was being used by the Mugabe regime in what Mehler (2007:194) terms as the "dominant mode of political struggle" in Zimbabwe.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, post-colonial Zimbabwe has also been accustomed to a culture of impunity since 1980 for those guilty of political violence. To elucidate this point, Patrick Kombayi (representing ZUM) was shot by ZANU-PF operatives. Despite the fact that Elias Kanengoni and Kizito Chivamba (as ZANU-PF spies) were both implicated as perpetrators in this shooting, the case 'died' a natural death. As a clear sign of a total disregard of the rule of law, the two assailants received a Presidential pardon and were freed from incarceration.

ZANU-PF in fact often celebrated its use of violence as *modus operandi*, as pronounced in its speeches such as the one in which Robert Mugabe boasted that "we have degrees in violence" (Bond and Manyanya, 2002:vi). In fact, in often violent discourses and narratives leading up to the 1990 elections, Mugabe went on to urge the masses to collectively "get rid of ZUM", and he sternly warned the electorate against listening to 'small petty ants' which he said would be easily crushed by the ZANU-PF party (Masunungure, 2004:161). White voters were also intimidated by Mugabe's warning shots when he made chilling statements to the effect that, if the whites continued rearing their ugly racist and terrorist heads through associating and supporting ZUM, their heads would be chopped off (Laasko, 1999; Kriger, 2005:15). It was through such messaging that opposition party supporters were left in fear.

3.4.2 Draconian Legislation

This section demonstrates how the ZANU-PF party deployed the use of draconian pieces of legislation aimed at cowing and intimidating opposition elements into submission. Opposition political parties remained weak or were weakened by various legislation enacted by the ruling party. Examples of this includes the State of Emergency which was constantly invoked during the 1980s and the 1983 censorship laws (van der Walt, 1998:99). These measures, like state violence, had footprints of the colonial system (the Rhodesian regime) as they were merely inherited and copied from the colonial establishment and then adapted to fit the post-colonial Zimbabwean polity (Magure, 2009). Put simply, there has been a significant continuity in the

enactment of draconian legislation in the Zimbabwean legal and political landscape across the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Strictly speaking, Zimbabwe is a classic example of a nation-state where law has been used as an instrument and weapon to instil fear within, and scuttle dissent from, the critics of the government. Kagoro (2003) names this regularisation and normalisation of state repression under the law as the “legalisation of repression” (Kagoro, 2003:13). Amongst other things, this involved the arrest of opposition party members and civic activists on contrived charges, with the police and central intelligence services acting in a manner loyal to the specific interests of the ruling party. More broadly, this abuse of the state apparatuses by ZANU-PF to stifle the opposition saw the violation of first generation rights amongst Zimbabweans, especially through the regulation and restriction of fundamental freedoms such as freedom of assembly, association and movement. The enactment and operationalisation of repressive legislation acted as an albatross around the neck of opposition parties. Like the sword of Damocles, the enactment of draconian pieces of legislation was aimed at curbing, curtailing and inhibiting the development of opposition politics in Zimbabwe (Ncube, 1991).

In terms of the states of emergency, the ill-treatment of opposition forces was justified under the law in the Provisions of Emergency Powers, Law and Order (Maintenance) Regulations Statutory Instrument 435 of 1983, sections 21 and 53. These sections (21 and 53) granted powers to the police to detain a person (for up to thirty days) deemed to be a risk or threat to public order and state security. Due to this law, post-colonial Zimbabwe witnessed sporadic detentions which often took place without due process. One such example was the arrest and detention of ZAPU leadership and its supporters as well as members of the Bulawayo City Council in 1985.

During the early 1980s, the Mugabe regime also evoked repressive legislation to incarcerate high-ranking Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) commanders Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku under treason charges. The allegations were that the two wanted to depose the ZANU-PF government (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006:64). Writing on his blog, one analyst, Alex Magaisa posits that: “In fact, Mugabe has always used treason charges as a tool for harassing and distracting political opponents. PF ZAPU’s Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku were some of the high profile victims in the 1980s as was a founding father of ZANU, Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole in the 1990s” (Magaisa, 2016).

In an open show of defiance to the principle and practice of separation of powers between the judiciary, executive and the legislature, Mugabe re-ordered the re-detention of Dabengwa and Masuku after they had been acquitted by the courts. Indeed, the executive

interference in this case was a calculated strategy to silence any form of political opposition, dissent and criticism to Mugabe's governance. Then High Court judge, Justice Hilary Squires, in 1983 dismissed the state's case. He remarked that Dumiso Dabengwa was "the most impressive witness any of us has seen in court for a long time". This claim served to prove the point that the actions of the accused were the opposite of anyone "scheming to overthrow the government" as claimed by the state (Judith Todd, *The Zimbabwean*, 23 February 2006). In this regard, the two were pronounced innocent and were subsequently acquitted.

But, in opposition to this court ruling and in actions which could be seen as a brazen act of undermining the independence and autonomy of the judiciary, then Home Affairs Minister Herbert Ushewokunze stated that "let it be stated that the acquittal of Dabengwa and others proves once more that the judiciary we inherited from Smith is not in tune with the present Government" (Judith Todd, *The Zimbabwean*, 23 February 2006) After making such an executive pronouncement, the two (Dabengwa and Masuku) were re-incarcerated only to be released five years later without undergoing a proper trial. One can then argue that these actions by the state undermined the praxis of separation of powers, judicial independence and adherence to constitutionalism in Zimbabwe. This is just one, very important, example of the use of legislation to silence political opponents through trumped-up treason charges.

In spite of the existence of this undemocratic and repressive legislation during the 1980s and 1990s, some scholars contend that some space still existed which enabled the germination and growth of a strong, dense and vibrant civic movement in post-colonial Zimbabwe (LeBas, 2006:424) which facilitated the rise of opposition parties.

3.4.3 Control of Media

One of the key tactics used by ZANU-PF to restrict the influence of opposition parties was resorting to maintaining a tight control on the media spaces. The ZANU-PF regime sought to undermine the visibility of opposition parties through monopolisation and tight control over the public/state media: namely, the national television station and the national broadcaster, respectively Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) as the only television station and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) which also controlled radio stations. In controlling these, ZANU-PF appointed the boards of management, chief executive officers and editors under the control of the relevant state minister and permanent secretary. As noted by Makumbe (2006), "the control of the state media for partisan political purposes" posed significant challenges for the existence of vibrant and effective multi-party electoral politics (Makumbe, 2006:45).

This monopolisation of the media, by glowingly portraying the ruling party and heaping abuse on the opposition (or ignoring them altogether), blocked the political opposition's access to voters and undercut their credibility. On countless times, ZANU-PF would ensure negative reportage on television and radio of opposition parties including ZUM, and often these would be totally fabricated stories. In many cases, the regime would maintain a complete blackout on the coverage of the opposition parties' campaign activities. The case of how ZUM received limited airplay if not bad publicity during the 1990 elections remains as an illustrative example (Makumbe, 1991). In a related point, other scholars chronicle how for instance the 1990 election campaigns were punctuated with mudslinging, violent narratives, threats, disparaging claims, inflammatory and hate speech, innuendos and accusations as played out in the mainstream media (Sylvester, 1990:394). In a most unsettling and disparaging criticism, Tekere of the ZUM party was even labelled by the ruling party as a rapid dog bent on transforming his party into a banditry movement so as to destabilise the country (Sylvester, 1990:395). Certainly such politics of misrepresentation in the media played a significant role in the de-legitimation and discrediting of opposition parties.

In further denigrating and discrediting the opposition, ZANU-PF also used the print and electronic media to frame the opposition as agents of foreign ideologies. For instance, it presented ZUM as a front for Western imperialism. As Kriger (2005:2) reminds us, "besides coercion, ZANU PF has also engaged in a political discourse that demonises its key opponents as reactionary, subversive, and often stooges of whites and/or foreigners". The de-legitimation of ZUM as a front for Western interests was particularly important to ZANU-PF given ZUM's success in the 1990 elections, and it sought to deny that ZUM was a (credible) home grown opposition party and thus unworthy of representing the Zimbabwean nation.

In a bid to further weaken and suppress the opposition, the ruling party increasingly exercised state censorship over the private media during the late 1990s (specifically in 1998 and 1999). Salutory examples include the arrest and torture of the then editor of *Standard Newspaper* (a private newspaper) Mark Chavhunduka and (reporter) Ray Choto. Following such incidents was also the arrest of Ibbo Mandaza (then editor of the *Mirror*) along with (then reporter) Grace Kwinjeh. This evidence can be taken as proof of how the post-colonial Zimbabwean state deployed the Law and Order Maintenance Act of 1960 (a remnant of the colonial regime) to curtail and muzzle the media.

3.4.4 Unfair Political Party Financing

Finally, political party financing was distributed unfairly to the disadvantage of opposition parties. Post-colonial opposition parties in Zimbabwe suffered from the lack of adequate financial resources as the country transitioned from the colonial era. But this is also attributable to the fact that these parties were not eligible to receive political party finances as per the regulations of the law. The net effect of this gate-keeping effort by the ruling party was that numerous opposition political parties failed to sustain their election campaigns and even struggled to ensure their basic organisational existence due to limited finances. This trend existed mainly because the ruling ZANU-PF party was the only party entitled lawfully to receive public finance from the Ministry of Political Affairs up until mid-1992 (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997:132).

It was only after pressure from opposition parties such as the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) and from the legal fraternity that the above-mentioned Ministry was disbanded and political financing was liberalised under the Political Parties Finance Act of 1994. This Act provided for political funding to other parties as long as they met the required constitutional threshold. To be eligible for funding, a political party had to obtain fifteen parliamentary seats.

Unlike the previous funding arrangement, which only benefitted ZANU-PF and disadvantaged other political parties, the Political Parties Finance Act at least provided potential funding to opposition parties. Vital to note, however, is that despite the existence of the Political Parties Finance Act, opposition parties faced major challenges in meeting the required constitutional threshold of fifteen parliamentary seats in order to be eligible for funding. Consequently, most opposition parties (due to their weak financial state) continued to struggle in sustaining their electoral campaigns and running their party organisations.

3.5 Internal Flaws of Opposition Parties

This particular section focuses on the organisational character and internal weaknesses of the opposition parties in Zimbabwe since 1980 which, along with the machinations of the ruling party (as discussed in the previous section), provide a basis for explaining the ineffectiveness of opposition parties until the late 1990s. Not only have the post-independence Zimbabwean opposition parties been weakened by the ZANU-PF party-state, as they have been afflicted with their own inherent weaknesses in one way or the other. Partly and unjustifiably, these internal flaws have been placed at the feet of the ruling ZANU-PF party. However, as I argue here and as literature on post-colonial Zimbabwean opposition parties testifies, most if not all

of the emerging opposition political parties in Zimbabwe (post-1980) were marked by internal contradictions and tensions as well as by undemocratic practices and tendencies (Nkiwane, 1998; Masunungure, 2004; Laasko, 2003), and these problems are not reducible to the actions of the ruling party. For example, Masunungure (2004:164) chronicles how a proposed coalition of opposition parties under the banner of an opposition Forum failed to materialise because of lack of co-operation and infighting, power disputes, and autocratic tendencies amongst and within the leadership of the involved opposition parties.

3.5.1 Weak Institutionalisation, Eliticism and Leadership Wrangles

The theme of weak institutionalisation relates to the lack of stable linkages and strong roots amongst Zimbabwe's post-colonial opposition parties within broader society, which has led to a form of elite politics or eliticism. This viewpoint finds resonance in some of the extant literature. As LeBas cogently asserts, "democracy requires strong, competitive and socially rooted parties" (LeBas, 2011:16). In relation to this, a further critique often levelled against the opposition parties is that they were in large part urban-based without any significant presence in rural spaces and, because of this, they often only voiced urban demands (Schiphorst, 2001). Clear examples of this include the Forum Party of Zimbabwe, United Parties and Forum Party for Democracy. This was also reflected in their leadership and policy emphases.

Without any strong rootedness in any form of constituency and without mass party membership, the parties were elitist in nature, form and composition. Of course, weak institutionalisation of parties is not unique to Zimbabwe alone as it is a pervasive phenomenon across political party-systems in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond (Sanches, 2014; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Mainwaring and Torcal, 2005; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005; van de Walle and Butler, 1999; Doorenspleet and Nijzink, 2014). This tendency in Zimbabwe relates back to the point about the emergence and proliferation of parties during and toward election periods (Sachikonye, 2005). The lack of visibility, prior engagement and interaction of these opposition parties with society (the Zimbabwean citizenry) led most citizens not to have trust and confidence in these mushrooming parties. Such amorphous opposition political parties were simply devoid of strong structures and links with civil society and the populace at large (Masunungure, 2004). In part, this weak institutionalisation (as indicated) was particularly evident in their poor penetration into the rural areas, as exhibited in their "little interest in mobilising rural constituencies" (LeBas, 2011:121) where ZANU-PF was particularly strong (at least outside Matabeleland).

Broadly spelt out, Zimbabwe's opposition political parties during the 1980s and 1990s were beset with deficiencies in democratic practices in part because of leadership problems. This dominant and recurrent trend has detrimentally militated against the overall growth, unity and strength of opposition politics. A telling example of internal democratic deficits within opposition parties is how Enock Dumbutshena unilaterally uplifted James Chikerema and Patrick Kombayi into high leadership positions in the Forum Party of Zimbabwe in 1990 (Masunungure, 2004). This not only indicates the often highly personalistic nature of opposition parties, but also the dearth of intra-party democracy. In a related development, within ZUM, Tekere's leadership over time came under increasing criticism for failing to respect and observe intra-party democracy. Resultantly, this led to elite dis-cohesion and widespread conflicts within the party and this situation was further exacerbated after Tekere suspended some party members (Laasko, 2003:9).

The Forum Party of Zimbabwe was later entangled in an intense leadership wrangle, in 1994. This acrimonious leadership dispute even spilled into the courts. After the refusal and failure by Dumbutshena and Washington Sansole to relinquish power, Themba Dlodlo went on to form his own party, named the Forum Party for Democracy. Dlodlo justified the formation of his own political offshoot on the basis of the absence of democratic accountability within the party he left. Such events affected detrimentally the longevity of post-independence opposition parties as most of them fell by the wayside because of such contestations.

Further compounding the situation is that the opposition parties tended to have weak or inadequate internal conflict resolution mechanisms. Undeniably, several parties failed to handle and manage emerging internal conflicts expeditiously and properly. For example, in spite of the fact that ZANU-Ndonga (a regional based party) was able to sustain itself, in 1992 it was entangled in a serious internal leadership squabble after the return of its leader Ndabaningi Sithole from exile in the United States of America; and there were no clear mechanisms existing within the party for handling this squabble, if only because Sithole was considered as (or at least considered himself) as the undisputed party leader.

Masunungure (2004:165) holds that the opposition parties were fragmented and regularly disorganised if only because they were pre-occupied in internal fighting for leadership positions and, as such, they tended to "be aggressive in attacking each other than in directing their combined firepower at ZANU PF". Notably, most of the opposition parties were beset with a common trend of fractious politics between, within and amongst themselves, with numerous splits leading to 'bad blood'. One telling critique on the state of the then opposition parties came in fact from former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith who, prior to the 1995

elections, criticised the existing Zimbabwean opposition parties for being fractured and tension-riddled (Masunungure, 2004). What these internal organisational weaknesses and fissures further depict is a picture of opposition parties devoid of a clear programmatic appeal, vision, coherent ideology, cohesion and unity of purpose.

3.5.2 Inarticulate Party Ideologies, Regionalism, Ethnicisation and Breakaways

Most of these opposition parties seem to cluster around particular individuals, rather than on specific political ideologies. Put somewhat differently, the political parties were personality-driven, rather than issue- or ideologically-driven (Rukobo, 1991). As such, they were characterised with low levels of ideological cohesion. This ideological bankruptcy or weak ideological core was in contrast to the ruling ZANU-PF party, which had a clearer ideological position involving Pan-Africanism and nationalism sprinkled admittedly somewhat confusingly with Marxism-Leninism. However, those voting for ZANU-PF often did so because of the appeal of dominant personalities in the party (i.e. the personality of the party leader). In addition, since independence, ZANU-PF had always appealed to emotional voting by invoking memories of the liberation struggle and the associated historical suffering of the masses.

In some way, the lack of coherent ideologies led to the detachment of the numerous post-colonial opposition parties from the Zimbabwean electorate. This detachment occurred in a context where many voters made their voting choices, or preferred to make their choices, based on ideological and programmatic preferences. Undeniably, the phenomenon of problematic party ideologies and the resulting lack of clear alternative and substantive policy interventions dealt a huge blow to the success of the Zimbabwean opposition parties in luring voters (Sylvester, 1995) away from the ruling party.

Though the salience of ethnicity in shaping political support and voter choices is somewhat subtle, in Zimbabwe it has been extremely important and often quite explicitly so. It has played a major role in shaping Zimbabwean political dynamics, with parties emerging that assumed an ethnic and geographical dimension and appeal. As a result, ethnicity and tribal affiliation have been used in post-colonial Zimbabwe as dominant tools for political mobilisation. For instance, although the PF-ZAPU party later assumed a national appeal, for the greater part of its lifespan it was largely perceived by many as a regional and ethnic-based party (amongst the Ndebele) with deep roots in the Matabeleland region. Likewise, ZANU-Ndonga was a party led by Sithole with support in large part restricted to Chipinge in Manicaland, and it had no national character at all. Even until today, ZANU-Ndonga party has

remained as a residue of regional politics. Another example is the Democratic Party which emerged in 1991 as an offshoot from the Zimbabwe Union for Democrats (ZUD). This party was largely perceived as a tribal party representing the Kalanga since most of its leadership came from Masvingo (Masunungure, 2004:163). This does not mean that all parties had a distinctively ethnic and regional base; for instance, despite its internal challenges and imperfections, ZUM had a national profile. And certainly ZANU-PF has not been spared of ethnic labels as well, of the Shona broadly and of specific groups within the Shona (such as the Zezuru, Manyika and Kalanga) more specifically. This ethnicisation of politics was particularly pronounced in leadership wrangles within opposition parties, which pitted different ethnic groups against each other (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). As a result, opposition parties in Zimbabwe failed to build a political profile that cut across ethnic and tribal lines, and it detrimentally affected the growth of an inclusive form of politics and nation-building.

Post-colonial Zimbabwe before the year 2000 was beset with the rise of independent candidates as well as the proliferation of breakaway parties. This then militated against the formation of a viable, united and strong opposition movement. For instance, in the 1990 elections alone, there were twelve independent candidates and the figure rose to twenty-nine in the 1995 elections. This particular phenomenon of independent candidates was even evident in municipal elections (Council and Mayoral) in which some candidates performed reasonably well (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997:130; Masunungure, 2004:166).

Efforts to bring together different opposition parties into some form of coalition were tried but in large part unsuccessful. The initiative to bring such parties together under one united front was first initiated by Margaret Dongo under the Movement of Independent Electoral Candidates (MIEC) which later transformed into Zimbabwe Union for Democrats (ZUD) (Masunungure, 2004). It was under ZUD that, only after a year, Kempton Makamure (then its Secretary General) split from the party citing Dongo's lack of transparency and he went on to form the Transparency Party. These problems relate back to internal leadership squabbles but also sometimes they had a regional or ethnic dimension. LeBas (2011:121) thus asserts that "some parties, such as the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats (ZUD) and ZUM, were the personal vehicles of single individuals". This claim by LeBas resonates with points made by Masunungure (2004:187) who observes that the main reasons behind fractionalisation and splits amongst the parties were trivial and personality-driven amongst the elite leadership. Whatever the cause, though, a culture of splitting became almost endemic within Zimbabwe's opposition parties, with the folding and crumbling of parties soon after their emergence.

3.5.3 Speaking Truth to Power

The political opposition in post-1980 Zimbabwe, in the face of all the negative internal and external factors discussed above, with all its flaws, disunity and disorientation, nevertheless pushed for the democratisation of the Zimbabwean state. But Zimbabwean opposition parties struggled to voice their demands and to be heard. Rukobo (1991:126), writing within a broader African perspective, notes that “opposition groups in Africa have not always displayed the adequate maturity necessary for engendering democracy”. The very same argument has also been levelled against Zimbabwean opposition political parties. This ultimately means that the mere existence of opposition political parties per se does not in itself necessarily usher in democracy in a polity (Teshome, 2009; Nuvunga, 2014).

But the story of opposition parties in Zimbabwe in the 1980s and 1990s is not all a sad story. Some parties, notably the Forum Party led by Dumbutshena, contributed to “democratisation by litigation” through waging legal battles which at some point successfully led to the 1996 nullification of mayoral elections in Harare and Bulawayo (Masunungure, 2004:166). This came at a time when the ZANU-PF regime was regressing into hardened authoritarianism. Numerous parties also played an oversight role vis-à-vis the ruling party. One such example is the case of ZUM. It effectively castigated the deepening corruption within the top echelons in ZANU-PF as well as in lambasting the party elite’s non-adherence to the Leadership Code which the latter had put into effect (Schiphorst, 2001). In addition, prior to his expulsion (in 1987) from ZANU-PF, Edgar Tekere (thus before forming ZUM party) challenged the state of democracy in the ZANU-PF party. Through his candid and outspokenness, he noted that democracy had gone into the intensive care unit within the ZANU-PF party-state (Kagoro, 2003:12). It was in such a context that many commentators largely viewed ZUM as the vanguard of stronger post-colonial Zimbabwean opposition politics in the future. This also underscores the fact that ZANU-PF did not only have to contend with criticism from outside but also from within (intra-party opposition). For instance, ZANU-PF members such as Byron Hove, Sydney Malunga, Lazarus Nzarayebani, Dzikamai Mavhaire and Edgar Tekere were very outspoken over developments within the ruling ZANU-PF party, especially the waning of internal party democracy.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a historical as well as thematic account on the evolution and development of opposition political parties in post-colonial Zimbabwe until 1999, that is, before the rise of the MDC. The chapter discussed how the ruling ZANU-PF party sought

initially to form a one-party state but then back-tracked from this. At the same time, under formal conditions of multi-party democracy, it then tried to weaken and circumscribe the effectiveness of fledging opposition parties in order to retain its one-party dominance. This entailed a strong dimension of semi-authoritarian rule, with the party becoming almost indistinguishable from the state. But the early post-colonial Zimbabwean opposition parties are also a source of their own failures in pushing for democratisation, because of for example democratic deficits, in-fighting and weak institutionalisation. The next chapter examines the Zimbabwean political economy insofar as it relates to the emergence and growth of broad oppositional politics in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 4: POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ZIMBABWE FROM 1980 TO 1999

When you come out of a regime, it does not mean that you enter into a new regime. This coming out can be a simple slip resulting in collapse and chaos (Sartori, 1991:466)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter follows from the previous chapter which gave a historically-grounded account of the emergence and development of opposition parties in post-colonial Zimbabwe during the 1980 to 1999 period. Building on this backdrop, this current chapter maps out Zimbabwe's political and economic developments and challenges during this same period. Though it might appear more logical to discuss Zimbabwe's political economy during the first two decades prior to any overview of political parties more specifically, the main intent of this chapter is to set the historical context for a discussion of the MDC, as the formation of this party is deeply rooted in the political economy of the post-colonial period. Particular attention in the chapter is given to economic decline and a broader and deepening political and economic crisis, and the heightened mobilisation of both labour and civil society organisations. Combined, these developments triggered the formation of the MDC.

4.2 Anatomy of the Zimbabwean Post-Colonial Labour Movement (1980 to 1990)

This section provides a broad thematic examination of developments and events related to post-colonial Zimbabwe's labour movement from 1980 to 1990. We can only contextualise and understand the role of organised and unionised labour in shaping opposition politics in Zimbabwe by investigating the history of the labour movement.

At independence, the Zimbabwean labour movement was fragmented and generally weak as noted by several scholars (Schiphorst, 2001; LeBas, 2011; Raftopoulos, 2000, 2004). Despite this, the 1980-1981 period was characterised by significant labour unrest, such that Zimbabwe recorded more than two hundred strikes in these two years (Schiphorst, 2001:232) led by diverse union bodies. Thus, the emerging Zimbabwean government was greeted with a spate of in large part wildcat strikes which primarily arose out of what can be termed as a "crisis of expectations" on the part of the urban working class (Kanyenze et al., 2011:260). In the words of Sachikonye (1986:252), "the collapse of the white minority regime which had relentlessly pursued repressive labour and social policies seemed to have opened up a pandora's box of militant labour protest and industrial action".

In order to contain the waves of strikes, and as part of its broader attempt to address the legacies of Rhodesian colonialism, the Zimbabwean government adopted several policy measures aimed at regulating labour and the labour market (Raftopoulos, 2000, 2004; Sachikonye, 1986). For instance, in order to uplift the material conditions of the working class, the government introduced and passed the Minimum Wages Act in 1980 (Schiphorst, 2001; Kanyenze et al., 2011:260; Raftopoulos, 2000:262). Regrettably, many urban companies responded to this move by effecting retrenchments to minimise labour costs (Kanyenze et al., 2011). But as Kanyenze et al. further note, “[i]n order to forestall further retrenchments, government then responded with an Employment Act which stipulated that no retrenchments could take place without Ministerial approval” (Kanyenze et al., 2011:260). As well, post-1980, the newly independent black government moved in to address income disparities in the labour sector, as well as looking into conditions of service of the working populace, by appointing the Riddell Commission of Inquiry in September of 1980 with a view of addressing the inherited colonial labour irregularities (Kanyenze et al., 2011; Hawkins and Hawkins, 1981; Riddell, 1981).

At the same time, the government sought to regulate the labour movement and, essentially, to demobilise and bring the movement under its control. It thus actively pursued interventionist measures designed to curtail workers’ collective action. In this context, it is worth citing then Minister of Labour (Kumbirai Kangai), as he apparently exclaimed that “I will crack my whip if they do not go back to work”, a statement made in specific reference to the strike by transport workers in 1980 (quoted in Mitchell, 1987:108). In a similar vein, Mugabe labelled the bakery workers who also demonstrated in 1980 as “nothing short of criminals” (Bond, 2000).

It is important to note that, during this early period, several worker federations or labour centres existed, namely, United Trade Unions of Zimbabwe (UTUZ), Zimbabwe Federation of Labour (ZFL), Trade Union Congress of Zimbabwe (TUCZ), Zimbabwe Trade Union Congress (ZTUC), National African Trade Union Congress (NATUC), and Africa Trade Union Congress (ATUC) (Sims, 2015:84, Schiphorst, 2001:49, ZCTU website, 2016). Writing on his blog, in a 1999 unpublished paper but reproduced later in 2014, Lucien van der Walt comments that “[e]ach of these was aligned to a different political party, and ZANU only had limited support” (van der Walt, 2014). As such, these myriad worker federations posed several challenges to the ZANU-PF government’s desire and intent to regulate and control the labour sector.

Faced with this situation, the Mugabe regime resorted to the idea of creating an umbrella trade union movement which would, it was hoped, dance to its tune and limit the possibilities of further labour protests and uprisings. The government then saw it fit to facilitate the merger or amalgamation of six existing union federations, and in a manner which would co-opt labour into the emerging party-state nexus (Schiphorst, 2001; Kanyenze et al., 2011; Sutcliffe, 2012). This deliberate move resulted in the establishment of one labour centre – the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU) in 1981 (Sutcliffe, 2012:8). As Raftopoulos (2004) articulates, the post-colonial Zimbabwean government was bent on creating a consolidated labour movement which was subject to party control.

Indeed, the subordination of the ZCTU to the state was aimed at containing any form of organised dissent from labour. Other scholars such as Schiphorst (2001:87) even observe that the control of ZCTU by ZANU-PF should be interpreted as a pre-emptive strategy to ensure that the party's political rivals (including opposition parties), real or prospective, would never use the trade union movement as its power base. On account of ZCTU's subservient role vis-à-vis the party-state, it can be argued that the former emerged as an extension or wing of the ruling party. As Raftopoulos put it, during much of the 1980s, ZCTU existed as "an arm of the ruling party" (2004: 5). Such control of the ZCTU by the ZANU-PF party-state can be viewed as a kind of "paternalistic state corporatism" (Shadur, 1994:230). In order to further guarantee the dominance of the ZCTU as the sole trade union federation under the control of the ruling party, the government took measures to regulate the formation of new trade unions. At the same time, though, it did allow for the existence of smaller and ineffective trade unions as long as these unions were allied to the ZANU-PF party. This strategy helped in creating a resemblance of trade union visibility and democracy.

Significant to note also is that the Zimbabwean government played a major role in controlling both the leadership and organisational structure of the labour movement (Schiphorst, 2001:59). This move was aimed at creating a leadership and structure that would remain subservient and submissive to the ZANU-PF party. One such example is the meddling of Zimbabwe's first Minister of Labour (Kangai) in ZCTU's affairs when he took an active role in uplifting his own preferred candidates into executive positions at the ZCTU's congress held in 1981 (Schiphorst, 2001). Because of this, at this congress, ZANU-PF-backed union leaders (such as Albert Mugabe, related to Robert Mugabe) managed to obtain top leadership positions (LeBas, 2011). Clearly, party involvement in the selection of the ZCTU leadership undermined the autonomy of the labour movement. In a similar vein, in 1983, one ZCTU

executive member was expelled – with the help of the Labour Minister – from the union after publicly criticising the Labour Relations Bill (Schiphorst, 2001:76).

Also during the early 1980s, the state sought to regulate labour relations through its proxies, including war veterans (or ex-guerrillas from the war of liberation). In actual fact, the war veterans even went on to arm-twist employers to employ war veterans who in turn would take up leadership positions in workplace-based worker committees and thereby mobilise support for ZANU-PF on the shop floor (or workplace) (Raftopoulos, 2004; Bratton and Masunungure, 2011). Again, this was a tactic designed to ensure a workforce submissive to the ruling party and one which would not engage in popular mobilisation against the state.

During the late 1980s, and notably 1988 and 1989, the relationship between ZCTU and the party-state began to show strain. This thawing of state-labour relations arose in part because of the government's desire to create an investment code as well as due to ZANU-PF's non-adherence to its own Leadership Code (of 1984) (Schiphorst, 2001; Raftopoulos, 1991) which was meant to eliminate corruption within party leadership. As Raftopoulos (2000:264) asserts, "the investment code ... signalled the state's move towards the implementation of a structural adjustment programme". In this context, the ZCTU began to assert its autonomy and this became particularly evident through a revitalised and strong leadership under Morgan Tsvangirai (from the Mineworkers union), elected as the secretary general, and Gibson Sibanda (from the railways workers' union, as vice-president) and Jeffrey Mutandare (from the associated mine workers' union, as president). They were elected at the 1988 ZCTU Extraordinary congress (Schiphorst, 2001, 96-97). Schiphorst describes the resurgence of the ZCTU national labour union under the leadership of Tsvangirai through using the analogy of "[w]hat was once a rudderless boat, floating aimlessly around with too many mediocre seamen claiming to be captain, was now put slowly, yet steadily, on a firm course" (2001:2). Since then, the ZCTU started to slowly wean and delink itself from the ZANU-PF party-state corporatist arrangement to the extent that the rift between ZCTU and the state further widened (Masunungure, 2004; Bratton and Masunungure, 2011).

In this regard, open hostilities between government and labour became manifest. For instance, in 1989, the ZCTU reacted angrily to the government's temporary closure of the University of Zimbabwe in the wake of the student-led anti-corruption commemorations. The state unleashed its repressive state apparatuses against the student movement leadership who included the likes of Arthur Mutambara and Enoch Chikweche (now Munyaradzi Gwisai), both of whom became involved in the MDC in later years (Ncube, 1991; Kagoro, 2003). In response, the ZCTU heavily condemned the government's coercive measures. During these days,

ZCTU's sustained criticisms of state repression and lawlessness further revealed the chasm that was appearing in the relationship between the state and the labour movement.

Such condemnation of rising state repression served also to show the broadening of the mandate by the labour centre from purely socio-economic labour issues to political governance issues. Schiphorst (2001:2) further enunciates that "the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions ...made its way from a mere marginal yes-figure in politics into an (at least) forceful critical observer of the political wheeling and dealing of the government, if not as a potential powerful competitor in the political arena". In the wake of ZCTU's scathing criticism of the state (as elaborated above), the latter went on to detain Morgan Tsvangirai on the 6th of October in 1989. Previously, Tsvangirai (then secretary-general of ZCTU) had survived numerous assassination attempts (Bratton and Masunungure, 2011). Taken together, these developments set the two (labour and ZANU-PF government) on a collision path. The increasingly strident push (by workers and students) for democratisation became, for Zimbabwe, the start of the 'third wave' of democracy which began blowing elsewhere on the continent and beyond in the 1980s and 1990s (Huntington 1991; Bratton and van de Walle, 1992; van de Walle, 2001; Ake, 1991). This became increasingly apparent in the 1990s.

4.3 Deepening Economic Crisis and Labour Agitation during the 1990s

In inheriting a racially-skewed capitalist economy at independence in 1980, the new government became pre-occupied with implementing policies that were redistributive and pro-poor (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003). But, in doing so, it grappled with striking a fine balance between economic growth and social equity (Kanyenze et al., 2011: 35; Stoneman, 1988). This entailed initially the Growth with Equity economic policy, which was characterised by high public expenditure and a deepening fiscal deficit. The huge state expenditure was in large part attributed to the government's adoption and pursuance of expansionist programmes around social services and welfare (such as health and education), as well as to the need for socio-economic reconstruction, rehabilitation and the building of new infrastructure (especially in the war-torn rural areas) after the liberation struggle in the 1970s (Mashakada, 2013; Davies, 2004; Raftopoulos, 1991:9). It is indisputable that important advances were made during the first decade, such that Davies (2004) terms this period as the "successful eighties".

However, overall, the newly-independent government's policies failed to address "the inherited dual (separate) and enclave (isolated) economy" (Kanyenze, 2004:145), as witnessed by the land reform programme which left white settler agriculture largely intact because of minimal land redistribution. As Muzondidya (2009:169) argues, "the gains made in the first

decade were limited, unsustainable and ephemerally welfarist in nature”. Certainly, from the 1980s, there is no evidence of an ushering in of sustainable economic growth and long-term development. This is despite the fact that Zimbabwe recorded post-colonial economic growth from the early 1980s. Thus, the growth rate in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1980 and 1981 amounted to 11% and 10% respectively (Kanyenze et al., 2011:35).

In addition, though, capacity utilisation of manufacturing industries which stood at 76% in 1979 significantly improved to 83% in 1980 then to 95% in 1981 (Kanyenze et al., 2011). There were also significant rises in the gross investment in capital stocks, from 13.7% to 14.8% and then to 15.5% (in the period from 1979 to 1980 up to 1981). Whether this is attributable to good government policies, to the inheritance of a reasonably strong colonial economic structure, or simply to the low economic performance indicators after years of war, is debatable (Zhou and Zvoushe, 2002).

Deepening economic problems in the first decade of independence were perhaps lurking below the surface, and Zimbabwe soon became plagued with a plethora of economic challenges including misplaced economic priorities and economic mismanagement. There were high expenditures on defence and excessive government consumption and expenditure (due to the bloated civil service wage bill), as well as challenges related to the subsidisation of parastatals and local authorities (Mashakada, 2013). As observed by the current MDC-T secretary-general:

The independence government came with corruption, economic mismanagement and policy inconsistency that adversely affected Zimbabwe’s economy and consigned the masses to poverty (Interview with Mr Douglas Mwonozora, MDC-T secretary general, 4 October 2016, Harare).

Excessive state expenditure and growing state indebtedness arose because of the new government’s developmentalist stance involving an interventionist state with national development plans. The newly-independent government also struggled to service the ballooning odious debt (which was punctuated with soaring interest rates) which the colonial state had accumulated. Mugabe had at first refused to service this debt, until he was pressured by the international community not to default on clearing the inherited debt (Mhone and Bond, 2001). Owing to this debt-based distress (with high servicing ratios) and the further accumulation of debt by the developmentalist state during the 1980s, Zimbabwe became afflicted with what came to be referred as the Zimbabwean debt crisis.

Since independence, up to the year 2000, the Zimbabwean government introduced a raft of economic policies including *Growth with Equity* (1982-1985), *Transitional National*

Development Plan (TNDP) (1982-1984), *Short Term Stabilisation* (1985-1988), *First Five Year National Development Plan* (1986-1990), *ESAP* (1991-1997) and *Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST)* (1998-2000). The 1980-2000 period seemed to involve an era of leapfrogging from one policy to another. During the first and second decade after independence, Zimbabwe recorded, according to some economists, a mixture of bad, poor and good policies (Kanyenze, 2015³; Chinyadza, 2015⁴; Kothari, 1986). Davies (2004) argues that post-colonial Zimbabwe was afflicted with policy disconnect coupled with lack of, or poor policy implementation. This point is shared by Kanyenze et al. (2011:459) who observe that Zimbabwe was plagued with “an inconsistent policy regime” as evident in how the country vacillated (now and again) from one policy to the other. Put somewhat differently, there were unpredictable and unstable policy decisions, or what I would term as moments of ‘policy schizophrenia’.

More generally, as Brett (2005:92) contends, “Zimbabwe adopted a highly corporatist [and developmentalist] program between 1980 and 1990, before making a rapid switch to a liberal one in 1991 that terminated in disaster in the last years of the decade”. Brett goes on to argue that “the shift from corporatist to liberal economic policy regimes in Zimbabwe led to the crisis of the late 1990s” (Brett, 2005:92). In this context, I now consider specifically the introduction of economic liberalism in the early 1990s, and the complex interplay between Zimbabwe’s economic crisis and labour agitation during the 1990s.

The notion of crisis with specific reference to the Zimbabwean economy has been the subject of significant literature but there is no general consensus amongst scholars on what the Zimbabwean crisis entailed or its causes (Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2010). Hence, despite the availability of an extensive corpus of literature on the Zimbabwean economy, differing interpretations on when and how the so-called ‘Zimbabwean crisis’ emerged abound (Moore, 2001, 2003; Sutcliffe, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003; Bond and Manyanya, 2002; Moyo and Yeros, 2007; Mhone and Bond, 2001; Freeman, 2014; Raftopoulos and Phimister, 2004a; Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003; Muzondidya, 2010; Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2010).

In fact, it still remains difficult to ascertain conclusively the origins and consequences of the economic crisis. In addition, the literature speaks about the coming into being of a

³ Presentation made at the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI) public seminar on the topic: *Zimbabwe Economy: Are we going back to 2008*, 26 March 2015, Holiday Inn Hotel, Harare; seminar attended by the researcher

⁴ Ibid.

political crisis in the 1990s, with numerous debates taking place on the genesis, evolution, impact and implications of the Zimbabwean economic and political crises and how they interrelate (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003; Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2010; Dansereau and Zamponi, 2005; Hammar, 2005; Chiumbu and Musemwa, 2012; Masunungure and Badza, 2010; Raftopoulos and Phimister, 2004b).

Nonetheless, what ought to be brought to the fore is that the Zimbabwean economic (and political) crisis was caused by a constellation of broad structural and conjunctural factors, arising both internally and externally. To underscore the multidimensionality of this crisis, Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003:2) cogently assert that “the crisis is not about a single issue, neither is it rooted in a one-off event or single historical trajectory”. The factors which precipitated the Zimbabwean crisis include, but are not limited to, the rise in the cost of living, intensifying political conflict, lawlessness, heightened poverty levels, de-industrialisation, high levels of unemployment and job losses, hyperinflation, endemic corruption, stagnant economic growth, economic recession, disinvestment, capital flight and the erosion of safety nets for the urban working classes.

In 1991, based on the recommendation from key Bretton Wood institutions, namely the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB), the then Zimbabwean Finance Minister (Bernard Chidzero) persuaded the Zimbabwean government to adopt and introduce the neo-liberal market-based Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). The capitalist lobby groups, such as the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, Commercial Farmers Union, the Chamber of Mines and the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce also played an integral part in lobbying the Zimbabwean government to adopt ESAP (van der Walt, 1998:97). With the adoption of this so-called ‘home-grown’ neo-liberal structural adjustment programme (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003:5), the ZANU-PF government abandoned the welfarist socio-economic policies from the 1980s which had given emphasis to significant intervention of the state in the national economy along with massive public expenditure on social services notably health and education.

Zimbabwe thus adopted the globally-prescribed orthodox neo-liberal economic policies which advocated for privatisation, deregulation, devaluation and elimination of consumer subsidies, public sector reforms, and the restructuring of the economy through massive socio-economic cutbacks in public spending. For instance, cuts were introduced in crucial sectors such as health and education. The 1990s also saw the removal of import controls (namely tariffs and quotas), and removals of price controls (Sutcliffe, 2012; McCandless, 2011; van der Walt, 1998; Chakaodza, 1993).

As was the case elsewhere in national polities which adopted structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), and they were adopted throughout the African continent, it was the urban and rural poor who bore the brunt of such policy adjustments. Their suffering became clearly exemplified for example in the increasing failure and limited capacity to afford the rising health care and education costs. In line with this, Zimbabwean citizens' discontent, with the rising cost of living and deteriorating access to social services, grew stronger. As one respondent noted:

With the advent of the ESAP policy being implemented in the 1990s, a lot of things especially impacting on the majority of the people started going really wrong. Social services started to deteriorate mainly because the government had started to move away from providing the usual social services that the people of Zimbabweans had become accustomed to. Government was playing an inconsequential role now in providing for loans and grants to university students. Most state corporations were being persuaded to be privatised and some being disbanded. ESAP came with a lot of social dislocations as witnessed in the massive retrenchments as a result of the adoption of the very stringent austerity measures as prescribed by the ESAP blue print. The people who felt the pinch were the working class people (Interview with Obert Gutu, MDC-T National Spokesperson, 29 August 2016, Harare.)

This respondent went on to add:

In addition to the massive retrenchments and downsizing there were corresponding social consequences and repercussions. There was a rise of the informal sector and some Zimbabweans even started going into the diaspora (although it was on a low level). But, by the late 1990s, a lot of Zimbabweans, especially the young and skilled who were failing to get jobs in the formal sector, started trickling into the diaspora and within the region. South Africa was a destination of choice, but then the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, USA and later on all over the world (Gutu).

It is not entirely clear why the Zimbabwean government adopted and implemented a neo-liberal structural adjustment programme during the second decade of independence, though certainly explanations in the scholarly literature exist (Mhone and Bond, 2001; Bond and Manyanya, 2002; Moore, 2001, 2003; van der Walt, 1998; Chakaodza, 1993). Some commentators contend that it was the imminent and severe economic challenges facing the country, particularly with regard to the manufacturing and industrial sector, which prompted the Zimbabwean government to concede to the pressure emanating from the World Bank and IMF (Chipika et al., 2000:10). From the perspective of Mhone and Bond (2001: 10), Zimbabwe

adopted ESAP because it “provided a solution to Zimbabwe’s chronic stagnation of fixed capital investment”. Simultaneously, in practice, even though a principal goal of ESAP was to reduce state intervention in the formal economy, this did not happen to any major extent (Chakaodza, 1993; Freeman, 2014). The Zimbabwean state continued on a *dirigisme* path involving a close intertwining of the state and economy (Mhone and Bond, 2001).

Whatever the causes for the emergence of ESAP, there seems to be widespread consensus among scholars that structural adjustment brought about, or at least intensified and deepened, the economic crisis prevailing in the country, particularly when the detrimental effects on the working class are taken into consideration. In this sense, ESAP’s practical implications diverged from, and even contradicted, its anticipated goals. For instance, it was expected that the advent of ESAP would lead to an increase in the annual economic growth rate to five per cent, but growth rates fell short of this. Likewise, the expected shrinking of the overall budget deficit by 5% of the total Gross Domestic Product did not materialise.

Even more telling, it was believed that the Zimbabwean government would be better able to repay its foreign debt because of ESAP but the debt level soared from US\$2.4 billion in 1991 to approximately US\$4 billion by 1995 (Bond and Manyanya, 2002; Mhone and Bond, 2001). Other projections were also not realised, including in relation to increases in foreign direct investment and levels of exports. Overall, economic growth only reached 5% in 1994, whereas it stood at an average of 1.5% during the 1991 to 1995 period (Mhone and Bond, 2001:15). Undoubtedly, the adoption of ESAP was not a panacea or cure for Zimbabwe’s socio-economic ills.

Thus there was a rise in the cost of living (with cutbacks in agricultural subsidies), a decline in real wages within the formal economy, soaring rates of unemployed school leavers, retrenched workers and widespread poverty, all combining to indicate the widespread failure of ESAP in terms of both economic growth and redistribution. To give a few examples: because of deindustrialisation and company closures, the Gross Domestic Product in the manufacturing sector declined from 20.4% to 16% in the 1990s with as many as 30,000 job losses in 1998 alone specifically because of retrenchments (van der Walt, 1998; Bond and Manyanya, 2002; Mhone and Bond, 2001). Of significance is the fact that retrenchments also involved an increasing number of civil servants.

Along with this was the cutting of social expenditure under ESAP, which was felt quite dramatically in the educational sector. This sector, during the 1980s, often received an overwhelming portion of the national budgetary allocation, amounting to up to 25% of the national budget. This amount was dramatically reduced in the 1990s (Schiphorst, 2001:27),

leading to the soaring cost of education. This in turn led to high rates of school drop-outs (Chakaodza, 1993). Further, with reference to the primary school drop-out rates being recorded, it was the girl-child who was most heavily affected as compared to the boy-child (Gaidzanwa, 1992:2; Mate, 2014:65). It seemed that ESAP was washing away the socio-economic developmental gains recorded during the first decade of independence.

Although ESAP posed major socio-economic challenges for the Zimbabwean nation-state and its citizens, scholars often argue that this did not result in sustained social mobilisation around and opposition to the neo-liberal economic restructuring project from pro-democracy forces in the 1990s. Thus, Makumbe and Compagnon (2000) lament over the failure of opposition movements to successfully rally and wage a formidable struggle against the negative socio-economic effects and hardships wrought by the austerity measures. This, however, is only a partial reading of the activities of the emerging urban pro-democracy movements in relation to ESAP. There was significant opposition but without necessarily engaging directly with the dominant global forces behind ESAP. The anger arising from ESAP, insofar as the party-state was central to its implementation, was directed at the ruling party.

In this context, the evidence suggests that the trade union movement (namely, ZCTU) together with the existing opposition parties such as the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), publicly voiced their widespread dissatisfaction in mobilising internal opposition to ESAP (van der Walt, 1998; Sutcliffe, 2012; Yeros, 2013; LeBas, 2011). It was in part because of this, and the ruling party's early recognition of the problematic character of ESAP as first introduced, that the Zimbabwean government went on to introduce the Social Development Fund (SDF) in 1991. This social protection policy was aimed at cushioning the poor and vulnerable from the disastrous ripple effects of ESAP, and hence it amounted only to a softer or more humane version of structural adjustment.

Even in the midst of this effort, poverty continued to take its toll (LEDRIZ et al., 2012:90-94). For example, a detailed Poverty Assessment Study conducted in Zimbabwe in 1995 concluded that seventy-five percent of the entire Zimbabwean population, in both urban and rural spaces, was living under abject and absolute poverty (Kanyenze et al., 2011:231). As well, the social development fund was poorly implemented and simply fell far short of what was required to counter the detrimental effects of ESAP (van der Walt, 1998:98). Most of the funds, in the form of offering social assistance, were dispersed in the urban areas while the rural areas, which were often recipients of those retrenched from urban industry, were marginalised in the programme (Kanyenze et al., 2011).

One informant for my study in fact concluded that any evaluation of the ESAP programme would show that the economy was in a direr situation post-ESAP compared to the pre-ESAP period. In this regard, the impact of ESAP created fertile ground for discontent among the people of Zimbabwe across all sectors, urban and rural (Interview with Mr Colleen Gwiyo, former MDC-T legislator for Zengeza West, 4 August 2016, Harare). Certainly, ongoing retrenchments and lay-offs led to a restive labour population with high rates of redundancy and minimal employment security. Indeed, recurrent budget deficits and a decline in export growth rates, involving a shrinking economy, continued during the 1990s (LEDRIZ et al., 2012; Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003; Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000:7).

By the mid-1990s, there was significant agitation against ESAP, with the focus of the agitation being the party-state. In particular ZCTU, now having dislodged itself from any formal subordination to the ruling party, continued to castigate the Zimbabwean government for having adopted and implemented the neo-liberal programme. This strong critique of neo-liberalism by the labour union was evident in the publication by ZCTU of its *Beyond ESAP* policy document in 1996 (Dansereau, 2001). This particular economic policy document did not only point out the defects in the government's ESAP policy programme, as it also articulated alternative national policy proposals with a special emphasis on pro-poor development programmes. Thus the sub-title of the policy document was *Framework for a Long-Term Development Strategy in Zimbabwe*. At the same time, as Raftopoulos (2004) observes, ZCTU started to connect the disturbing developments in the Zimbabwean socio-economic terrain with a national crisis of governance.

The publication of *Beyond ESAP* also marked a major turning point in the ZCTU-government relationship. This is regardless of the fact that, in the previous years, the ZANU-PF led government had in large part enjoyed "unquestioned support from the national labour centre" (Schiphorst, 2001: 85). Even state ministers attached to the ZANU-PF party began to realise that sluggish economic growth under ESAP was an indication that ESAP was a "disastrous policy error" (Bond and Manyanya, 2002:28). But, by then, ZCTU had become increasingly concerned with questions of corruption, mismanagement and poor governance amongst the ruling ZANU-PF party.

In the end, ESAP led to the contraction of the formal economy as well as to the dramatic rise in the informal economy, such as street vending and cross-border trading in neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana. At the same time, chronic poverty became pervasive and systemic across the breadth and length of the Zimbabwean society.

4.3.1 State-Labour Relations in Zimbabwe from 1990 to 1999

I now give attention to how and why the once cordial, early independence, state-labour relations became severed during the ESAP era, particularly as ZCTU became increasingly outspoken and critical about the government's economic restructuring policies during the 1990s as well as the latter's authoritarian tendencies – which I noted in the previous chapter. In 1990 at a Congress held in Bulawayo from the 14th to 16th of September, Morgan Tsvangirai retained his position as secretary general of the ZCTU, while Gibson Sibanda was elevated to the position of ZCTU President (Schiphorst, 2001:110). This leadership became outspoken insofar as it lambasted the ESAP as anti-worker. It also brought to the fore that the state was failing to incorporate the trade union federation into the national public policy decision making processes (Schiphorst, 2001), with the introduction and implementation of ESAP being seen as a prime example of this.

After recognising and experiencing increasing signs of labour unrest coupled with the rising demand for greater union autonomy, the ZANU-PF led government reacted by way of pushing through amendments to the labour relations legislation in 1992 (Yeros, 2013). These amendments accorded the Minister of Labour extended powers to regulate on labour relation issues as well as on matters around collective bargaining. The amendments were also aimed at deregulating labour relations to be in sync with the neo-liberal ESAP (Raftopoulos, 2000:266). This then deepened the strain between organised labour and the state. The amendments were viewed by ZCTU as an attempt at clipping the wings of the trade union movement. Correctly so and as explicitly highlighted by Raftopoulos (2000:266), such amendments were aimed at constraining union power or agency. The ZCTU thus objected to the amendments but it was also angered by the fact that the government failed to consult the federation in proposing and finalising the amendments. Overall, then, ZCTU was asserting its autonomy as an 'independent' labour federation which acted neither at the behest of nor on behalf of the ruling party.

The continued flexing of the union federation's muscle by exhibiting its "autonomous and adversarial stance" led to the drawing of battle lines between the ZANU-PF led government and ZCTU (van der Walt, 1998:105), with the post-colonial Zimbabwean government becoming very critical of the ZCTU's new found agency, strength and voice. In fact, the state became highly intolerant, repressive and ruthless towards the trade union leadership as well as its structures. However, this did not in any way silence or dissuade the ZCTU in speaking against the government's bad governance and mismanagement of the economy, thereby eroding the legitimacy and unquestioned hegemony of ZANU-PF party-state, as opposition

parties like ZUM were trying to do within the party political system. This growing trade union mobilisation involved ZCTU in seeking to pressurise the state to concede to pro-worker reforms in Zimbabwe's labour laws.

This changing relationship between state and labour is manifested in the positions adopted by leading ZANU-PF politicians. For instance, the then Minister of Labour, John Nkomo in 1992 remarked that "the ZCTU is now a political party and we shall deal with it in the way that we deal with political parties" (quoted in Sachikonye, 1996:18). Overall, the state lambasted the ZCTU for "harbouring political ambitions" (Magure, 2009:166) and thus for seeking regime change. Intriguingly, then, the beast so to speak came back to haunt the ruling party in the 1990s, for it was ZANU-PF during the 1980s which had played such a pro-active role in the amalgamation of the disjointed labour unions to form the ZCTU in the first place (Schiphorst, 2001; van der Walt, 1998; Tarugarira, 2011). Certainly, under its new astute leadership – including Tsvangirai – ZCTU was reorganised and revitalised to the condemnation of the party-state.

In the wake of the resilient and growing opposition to ZANU-PF's hegemonic rule by ZCTU, the latter resorted to all means possible to weaken and contain ZCTU's robustness and influence. In order to succeed in such an endeavour, the state facilitated the creation of "rival unions within the same industry" (Schiphorst, 2001:53). It was assumed that rival unions would be in a better position than the ruling party itself to counter ZCTU's dominance and effectiveness within the overall Zimbabwean trade union movement (Tarugarira, 2011). To cite one example, from 1998, the ZANU-PF government was directly involved in the birth of the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) as a way to dilute, weaken, divide, disorganise and undermine organised labour especially a more autonomous, outspoken and critical labour body. In other words, a fragmented trade union movement was less likely to pose a threat to ZANU-PF's hegemony and grip on political power. But, as the next section shows, such interventions were too late, as the adoption and implementation of ESAP in Zimbabwe – in giving rise to deep woes amongst the urban population in particular – led to citizen anger and disgruntlement against the ZANU-PF led government.

4.4 'IMF/ESAP' Strikes, Food Riots and other Protests

I examine in this section how the introduction and adoption of the ESAP neo-liberal market driven economic policy measures triggered a wave of nation-wide demonstrations and social protests, and a throng of food riots in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The economic challenges wrought by the neo-liberal austerity measures were thus critical to the plethora of strikes and

demonstrations largely led by the labour movement (ZCTU and other smaller unions) but also in a growing alliance with the broad urban civic movement such the National Constitutional Assembly, or NCA, and Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights).

Given the deepening concerns with questions around political governance, as detailed in chapter three, it seemed that a pro-democracy alliance was afoot in Zimbabwe during the 1990s which raised economic and political challenges often simultaneously – with these challenges being placed squarely at the door of ZANU-PF. Although both the socio-economic and political crises were linked to the adoption of the neo-liberal ESAP, it is evident that the political crisis is not simply reducible to ESAP, as the governance problems that shook post-colonial Zimbabwe were also a result of the ZANU-PF regime's intransigence and deepening corruption which predate ESAP (Raftopoulos, 2004). In fact, the authoritarian tendencies of the ruling party have their roots in the liberation struggle during the 1970s and the ways in which the nationalist movements for instance handled internal dissent.

Nevertheless, it seems that the implementation of ESAP was a key spark and immediate cause in heightening the economic, social and political tensions in Zimbabwe. In this context, the pro-democracy forces started to question openly the government's failure to steer the economy in the right direction as was epitomised by food shortages and the deepening economic meltdown. As a result, the 1990s became "a decade of unprecedented industrial and social action" (Bond and Saunders, 2005:45) in which a strong anti-ZANU-PF discourse and sentiment existed, eventually leading to the formation of the MDC (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Overall, as one scholar asserts, "the radical mass actions driven by the labour multitude including strikes, demonstrations and anti-IMF riots represented a direct threat to the regime and a rejection of authoritarianism and the malevolent consequences of neo-liberalism" (Sutcliffe, 2012:13). Because of this, it is not unusual to locate the Zimbabwean crisis within ZANU-PF's unrelenting grip on power at the expense of ensuring broad-based development and poverty reduction (Munemo, 2012; Chakaodza, 1993:66).

Citizens more broadly also expressed their frustration with ESAP which saw the scrapping of maize subsidies and the doubling of the price of bread at a time when formal employment was on the decline (Saunders, 1996). The rise in prices of basic foodstuffs like bread, and food insecurity more generally, cannot be fully explained in terms of ESAP, as successive severe droughts in 1992, 1993 and 1995 also played a part. However, urban-based citizens in particular went into the streets in 1993 in venting their disgruntlement in what came to be known as the 'IMF food riots' (Dorman, 2001). Criticism of the ZANU-PF government increased as well amongst tertiary level students, to the extent that in 1996 students from

universities and technical colleges embarked on a massive demonstration demanding an increment to their student pay-outs (van der Walt, 1998). Like in previous episodes of student activism, the government unleashed armed riot police to quell the student protests. This took place in the context of the University of Zimbabwe Amendment Act of 1990 which granted enhanced powers to the university authorities in quelling dissent.

As in Zambia at around the same time, the Zimbabwean trade union movement became a hotbed of opposition politics, with Table 4.1 showing the sheer volume of strikes led by ZCTU unions during the 1990s. As we can see from this table, there was a marked increase in the number of strikes in Zimbabwe since 1991, with the strikes reaching a peak in 1997. The fact that there were only five strikes in 1991 – and all of these in the last month of the year – and 232 strikes in 1997 – with nearly half of these in October alone – bears testimony to the deepening anger and frustration of workers. These strikes took place not only in the major cities like Harare but also in small provincial capitals like Bindura in Mashonaland Central Province.

Table 4:1: ZCTU Strikes from 1991 to 2000

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

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

Source: Bratton and Masunungure (2011:21).

In seeking to further its mobilisation without hindrance, the ZCTU in 1992 engaged in litigation through filing a court case against rising state repression against the trade union leadership. In particular, the union managed to wage a successful class action suit challenging the constitutionality of repressive laws such as the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) (Yeros, 2013). This litigation process arose after the state had arrested and detained six trade unionists-cum-anti-ESAP protestors (van der Walt, 1998:105).

Undeterred by the rising state repression against demonstrators, even public sector employees became involved in a series of crippling strikes in the mid-1990s in the major urban centres. One such example is that of the Zimbabwean nurses and doctors who engaged in a sequence of strikes in August and September of 1996 (van der Walt, 1998; Dansereau, 2001). The 1996 strike is recorded as one of the longest and most hostile strikes ever witnessed in post-colonial Zimbabwe (Kanyenze, 2004:130) and, as indicated, 1997 recorded an exponential rise in strikes (Kanyenze et al., 2011:266). These recurrent strikes point to the high level of worker dissatisfaction and abhorrence of ESAP which was blamed for bringing about unprecedented levels of socio-economic hardships.

The strikes in 1997 also involved mass popular demonstrations by urban workers over the government's desire to introduce a five percent levy on wages (and company profits) and a 2.5% hike in sales tax, coupled with the skyrocketing prices of energy (electricity) and petrol which were taking place at the time. The demonstrations though emerged after the state president had conceded to the war veterans' demands for a hefty monthly stipend of Z\$2,000, amongst other demands which included a once-off lump sum gratuity, and free education and health care for their children (Addison and Laasko, 2003; Kariuki and van der Walt, 2000; Kanyenze, 2004; Kagoro, 2003). As one interviewed respondent put it:

The ruling ZANU PF government faced pressure from war vets who demanded their share for their participation in the liberation struggle. They wanted compensation and they sent clear signs of intending to revolt from within (Interview with Austin Muswere, GAPWUZ Deputy Secretary General, 29 July 2016, Harare).

The revolting from within referred to the fact that war veterans had established a post-colonial alliance with the ruling party, but they were becoming increasingly despondent about the socio-economic misery experienced by thousands of war veterans since the early 1980s.

Angered by the acquiescence of the ZANU-PF government to the war veterans' wide-ranging demands, at a time when workers were experiencing the consequences of economic decline, the ZCTU organised a general workers strike in 1997. In response to this, the government unleashed its state agents who went on to, for example, torture Morgan Tsvangirai (secretary general of ZCTU) a few days after the general strike. While state repression often has its intended consequences in subduing, silencing and containing political opposition, it does not address the underlying structural and contingent causes of the opposition. In this regard, the economic decline deepened because of the unplanned budgetary expenditure on war veterans. In this context, on the 14th of November in 1997, the Zimbabwean dollar drastically

fell in value (Davies, 2004; Mhone and Bond, 2001). The depreciation of the Zimbabwean dollar in turn led to a sharp upsurge in inflation. According to one respondent:

For the first time many people started to hear about inflation. Inflation rates were so high that some newspapers started to give month on month inflation reports. Prices were skyrocketing each and every passing day (Interview with Gutu).

In its turn, the incessant rise in inflation triggered further citizen discontent and public riots. In particular, these emerged as a response to the soaring prices of fuel, maize, cooking oil and rice in the urban cities of Harare and Bulawayo during the months of January and October in 1998. This steep rise in the price of maize was attributed to the substantial depreciation of the Zimbabwean dollar which had led to a rise in the costs of agricultural inputs. Consequently, farmers were left with no choice but to hike the price of maize. The impact of such an economic move was felt by the millers who went on to increase the price of maize meal by 24% (Kanyenze et al., 2011:40). The price increases and protests resulted in the government introducing price control measures on virtually every basic commodity. As well, 1998 was marked by another wave of student demonstrations (Dorman, 2001) at the University of Zimbabwe, including class boycotts because of problems with access to student grants and loans. The cutbacks in student grants (and loans) was attributed to the impact of ESAP, mismanagement of public finance and entrenched state corruption.

Clearly, the ZANU-PF government was facing a colossal conundrum of trying to subdue democratic forces for change while also addressing the increasingly dysfunctional economy. In the main, the government had itself to blame for the deepening crisis. Adding to the crisis for the ruling party was the reawakening of civil society formations in urban areas in the 1990s.

4.5 ZANU-PF Corruption – A Marker of State Authoritarianism

The emergence of civil society formations in the 1990s is in large part a response to the growing authoritarianism, erosion of human rights and civil liberties, and political mismanagement by the ruling party, including numerous cases of corruption, which in effect became a cancer eating away at the integrity of government. In this section, I detail the massive corruption which emerged in the 1980s as a marker of deepening state authoritarianism and ruling party disregard for democratic processes.

At its 1984 Congress, the ZANU-PF party adopted a Leadership Code as a way of curbing the spread of corruption within the ranks of the party. This move was a noble gesture towards entrenching democratic, accountable and transparent forms of governance among

ZANU-PF's political leadership. The Code was aimed at regulating the conduct of public officials in the wake of heightened corruption. The Leadership Code obligated the ZANU-PF elite to declare their assets and it also compelled ZANU-PF members to desist from engaging in corrupt activities. In addition, the Code prohibited party leaders in the branch, district, provincial and central committee structures, as well as in state ministries (i.e., civil servants), from receiving more than one salary as well as income from rented properties, from owning more than 50 acres of prime agricultural land and from establishing businesses as a means of wealth accumulation (Sachikonye, 1991).

However, it remains debatable whether the code actually helped in eliminating or reducing rampant corruption which had become pervasive within the ZANU-PF party-state. In any case, empirical evidence shows that, even with the existence of the Leadership Code, corruption scandals raged on persistently. In fact, there was widespread pardoning of high ranking political elites who had been implicated in graft scandals (Bratton and Masunungure, 2011). This is despite the pretence and posturing by the ZANU-PF led government as being committed to ending corruption. Further, underhand business dealings continued to occur even after the inception of the Code. Because of this, the Code appears only as a 'paper tiger' or a smokescreen to deceive the citizens (voters) into believing that the party was committed to rooting out corrupt party and state activities (Sachikonye, 1991). In this way, ZANU-PF initiated a Leadership Code to which it never adhered strictly speaking.

In light of this, the growing urban civic groups, student movements and ZCTU started to articulate the need for more transparent forms of governance, respect for the rule of law and the need for constitutional reform. As van der Walt asserts, "these popular class movements began to move from economic demands to calls for political reforms, blaming the economic crisis on unpopular and corrupt governments" (van der Walt, 1998:93).

I now detail some of the corrupt activities which occurred, with these activities becoming endemic and systemic while also contributing to the aggravation of Zimbabwe's economic turmoil through economic mismanagement. An excerpt (Table 4.2) from a public lecture delivered by Shana (2006) to the Mass Public Opinion Institute of Zimbabwe on the topic entitled *The state of corruption in Zimbabwe* helps to show the successive corruption scandals which occurred in Zimbabwe from 1986 until the turn of the century. A statement of caution is warranted in that the excerpt does not claim to be exhaustive; as it illustrative rather of a trend of endemic corruption in government under ZANU-PF.

Table 4.2: Corruption Scandals since 1986

Year	Scandal
1986	National Railways Housing Scandal
1987	Ziscosteel Blast Furnace Scandal; \$100 million Air Zimbabwe Fokker Plane Scandal
1988	Willowgate Scandal
1989	ZRP Santana Scandal
1994	War Victims Compensation Scandal
1995	GMB Grain Scandal
1996	VIP Housing Scandal
1998	Telecel Scandal; Harare City Council Refuse Tender Scandal; Boka Banking Scandal; ZESA YTL Soltran Scandal
1999	Housing Loan Scandal; Noczim Scandal; DRC timber and diamond UN-reported scandals; GMB Scandal; Ministry of Water and Rural Development Chinese Tender Scandal; VIP Land Grab Scandal
1999/2001	Harare Airport Scandal

Source: Shana (2006:2).

Shana (2006:2) aptly observes that corruption scandals mutated from greed-based corruption (from 1980 to 1987) to more sophisticated political elite/network corruption from 1987 onwards. Perhaps the most talked about scandal, which is also significant in understanding the evolution and development of opposition politics in Zimbabwe, is the Willowgate car scandal of 1988. This scandal was exposed by Geoff Nyarota, an investigative journalist. After this exposition, and also as a response to the 1988 university students' anti-corruption demonstrations, the Zimbabwean government established the Sandura Commission of Inquiry. The Commission went on to conclude that many high-ranking government officials bought cars at Willowvale Mazda Motor Industries at subsidised prices and then later resold them at inflated prices thereby making huge profits.

The unearthing of the Willowgate scandal exposed several high-ranking personalities, including Dzingai Mutumbuka, Callistus Ndlovu, Frederick Shava and Enos Nkala (at the time, all government ministers). The unearthing of this scandal dealt a huge blow to Nkala's political career, but no stern action was taken against the three others. Surprisingly, Shava even received a presidential pardon after spending a day in prison and was later deployed to China and then

to the USA to serve as a diplomat. One implicated politician, namely Maurice Nyagumbo, later committed suicide out of humiliation (Bratton and Masunungure, 2011; Schiphorst, 2001; Chakaodza, 1993). This scandal, in pointing to mismanagement by the governing regime, led to a loss of confidence in the Zimbabwean economy (Interview with Mr Earnest Nyamukachi, MDC-T official, 7 October 2016, Harare).

This and later corruption disclosures did not in any way dissuade other public officials from either committing or in further engaging in corrupt activities. It is against this backdrop that the outspoken Edgar Tekere lambasted the ZANU-PF party-state for nurturing corrupt practices especially by the ‘vampire class’ within the party (Bratton and Masunungure, 2011). The fact that the findings of the Sandura commission were never fully actioned, or the guilty culprits disciplined or imprisoned with any vigour, perhaps contributed to an ensuing culture of impunity. However, Makumbe (1991:180) holds that the Commission was effective in that it did lead to the resignation of several politicians and civil servants in government, and to the imprisonment of one state minister. While this may be true, the hypocrisy of ZANU-PF in weeding out corruption was further exposed when Geoff Nyarota (the whistle blower) was forced to flee into exile to Maputo in Mozambique.

4.6 Civil Society Awakens and ZANU-PF’s Stern Response

From 1980, and particularly during the 1990s, the post-liberation movement turned ZANU-PF party did not only face stiff challenges from formal opposition political parties (as discussed in chapter three) and trade unions. Rather, it also was the object of a formidable challenge from nascent post-colonial civil society groups particularly based in urban areas. These early civil society organisations (CSOs) mushroomed mainly during the second independence decade (the 1990s). This emergence of domestic civil society was part of an international phenomenon as CSOs blossomed from the 1980s under conditions of neoliberal restructuring and the good governance agenda of the international development system.

These CSOs mobilised around a range of issues ranging from the dearth of constitutionalism, abuse of human rights, deepening corruption, bad governance, political and economic liberalisation, women’s rights, gender, land, and HIV and AIDS. These CSOs received substantial funding from international donor agencies (Dorman, 2001). During the early part of the 1990s, Zimbabwean urban civic society maintained a good working relationship with the state (McCandless, 2011:39). Possibly, as McCandless (2011) suggests, such a cordial state-civil society relationship was carved out of fear in the wake of the *Gukurahundi* atrocities. In other words, most of the nascent CSOs somehow adopted initially

a de-politicised agenda or were not particularly strident in articulating their politicised agenda. In this respect, Mike Auret, the former chairperson of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, or CCJP, which investigated and exposed *Gukurahundi* (Sylvester, 1995:408), offered a scathing critique of civil society for seemingly failing to strongly denounce rising political authoritarianism in post-colonial Zimbabwe. In fact, civil society groups were largely silent when the shooting of Kombayi (the ZUM candidate) occurred in 1990. This of course was of likely minimal significance compared to the silence during slaying of thousands of innocent civilians in Matabeleland during the Fifth Brigade's reign of terror.

The apparent inaction of CSOs in the wake of rising state repression led Christine Sylvester to assert that in post-independence Zimbabwe there existed "few autonomous public institutions to aggregate and articulate dissent to official power" (Sylvester, 1995:408). Civil society originally seemed almost apathetic in this respect, with church-based organisations and rising independent trade union movements perhaps being most vocal (LeBas, 2011). Sylvester further holds that it was the church which was also outspoken over civil society's silence and passivity in the wake of the state's huge expenditure (Z\$ 1.5 million) to the military (security and defence) at the sacrifice of the health sector. This notion therefore challenges the widely celebrated view of civil society as having been strong, effective and instrumental in keeping the ruling party in check.

The ruling party-state though was fully aware of rumblings within civil society and, in trying to keep it at bay, the government promulgated and enacted the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Act in mid-1995 which repealed the pre-independence Welfare Organisations Act. This piece of legislation granted to the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare unrestrained powers to "approve or reject registration of NGOs at his/her discretion" (Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000:312). Such legislation also specifically targeted the work of CSOs which were largely viewed as anti-ZANU-PF and anti-government (that is, counter-hegemonic CSOs).

The subsequent intimidation and harassment of CSO activists affected the building and strengthening of civil society structures in the mid- and late 1990s in particular. In effect, the state narrowed and closed down civic space through the use of both 'visible' and 'invisible' forms of power (Gaventa, 2005). This affected the agency of CSOs in their quest to openly claim, engage, demand and occupy the available spaces of democratic participation.

4.7 The Deepening Crisis (1998-2000)

By the end of the century, the economic and political crises were deepening even further. Of particular significance in this regard is Zimbabwe's military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and how it impacted negatively on the national economy and fiscus. Despite growing dissent at home around economic decline and state authoritarianism, the Zimbabwean ruling party and government ambitiously came to the rescue of the besieged Laurent-Désiré Kabila (president of the DRC) who was facing an insurgency from armed rebels (backed by Rwanda and Uganda). Without any public debate on the matter, the Zimbabwean government sent in a contingent of troops in support of Kabila. It is estimated that the DRC war cost the Zimbabwean government an unbudgeted sum of US\$33 million a month (Kanyenze, 2004). Others have pegged the amount much higher, including up to US\$166 million per month over a two-year period (Addison and Laasko, 2003:462). Since the whole operation was veiled in secrecy, especially to ordinary Zimbabweans, it has remained difficult to verify exactly how much was spent overall.

It needs to be emphasised that the funds spent were unbudgeted and, as such, the DRC war drained the national fiscus (Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2010). This foreign intervention triggered severe criticism and opposition from civil society organisations and the labour movement (notably ZCTU), in particular because the war in DRC was not Zimbabwe's war to fight and it led to a further downward spiral in the economy. It is also well-known that political and military elites in the Zimbabwean state benefited enormously through financial gain in terms of access to the mineral wealth of the DRC. In addition, because of Zimbabwe's involvement in DRC, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suspended any further budget aid to Zimbabwe, causing even more economic calamity. This was simply another case of massive unbudgeted expenditure, but even more extravagant than the case from the previous year involving (as discussed earlier) the state's payments to war veterans. The depreciation of the Zimbabwean dollar was evident in what has become known as 'Black Friday' (14th of November of 1997) (Bond and Manyanya, 2002; Kagoro, 2003).

Of significance to note is that, in 1998, Zimbabwe's "fiscal deficit became unsustainably high (at 8% of GDP)" (Mashakada, 2013:173), with this being one key reason for why the IMF suspended any further balance of payments support to Zimbabwe. This decision by the IMF was also in part stimulated by the Zimbabwean government's failure in pay outstanding cumulative arrears. The net effect of such a decision was to take a toll on the Zimbabwean economy as exemplified in the unprecedented economic slump post-1998. Tied

to this worsening economic crisis was deepening political turmoil, as expressed in the establishment of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA).

Despite the ruling party's increasing anguish over a revitalised civil society, an important organisation emerged in the form of the NCA. It arose in part because the growing civic resistance and social mobilisation against the Mugabe regime during the 1990s led to intense conversations around constitutional reform, with the NCA being a constitutional reform-seeking organisation. The NCA was formed in 1996 but only officially launched in 1997. It emerged from a broad array of civil society organisations, university students, intellectuals, church-based organisations and the trade union movement. Key figures in the NCA included: Tawanda Mutasah, Everjoice Win, Priscillah Misihairambwi-Mushonga, Thoko Mathe, Brian Kagoro, Deprose Muchena, Tendai Biti, Welshman Ncube, Morgan Tsvangirai, Douglas Mwonzora and Lovemore Madhuku.

During its formative stages, the NCA faced challenges in terms of how to confront the state and pursue its objectives. There were also internal contradictions within the NCA mainly because of the cosmopolitan and disparate nature of the grouping. Indeed, there were some radical elements within it and some conservative elements and, as such, some members opted for dialogue and co-operation with the state (LeBas, 2006:425). In the late 1990s, the NCA mobilised around the need for constitutional reform and in a way which would clip the wings (or reduce the power) of the state executive including the executive president (Mugabe). The NCA also became very vocal on issues related to civic advocacy and education, socio-economic and political rights, and participatory democracy in Zimbabwean state and society (Dorman, 2001).

Certainly, the deepening economic and political crises in the last couple of years of the previous century provided fertile ground for the germination of a strong viable opposition in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), as discussed in the next chapter.

4.8 Conclusion

In a nutshell, this chapter examined key developments in the political economy of Zimbabwe since the early 1980s until the end of the 1990s. It examined the deepening economic and political crises in the country as well as the heightened mobilisation both within the trade union movement and civil society. It sought to highlight the diverse factors, including ESAP, which triggered Zimbabwe's ongoing economic decline and it brought to the fore the rising authoritarianism of the party-state, a tendency raised initially in chapter three. As the crisis became more pervasive and deepened, there were important though limited forms of opposition

to the ruling party, by labour and civic groups but also from political parties as discussed in the previous chapter. This slow build-up in opposition forces, which certainly was not linear in its development, eventually led to the formation of the MDC in 1999. In the following chapters, I discuss in detail the MDC and its quest for democratisation under very challenging conditions.

CHAPTER 5: MDC PARTY FORMATION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATISATION IN ZIMBABWE FROM 2000 TO 2008

In many ways, we are moving away from the nationalist paradigm to politics grounded in civil society and social movements. MDC politics are not nationalist inspired, because they focus more on empowerment and participation of the people. ZANU's thinking has always been top down, centralised, and always trapped in a time warp. Nationalism was an end in itself instead of a means to an end. One of ZANU's constant claims is that everyone in Zimbabwe owes the nationalist movement our freedom. It is therefore also become a nationalism based on patronage and cronyism (Morgan Tsvangirai, president of the Movement for Democratic Change, as quoted in Southern Africa Report, 2000:4).

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a historical overview of the rise and development of the MDC, its ideological and political diversity, its splits and fissures, and its attempts at bringing about democratisation from 2000 to 2008 (the pre-GNU period) in the face of ruling party and state intransigence and resistance. The following chapter (chapter 6) examines the GNU period. In considering the process of democratisation, and the MDC's involvement in it, I examine in turn constitutional, electoral and legislative spaces. It will become clear that the effects of the MDC's involvement in these interrelated processes of democratisation was quite uneven, with some meaningful contributions being evident. As a lead in to the discussion of MDC and democratisation during the GNU period, the chapter ends by discussing relevant developments in the political economy of Zimbabwe during the pre-GNU period, and how these developments led in the end to the formation of the Government of National Unity.

5.2 Genesis of the MDC Party

As a prelude to a fuller discussion of the MDC, I first offer a brief descriptive account of the gestation and formation of the MDC party since its rise in September 1999. Without a doubt, the formation and development of the MDC party has generated intense debates around, amongst other things, its overall programme, ideological orientation, social base and internal dynamics. The MDC emerged in late 1999 under the existence of an increasingly authoritarian state regime and during a period, as discussed in the previous chapter, characterised by a wave of urban demonstrations and strikes (led by the labour movement and civil society

organisations) which arose in response to the deepening economic and political crisis gripping the nation.

Prior to the formation of the party in 1999, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) commissioned a nation-wide survey in 1998 to look into issues which were affecting the economy. Timothy Kondo (head of the Advocacy Department in the ZCTU) and Dennis Murira (from Zimbabwe Unemployed and Retrenches Organisation or ZURO) spearheaded the research. Under the guidance of these two lead researchers, the ZCTU rolled out a nationwide outreach programme to collect views in both urban and rural areas on issues to do with the economy, unemployment and governance (Interview with Lovemore Kadenge, former MDC-T Liaison Officer in Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee or JOMIC, 15 September 2016; Interview with Colleen Gwiyo, former legislator for Zengeza West constituency, 4 August 2016).

After holding a series of public hearings, the findings of the national outreach programme were condensed into a voluminous document known as the *Raw Data and ZCTU/ORAP⁵ Consultative Report*, with the findings widely disseminated across various stakeholders (Interview with Kadenge; Lebas, 2011; Tsvangirai and Bango, 2011). As further explained by Kadenge, the findings of this survey established that post-colonial Zimbabwe was afflicted by a major economic crisis connected to national misgovernance by the ruling party and overall political decay. At the same time, international democracy-promoting institutions, notably the German-based Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation (FES), provided technical assistance (behind the scenes) that helped the Zimbabwean trade union movement in its convening of consultative citizen dialogue meetings on issues centring around the deteriorating political economy (Interview with Kadenge). It was largely through these kind of initiatives that the formation of the MDC party was set in motion, though not necessarily intentionally.

Following the presentation and interrogation of the ZCTU/ORAP Report in February 1999, the ZCTU and the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) successfully facilitated the convening of the National Working People's Convention that comprised of different stakeholders at the Women's Bureau in Hillside, Harare (Interview with Gwiyo). As one respondent aptly notes, the primary aim of this gathering was to further deliberate on the prevailing socio-economic and political situation in post-colonial Zimbabwe (Interview with

⁵Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress, which is a rural development-based NGO.

Austin Muswere, Deputy Secretary General of GAPWUZ⁶, 29 July 2016). The proceedings from this convention paved the way for the building of a new party, the MDC. Subsequently, on the 11th of September 1999 at Rufaro Stadium in Harare, the MDC party with strong labour roots was officially launched (MDC website, 2016)⁷.

Of significance to note are different but complementary perspectives on why the MDC party emerged in late 1999, as reflected in both public discourses and the academic literature (see for example, LeBas, 2011). Later, I present much more critical perspectives, as articulated by the ruling party. In part, the emergence of a broad-based and labour-backed MDC party stemmed from the reluctance on the part of the ZANU PF party-state to yield to economic and political demands and reforms. As one interviewee asserts:

The genesis of the MDC party started about 1994 – 95 era when the debate around the constitution began and later the National Constitutional Assembly was formed with Morgan [Tsvangirai] as the chairperson. It was the resistance of the state to the constitutional changes that were being demanded that eventually triggered the decision by the ZCTU and the NCA to form a political party to fight ZANU PF. It was not a decision taken easily - it was a decision adopted reluctantly. The principal motivation was the reluctance of ZANU PF to contemplate any kind of reforms to the state. This is because the ZCTU said mismanagement of the economy and the abuse of power concentrated on the president were the principal reasons for the problems facing Zimbabwe and it was to address those problems that the ZCTU had to decide to take political action (Interview with Eddie Cross, (MDC-T MP for Bulawayo South, 17 August 2016).

Further evidence from the field also indicates that the MDC emerged out of several events and developments which occurred in the post-colonial Zimbabwean political economy. For example, one interviewee, when asked about the factors that influenced the MDC party's formation, highlighted:

The arrogance of the ZANU PF party through the tired national discourse in which the party consistently claimed to have 'liberated' the country. Uncontrolled corruption, the economic meltdown, the imposition of Socialism (poorly implemented), market economy

⁶ General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe.

⁷ A detailed history of the MDC party formation is available here: <http://www.mdc.co.zw/index.php/about-us-1/our-history>

(the Economic Reform Programme), upsurge of inflation, abuse of rights, incessant violence, deterioration of living standards, and expensive wars in neighbouring countries claiming they were of national interest. This triggered the demands by the Zimbabweans and their quest for an alternate government. The government of the day was now short of ideas; this all then galvanised and necessitated the need for change (Interview with academic, anonymous, 23 August 2014).

Clearly, ZANU-PF's misrule and mismanagement of the economy fuelled the desire for an alternative politics in Zimbabwe. The ZCTU (as a key founder and ally of the MDC) thus spoke about:

The economic collapse in the country. Workers and the generality of Zimbabweans realised that the collapse of the economy was due to bad governance and that ZANU PF was doing as it pleased because there was no competition (Email correspondence, ZCTU Information Department, 22 August 2015).

In an interview with an MDC top party official, it was reiterated that:

The MDC was formed because of a crisis of expectations created by the nationalist government, which had prosecuted the liberation war on the basis of equality, freedom, justice and egalitarianism. However, it soon dawned that the nationalist government was unable to deliver on its promises. Therefore, there was need for another movement to be formed to complete the unfinished business of liberation (Interview with MDC-T Secretary General, Douglas Mwonzora, 4 October 2016).

This is in fact the official MDC view, with the public documentation put out by the party noting that its formation came about in order to challenge ZANU-PF's long-term hegemony (MDC Election Manifesto, 2013:2). The MDC-T website clearly states that:

The MDC was formed on the basis of carrying on the struggle of the people; the struggle for food and jobs; peace; dignity, decency and democracy; equal distribution of resources; and justice, transparency and equality of all Zimbabweans (MDC -T Website, 2016⁸).

All of these explanations about the rise of the MDC focus on a multiplicity of domestic factors. Other accounts hold though that regional and international factors played a role in the political party developments that ensued in Zimbabwe. Often cited in this regard in the

⁸ For a detailed brief on the origins of the MDC party see the party website <http://www.mdc.co.zw/index.php/about-us-1/our-history>

democratisation literature is the ‘contagion’ effect (Whitehead, 1991) or ‘snowball’ effect (Olcott and Ottaway, 1999; Huntington, 1991) in which struggles for democracy within one country are influenced by developments in neighbouring polities and thereby replicated, such as during the so-called ‘third wave’ era (Huntington, 1991).

Important to note here is that, by the 1990s, most polities in sub-Saharan Africa were adopting multi-party electoral systems. This was in spite of earlier reluctance by incumbent one-party regimes in embracing multi-partyism. Oppositional parties pushed and fought vigorously for the establishment of more pluralistic and open political orders. In a way, the adoption of multi-party regimes in Africa helped in debunking the myth of African states as being impervious to the tidal wave of democratisation. The case of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) in neighbouring Zambia born out of the labour movement (Olukoshi, 1998) attests to the existence of a regional democratisation process. It is argued that the Zimbabwean labour movement drew lessons from its Zambian counterpart (Nkiwane, 1998) and thus ZCTU’s direct involvement in the formation of the MDC.

In addition to the above, developments on the global scene (including the end of the Cold War and the emergence of multilateral and bilateral aid on the basis of political conditionalities around good governance) saw the emergence of a plethora of democracy-seeking civil society groups in most African countries. This period was also marked by massive domestic demonstrations in the region which started mainly around the detrimental effects of economic liberalisation (involving structural adjustment programmes) but later morphed into protests for political liberalisation (Ake, 2000; Olukoshi, 1998). Such demonstrations and protests also took place in the 1990s in Zimbabwe and contributed to the emergence of the MDC. Although these regional and global dynamics shaped the MDC party’s formation, much of the prevailing MDC party-centric accounts (i.e., those emanating from the MDC itself) tend to explain the party’s rise against a crisis of governance and legitimacy at the domestic level (see MDC-T, 2013; MDC, 2004).

Following the launch of the MDC party in 1999 at Rufaro Stadium in Mbare, the party held its inaugural congress in the year 2000 at the Chitungwiza Aquatic Complex in Harare. Here, the party adopted its first constitution as well as electing its leadership. Morgan Tsvangirai (the secretary general of the ZCTU) and Gibson Sibanda (president of the ZCTU), in demonstrating the union-roots of the MDC, were elected as the MDC party president and vice president respectively. It is significant to note that other ZCTU officials, as well as student activists, intellectuals and civil society activists, grabbed top, medium and lower leadership positions within the party ranks.

Urban-based civil society groups provided a key social base upon which the MDC party was founded. Linked to these groups was the ZCTU (as a national trade union federation) and some of its union affiliates such as GAPWUZ (Interview with Muswere). Undoubtedly, the key civil society organisation was the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). Together, the NCA and the labour union federation (and particularly the latter) provided the existing membership (or personnel), institutional links and organisational structures which later became instrumental in the formation of the MDC (Interview with Gwiyo; Interview with Mwonzora; LeBas, 2011). It was from established trade union organisation and urban civic society mobilisation that the MDC party emerged with a reasonably strong urban working class and middle class base. This point underscores the mid-wifery role played by the NCA and ZCTU in the birth of the MDC party. To corroborate this point, one interviewee recalled that:

It was the trade union that gave us our basic infrastructure; trade unions in all sectors were basically our best organisers and only the trade unions have the power and strength on the ground to challenge the state and that is what we were doing, challenging the state (Interview with Cross).

One respondent captures this view in the following words:

Most of the people who staffed the party came from the labour ranks, although there were some from the academia and from middle class professions (Interview with Earnest Nyamukachi, MDC –T official, 7 October 2016).

The list of leading unionists who took active leadership positions within the MDC include, besides Tsvangirai and Sibanda, Gift Chimankire, Lucia Matibenga, Paurina Gwanyanya-Mpariwa, Amos Chibaya, Tapiwa Mashakada, Thokozani Khupe, Thabitha Khumalo, Gideon Shoko, Douglas Mwonzora (also a lawyer), Colleen Gwiyo and Isaac Matongo. The ZCTU and the MDC have exhibited close historical and contemporary ties and links though, as discussed later, the two have clashed on several policy fronts. As argued by Muswere from GAPWUZ, the close relationship and alignment of the ZCTU with the MDC resembles that of a mother to a child relationship, with the MDC party owing its ‘parentage’ to the ZCTU.

Besides union activists, the role played by students and civic society groups in the emergence of the MDC should not be underestimated. Several civic activists falling under the NCA and former student activists also occupied top and medium level leadership positions within the MDC. Examples include Munyaradzi Gwisai, Nelson Chamisa, (the late) Learnmore Jongwe, Job Sikhala, Tafadzwa Musekiwa and Charlton Hwende; and, in later years, Jacob Mafume, Promise Mkwanzani, Solomon Madzore, Clifford Hlatshwayo, Lovemore

Chinoputsa, Samuel Wadzai and Tellington Kwashira among others. It seems that spaces of student activism have been a hatchery or breeding ground for producing opposition politicians, perhaps reflecting the intense university struggles in Zimbabwe during the 1990s. Significant strain did arise in the relationship between the NCA and MDC, as discussed later.

The MDC at its inception adopted a party symbol of an open hand and this is still in use (see Photo 5.1). Party-centric narratives often claim that the symbol exudes transparency, and signifies the quest for change as opposed to the ZANU-PF symbol of a clenched fist. According to Tendai Biti (2014b) (then Secretary General of the MDC-T), as said at a public seminar at SAPES Trust in Harare in March 2014, “when the MDC was formed, it came up with a symbol of an open hand depicting the openness and transparency of the party”.

Photo 5:1: MDC-T Party Symbol



Source: Nehanda Radio (2013). MDC-T party election campaign manifesto launch, 7 July 2013, Rudhaka Stadium in Marondera.⁹

The MDC party gives credit to Colonel Mudzingwa, a veteran of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle who also served in other capacities as a military doctor, for coming up with

⁹ Image available at <http://nehandaradio.com/2013/07/08/mdc-t-manifesto-launch-in-pictures/> accessed 7 December 2016.

the open hand party symbol (Tsvangirai and Bango, 2011:224). Corresponding with this symbol, the party's popular messaging was couched around the theme of '*A New Zimbabwe: A New Beginning*' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). The MDC messaging, which was laced with the tone of both liberal and social democracy, resonated well among the working class, unemployed youth, urban middle class, intellectuals, students and white commercial farmers.

Furthermore, the nascent MDC party adopted the slogan '*Chinja Maitiro, Gukula Izenzo*' meaning *Change Your Ways*. Earnest Mudavanhu (at the time, a young party activist) from Zaka in Masvingo province in the southern part of Zimbabwe coined this slogan (Tsvangirai and Bango, 2011:224). From its inception, the MDC emphasised its embodiment of non-violent change in seeking to attain political power in Zimbabwe, and both the party symbol and slogan were meant to demonstrate this.

In the following section, I explore the ideology and politics that has guided the MDC, including tensions and contestations within these.

5.3 MDC: Ideologies and Politics of Diversity (2000 and Beyond)

As indicated above, the MDC party was born out of a broad based alliance incorporating the constitutional reform-seeking movement (NCA) and labour movement (ZCTU) together with other sectors including the student movement. Emerging from such a background (of student-worker-civil society linkages), the nascent MDC party had to confront issues to do with ideological diversity and heterogeneity. In examining the underlying ideology that guided the MDC party (in its early days and more recently), I also explore how the party addressed the ideological contradictions and dissonance that ensued owing to the party's broad based character.

Ideology is defined here as "[a] set of coherent, unifying, political principles (ideas and values) that provide a framework for understanding a society, establishing a vision for its improvement and identifying the policy actions required to achieve that vision" (National Democratic Institute, 2013:13). At its inception, the MDC chiselled its founding values around themes that included empathy, transparency, freedom, accountability, equality, openness and social justice, among others (Interview with Innocent Gonese, MDC-T chief whip, 5 October 2016; Obert Gutu, national MDC-T spokesperson, 28 July 2016¹⁰; MDC, 2004; MDC-T, 2013). Since its formation to current, the MDC has broadly articulated and pursued mainstream

¹⁰ Presentation made at a Mass Public Opinion Institute public lecture attended by this researcher at the New Ambassador Hotel: Harare, 26 July 2016.

liberal democratic tenets and ideologies. This espoused commitment to liberal democracy is manifested in the party's relentless emphasis on issues to do with good governance, rule of law, justice, respect, and protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental liberties, as exemplified in the party's 2013 Election Manifesto and policy documents (MDC, 2004; MDC-T, 2013).

The MDC has always been a reasonably strong advocate of neoliberal views on the economy, which stresses the primacy of market forces (or a capitalist market driven economy). This emphasis on neoliberalism is reflected in several MDC party policy programmes, press statements, policy briefs and blueprints, as well as in successive party election manifestos. In accentuating at times its neoliberal economic outlook, the MDC party highlights issues pertaining to respect for property rights and encouraging foreign direct investment, among other related macro-economic policy positions (see for instance 2004 RESTART Policy Handbook; MDC-T 2008 Policy Handbook; 2013 Agenda for Real Transformation [ART]; 2013 MDC Election Manifesto) (MDC, 2004; MDC-T, 2008, 2013a, 2013b).

Admittedly, the MDC has also adopted a pro-poor and pro-labour stance that appears to be consistent with social democracy as articulated in some of its policy documents such as the Agenda for Real Transformation (MDC-T, 2013a). When asked about the MDC's ideological inclination, the current party national spokesperson (for MDC-T) said:

The ideology upon which the MDC party is benchmarked or supposed to be benchmarked is social democracy. It is a mixture of socialism (not the leftist Marxist socialism) but a mixture of socialism that is not very much to the Left. However, it is definitely to the Left of Centre where the state will obviously be called upon to play a role specially to cushion and protect the interests of the vulnerable in society, the poor, the working class, the students, the widows, the orphans and the elderly. It is democracy with a national face not naked capitalism and it is definitely to the Left [when talking of ideological inclination] and not to the Right. Not really extremely left but definitely to the Left of Centre [social democracy], not Centrist, not Rightist (Interview with MDC-T national spokesperson, Obert Gutu, 29 August 2016).

Talking on this issue, several interviewees likewise claimed that the MDC party subscribes to the ideology of social democracy. For example, another party official stated that:

The MDC party is guided by social democratic ideologies which is predicated on the values of freedom, justice, equality and solidarity. This is a modern ideology, which has been embraced by leading democracies especially in the Scandinavian countries and in Germany. The advantage of social democracy is that it is a pluralist ideology which

accepts the inevitability and benefit of social contradictions within society (Interview with Mwonzora).

Consistent with this, the party literature including in party policies and press statements underscores that the MDC is rooted in social democracy (such as Agenda for Real Transformation [ART] Policy Handbook, 2013; Movement for Democratic Policies, 2008). In fact, in its policy narratives and rhetoric, the MDC has blended the discourse of democratic change with the creation of a developmental state in post-colonial Zimbabwe in a manner which links developmentalism to social democracy (see for example, RESTART Policy Document) (MDC, 2004). When further probed on the ideology guiding the MDC party, another interviewee commented that:

In terms of ideology, from the beginning we were social democrats with a labour bias, but we did have some Marxist elements amongst us but they were discarded very quickly. However, ideologically the main genesis of the party was premised on social democracy (Interview with Cross).

Overall then, at least at the beginning but seemingly also in later years, the party had an ideological mix incorporating trappings from neoliberalism and social democracy. As a result, the party has tended to lack a distinctive ideological orientation. Specifically, because of these ideological variations within the party, some commentators argue that the MDC is an “ideological omnibus” (Makuyana, 2014:80). Makuyana further adds that “[i]deologically the MDC was never pure at any stage of its evolution” (Makuyana, 2014:81). However, it should be underscored that ideological purity is hard to find within African party organisations.

In an awkward fashion, the party straddles between different ideological inclinations. To some, this might entail an exhibition of lack of ideological clarity. As one analyst wrote in reference to the MDC:

The party does not appear to have a clear and consistent ideological agenda and as such has tended to merely react to Zanu PF. It has been accused of failing to clearly articulate its policies on land reform and indigenisation, weaknesses which Zanu PF has revelled in (Dumisani Muleya, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 13 January 2011).

As discerned from the fieldwork interviews, the MDC lacks shared ideological outlooks and cohesion among the party elite. Presumably, this is in part because the MDC was founded on different constituencies and from a politics of diversity.

As noted, at its inception, the MDC party incorporated a diverse pool of social actors coming from different constituencies, including students, middle class intellectuals, business organisations (for instance, Eddie Cross from the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries or

CZI), labour unions and farmers' organisations. It also included a network of women associations with prominent members such as Sekai Holland, as well as well-known feminists including Grace Kwinjeh and Priscillah Misihairambwi-Mushonga. Although the MDC tried to transcend social class boundaries as a multi-class alliance, policy disharmony was almost inevitable given its wide membership composition. In this regard, the politics of diversity, or the presence of diverse and competing actors with different sets of values and principles, raised problems, as seen already with reference to ideological confusion. As one respondent commented:

The problem with the MDC is that it emerged as a broad church embracing the business class, trade unionists, civics, farmers, women organisations, church and the students. It brought together people with different interests and ideological backgrounds. This later resulted in ideological clashes. We had the leftist, rightist and the centre. We could not converge on policy issues. A good example is the issue of Gwisai [MDC MP for Highfield] who castigated the parcelling of the land to the chiefs [bosses] whether in ZANU PF or in the MDC. He argued land was supposed to be given to the peasants (Interview with Gwiyo).

As the above comment outlines, the pluralistic nature of the party brought about ideological contradictions as well as conflicting interests along class lines. The comment below illustrates this point:

The diverse composition of the MDC has been the root cause of the internal contradictions within the party; the party has faced challenges on how to synchronise different interests. We have people coming from different [political] sides. We were bound to have contradictions. The challenge has always been on how to balance these contradictions (Interview with Kadenge).

In a related point, one respondent said the following:

It has been a great challenge reconciling ideological differences within the MDC party. This explains the frequent party splits (Interview with Morgan Komichi, MDC-T deputy national chairperson, 6 January 2017, Harare).

Talking about this issue of internal contradictions within the MDC party, an MDC official also noted:

The MDC party emerged as a broad based outfit comprised of various interest groups... This diversity brought internal party dis-cohesion as well as ideological clashes (Interview with Robert Mandeya, MDC-T official, 18 August 2016).

Although Lovemore Kadenge, Robert Mandeya and Morgan Komichi – above – all talk about challenges in reconciling ideological differences within the MDC party, contrastingly one respondent noted that a prevailing social democracy ideology actually enabled the party to blend well across diverse actors. He said the following:

Social democracy ideology fits different actors. It talks of solidarity, tolerance, people-centred and it is people centred. This is why we have been able as a party to synchronise our ideological differences. The ideology fits different stakeholders and actors (Interview with Happymore Chidziva, MDC-T National Youth chairperson, 6 January 2017, Harare).

This however tends to be a very water-downed and loose understanding of the specificities of social democracy.

The involvement of diverse groupings in the MDC led to several challenges, including how to integrate the different sector-based interest groups into a homogenous entity, particularly given the different class identities existing within the party (notably both business and labour).

Here I provide one illustration of these tensions, which arose during the constitution-making process at the time of the Government of National Unity. With reference to this process, one interviewee notes competing claims within the MDC (with some elements wanting to promote a labour agenda and others promoting neo-liberal capitalist interests). He recalls the contradictory positions between labour and capital leaning elements within the party as follows:

During the constitution making process in the era of the coalition government in 2009-13, there was a big debate within the party on labour rights, in particular the right to strike and collective bargaining with leading industrialists and capitalists seeking to constrict these rights (Interview with Mwonzora).

He also refers to

Internal contradictions on land acquisition and affirmative action among the party elites. Basically, leading the MDC has been a concordance of discordant forces (Interview with Mwonzora).

Discordance, then, is embodied in the internal dynamics of the party, and this has been evident from the very beginning of the party's history with visible signs of ideological rifts among competing blocs. Another respondent further noted other ideological contradictions and conflicts around policy agendas which blighted the MDC-T party during the period of the coalition government from 2009 to 2013. The comment below illustrates this point:

When the Government of National Unity [GNU] was in session – we as the MDC-T party differed. We had clashes within some sections of the party. Some of us were really concerned about social issues. We vigorously pushed for the increase of civil servant salaries. Yet, Tendai Biti [then Finance Minister and MDC-T secretary general] did not want to hear this. Some of us felt very strongly there was need to increase civil servant salaries. Since Biti was the man in charge of the finances, he objected. This impacted very heavily on us. People doubted very much whether we were really social democrats or not (Interview with Komichi).

Significant to note is that such ideological differences and clashes emerged during the early formative years of the party (as well as in later years).

As noted by scholar-cum-civic activist (and a founding member of the MDC), Brian Kagoro, in the immediate aftermath of the party's formation, there was a clash of interests between the “doves and the hawks, the leftists and the conservatives, the young and the old, patriarchy and feminists” (Kagoro, 2003:23). In terms of the categorisation provided by Gwiyo in an earlier quote, the leftists included social democrats mainly from the labour movement (as well as a sprinkling of Marxists), the centrists were mainstream liberals often found within urban civil society, and the rightists (or conservatives in Kagoro's distinction) were the business elite (such as the CZI and white agrarian capital). Such a broad based coalition, according to Kagoro (2003), was a “a curious alliance”.

At times, this triggered conflicting and irreconcilable differences on party policy positions. The following excerpt from Munyaradzi Gwisai, former MDC Member of Parliament for Highfield, gives a picture of the ideological contradictions and schisms which plagued the MDC party even in its early years. He notes:

In our February 2001 ISO Nyanga document to the MDC National Council, we had warned that unless the party embraced land reform, renounced the neo-liberal ideology fostered on it by its new western friends, and returned to its working class base, it faced annihilation from a left-ward moving regime. We were booted out (Munyaradzi Gwisai, Nehanda Radio, 9 August 2013).

Gwisai, as part of the far-left of the party, suggested that there was a right-wing shift in the party towards the centre and right, and that the original working class base was being sidelined. He was dismissed from the party by the MDC leadership on, he claims, ideological grounds, but the MDC leader (Morgan Tsvangirai and his former spokesperson – Willam Bango) argues otherwise, stressing that the Gwisai – MDC party fall-out was not only limited to policy differences and tensions but also related to issues of ill-discipline by Gwisai

(Tsvangirai and Bango, 2011:391). As if being prophetic, the first MDC Secretary of Land in 2000, Tendai Biti, warned that there was going to be “class struggles within the MDC ...between the neo-liberal element and the leftist element” (*quoted in* Alexander, 2000:400). Indeed, the class struggle did play out at times.

It is significant that, when the MDC emerged, it embraced immediately important sectors of the Zimbabwean white population; this was indeed a mutual embrace. Thus the multi-class alliance was simultaneously a kind of multi-racial alliance against the ruling party-state, leading one scholar to describe the MDC as a “spaghetti mix” which was “multi-ethnic, multi-racial and multi-class” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Prominent amongst the white members of the MDC were Ian and Kerry Kay, Eddie Cross (as mentioned earlier), Mike Auret, Trudy Stevenson, David Coltart and Roy Bennet among others. Some whites in fact became MDC MPs. The MDC in particular enjoyed huge financial and moral support from commercial farmers, most of whom though chose to remain in the background.

As Aeby (2015) observes, ZANU-PF did not take the support and inclusion of the white component within the MDC party lightly. Tsvangirai even claims in his memoirs that the white constituency within the MDC gave ample ammunition to ZANU-PF to de-legitimise the party and to project and frame it as a Western driven ‘puppet’ party fronting white monopoly capitalist interests (Tsvangirai and Bango, 2011). Over the years, the ZANU-PF party-state has capitalised on the MDC’s association with the white community (those in and outside Zimbabwe) to label the MDC as a counterrevolutionary party bent on effecting an illegal regime change in Zimbabwe. To ground its racial critique, ZANU-PF cited the involvement of whites (especially the commercial farmers) in openly backing MDC opposition politics. Such a critique was particularly prevalent during the period of the ‘No Vote’ constitutional referendum and during the subsequent land occupations in the year 2000. From the MDC’s perspective, this is simply a ploy by the ruling party to resist democratic reforms demanded by the MDC. But the party has been at pains in trying to dissociate itself from the white tag pinned on it.

5.4 MDC Splits and Breakaways

In 2006, the MDC party (now the MDC-T) held its second Congress followed by another one in 2011 and the most recent one in 2014. From its early years, the MDC has sought to develop a more national presence, particularly within the rural areas of the country (both in communal areas and fast track areas). Undoubtedly, though, the party’s main support base remains within the urban areas amongst unemployed youth, and the working and middle classes (with Harare

and Bulawayo being of particular importance). All the same, in recent elections, the MDC did manage to penetrate into the heartland of rural communities even in so-called ZANU-PF strongholds. The party now has structures in Mashonaland East and Mashonaland Central provinces, and even in areas that used to be no-go areas for any ruling party antagonists. However, while this was taking place, trials and tribulations were taking place within the party, including numerous splits and breakaways.

Intellectual concern and public interest in the internal cohesion and inconsistencies of the MDC (in pursuing its democratisation agenda) has risen since 2005 because of its fractionalisation, most notably the bifurcation of the party into two entities. In fact, from its inception to date, the MDC has witnessed two major successive splits. These have entailed what are labelled more broadly as “fissiparous tendencies” (van de Walle and Butler, 1999:23). In the case of the MDC, the first occurred in 2005 when Welshman Ncube (then party Secretary General) formed his own party, along with another founding MDC member, Job Sikhala and others. The MDC faction led by Welshman Ncube was viewed as tribalistic by many as it was comprised of members from the Matabeleland region. A few years down the line, Job Sikhala broke ranks with Ncube, citing poor leadership and dictatorial tendencies. In 2009, he defected to form a breakaway party, named MDC-99.

Following the damaging split of the mainstream MDC party in 2005, the two distinct MDC factions faced a tumultuous period characterised by intense inter-faction violence and rivalry (Coltart, 2006b) as well as bruising legal battles. The term faction I use advisedly because it often denotes a “team of politicians who are mutually dependent on each other for career advancement” (Dewan and Squintani, 2015:10) and hence it tends to imply that factional leadership is only interested in selfish gain. Certainly, post the 2005 MDC split, there were numerous litigation processes mainly revolving around the fight over party assets. In particular, this included vehicles and party finances, as well as the contested use of the party name and logo. But the two MDC parties were also driven by political and ideological considerations and not mere self-interest.

In a period close to nine years after the first MDC party split in 2005, the now renamed original MDC party (hereafter, MDC-Tsvangirai or simply MDC-T) witnessed a second split in April 2014. The term ‘split’ is contested. For instance, one of the MDC’s founding members, Eddie Cross, who remained within the MDC-T, chose to term the 2014 fissure as a ‘breakaway’ and not a split (Interview with Cross) in order presumably to portray those who broke away as a minority. This split or breakaway emerged when Tendai Biti (then MDC-T Secretary General) and Elton Mangoma (then party Treasurer General) left MDC-T due to various

reasons. The Biti and Mangoma faction often claim that its rift and subsequent fallout with Morgan Tsvangirai arose because of the following: Tsvangirai's financial impropriety and poor leadership skills, democratic deficits within the party and waning public confidence in Tsvangirai's leadership abilities (Interview with Elton Mangoma¹¹, former MDC-T Deputy Treasurer-General, 12 August 2016; see Elton Mangoma's letter in *The Herald*, 27 January 2014).

The Tsvangirai camp claims that the growing elite schisms and rift between Tsvangirai and the Secretary General Biti emanated from an attempted 'boardroom coup' orchestrated by the Biti camp. This entailed the usurpation of the party presidency outside of the scheduled national elective Congress. Mangoma and Biti eventually went on to lead a breakaway formation named the MDC-Renewal, which also later split due to intense infighting and increasing tensions over leadership within the breakaway formation. Consequently, Biti parted ways with Mangoma to form his own political grouping under the name Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). Following these events, Elton Mangoma went on to form his own party – Renewal Democrats of Zimbabwe (RDZ) (Richard Chidza, *Newsday*, 4 June 2015).

In turning back now to the first MDC party split in 2005, a variety of competing perspectives have come to the fore over the years when explaining the split. As embodied in the prevailing literature, these range from Tsvangirai's refusal to participate in the Senate elections of 2005, issues of tribalism, regionalism and ethnicity, erosion of internal party democracy, and insubordination and abuse of power by the party president. However, the dominant narrative relating to the MDC party split in 2005 has tended to focus on the animosity and rift between Tsvangirai and Welshman Ncube, with the latter receiving support from fellow MDC leaders mostly from Matabeleland, such as Renson Gasela, Priscilla Misihairambwi-Mushonga, Fletcher Dulini-Ncube and Paul Themba Nyathi. While the Ncube faction decided to participate in the upcoming Senate elections, Tsvangirai called for a boycott (Tsvangirai and Bango, 2011). In the fieldwork-based interviews (such as the Interview with Cross), these points were reproduced repeatedly. The fact that Tsvangirai tended to refer to the pro-Senate proponents as leaders from the 'Western region' in itself shows the salience of ethnic politics and regionalism in shaping the MDC party schism. This is despite the fact that the party often underplays the role of ethnicity in structuring internal opposition conflicts.

¹¹ Elton Mangoma was also the MDC-T party chief negotiator during the GNU negotiations and is a former legislator for Makoni West constituency.

The events, which led to the 2005 MDC party split, unfolded as follows. Welshman Ncube (then party Secretary General) was in support of the idea of the party participating in the upcoming Senate elections so as to influence legislative politics from within; and Tsvangirai was not. As one respondent revealed, a stalemate between the two top leaders then ensued stoking tensions within the party leadership (Interview with Clifford Hlatshwayo, MDC-T youth executive member, 3 October 2016). Following this standoff, it was decided that the issue be decided by a secret vote. Thirty-three National Executive Council (NEC) members voted for participation in the Senate (or were pro-senate), thirty-one dissented (were anti-senate), with two spoilt ballots. According to Eddie Cross (a top MDC party official), Ncube tricked him and some other top party members as they were sent on party business to South Africa during the time of the senate vote, which (for Cross) was a calculated ploy to dilute the numbers against senate (Interview with Cross).

Following the NEC results, Tsvangirai refused to abide to the outcome of the election. This move was seen by Ncube and his backers as an act of failure to adhere to internal party democratic processes (Welshman Ncube, *NewZimbabwe*, 25 July 2014). The pro-senate faction advances this point quite emphatically and they thus view Morgan Tsvangirai as the architect of the 2005 MDC party split. At a public lecture which I attended, former MDC top official Moses Mzila-Ndlovu (public lecture, 30 May 2013 at the New Ambassador Hotel in Harare) forcefully advanced the issue of lack of internal democracy as a basis for the 2005 MDC split. Other officials, who include David Coltart (former MDC-T top official), underscore the role of deep-seated internal violence in precipitating the 2005 split (Coltart, 2006b).

In light of the above, it can be argued that the 2005 MDC split was emblematic of deeper intra-party fissures and internal divisions. Following the senate stand-off, Welshman Ncube and other leaders from the 'Western region' went on to announce the formation of a splinter party, but still claiming use of the name MDC (Tsvangirai and Bango, 2011). After the split, the mainstream faction led by Tsvangirai adopted the name MDC-T (T for Tsvangirai) which it argues was done only to allow for easier identification and distinction from the other faction, rather than as a claim that Tsvangirai owned the party. The party still uses this name as to date. Although there are numerous debates on the implications of the split for the main opposition party in Zimbabwe and for oppositional politics more broadly in the country, what is certain is that it left the MDC-T in a much weaker position.

The senate narrative has gained traction in academic and public discourses in explaining the elite rupture and ripping apart of the MDC party in 2005. This however has tended to silence the salience of other central themes, traversing from regionalism, ethnicity and tribalism

(Shona versus Ndebele), to programmatic and strategic differences on how to prosecute the struggle for democracy and on how to secure political change. The role of still other factors including clashes between middle class professionals-intellectuals and trade unionists, ideological contradictions and latent elite rivalry, have also elicited less attention in understanding the party's rupture. These factors shaped the MDC's internal contradictions even well before the Senate debacle (Tsvangirai and Bango, 2011). Writing on his personal blog, one of the MDC founding members David Coltart underscored that "the reasons for the split in the MDC are numerous and complex" (Coltart, 2006b). Later on in this thesis, I return to the MDC splits in 2005 and 2014 in terms of their implications for the party's support base, agency, electoral success and unity.

So far, I have sought to provide mainly a historical narrative of the MDC to give the reader a sense of the MDC as a party, including details of its founding, diverse social base (with implications for ideology and politics) and internal cleavages and splits. In the following sections, and focusing on the period from 2000 to 2008, I examine thematically the different roles played by the MDC (if any at all) in influencing democratisation in Zimbabwe. As one respondent enunciated:

The MDC party since its formation to date has fought for democracy through multiple fronts. These include the constitutional, parliamentary and electoral arena (Interview with Misheck Shambare, MDC-T official, 17 August 2016).

5.5 MDC's Struggle for a New Constitution in Zimbabwe (2000-08)

This section examines the role of the MDC in pushing for good governance and democratisation in Zimbabwe by focusing on the constitution reform processes since the landmark 2000 'No' Vote campaign until 2008 (pre-GNU period). Concerning constitutional reform, the NCA together with the newly formed MDC party initiated several attempts in seeking to revise the Lancaster House (Westminster-type) constitution over a number of years. Such efforts were to bear fruit, at least indirectly, when these two political groups successfully campaigned for a 'No' vote against the government sponsored draft constitution in the year 2000 (Interview with Hlatshwayo; Interview with Gonese). In fact, the NCA became a leading voice in the constitutional reform debates and initiatives during this period.

Of utmost importance to note is that the vote 'No' campaign in 2000 was a milestone achievement in many ways. Firstly, it exhibited the immense power of the newly formed MDC party. Secondly, it signalled a turning point in Zimbabwean contemporary politics. Thirdly, it was the first major defeat for the dominant ZANU-PF party in the entire history of post-colonial

Zimbabwe. Fourthly, it proved that ZANU-PF had to face a new, emerging and strong formidable opposition (Interview with Mandeya). When asked about the role of the MDC in spearheading the democratisation process during the 2000-08 era, one MDC official stated the following:

The MDC played a major role in rejecting the piecemeal amendment of the constitution. In collaboration with the NCA and ZCTU, the MDC successfully campaigned for a 'No' Vote in 2000 (Interview with Nyamukachi).

Prior to the MDC-NCA no-vote sponsored campaign, Mugabe had established his own constitution commission with four hundred members. Such a move was aimed at countering the NCA-MDC's demands and agitation for a wholly people-driven constitution reform process (Interview with Kadenge). After recording a defeat (at the hands of the NCA-MDC alliance) in the 2000 constitution referendum, ZANU-PF started to peddle the narrative that it was the whites (in wanting to retain their monopoly ownership of agricultural land) who sponsored the No Vote campaign (Interview with Muswere). The draft constitution (as formulated by ZANU-PF) was widely rejected in the referendum because, according to the MDC, it did not arise from a consultative and participatory democratic process (as it was dominated and controlled by the state executive). The draft was also rejected because the revisions would have further entrenched the executive powers of the state.

In an interview with an NCA official, it was highlighted that the NCA had since its formation as a civil society group in 1997 consistently pushed for constitutional reform and a new constitution (Interview with Madock Chivasa, NCA national spokesperson, 13 October 2013). The NCA was in fact involved in the formation of the MDC and had close links with the MDC in pushing for a new constitution both in 2000 and in later years. In a statement, it states that:

For a long time, the NCA has been working with the MDC in the crusade for a new people-driven constitution. Thus in February 2000, the NCA teamed with its members including the MDC and mobilised Zimbabweans to vote NO in the February 2000 referendum. The reason for the NO vote was to protest against the process. The NO vote was in fact, about the principle of a people-driven constitution and a demand for a people-driven process (NCA Taskforce, *The Zimbabwean*, 20 September 2007).

After the defeat of the 'Yes' vote campaign, the ZANU-PF led government resorted to effecting constitutional reform through top-down constitutional amendments. This was possible since ZANU-PF had what is described elsewhere by Fomunyoh (2001:41) as "a compliant parliament" comprising of (in Zimbabwe's case) predominantly ZANU-PF legislators. Despite

this, Friedman (2008) asserts that the combined collective action and social mobilisation from the civic movement and the newly formed MDC party, which saw the rejection of the 2000 draft constitution, helped in intensifying the democratising pressure for change on the ZANU-PF party-state.

Although the MDC-T and NCA enjoyed a long cordial relationship in their united demand for a new constitution, things came to a head in 2007 when the MDC formations (MDC-Tsvangirai and MDC-Mutambara, with the latter representing Ncube's party) took part in negotiating secretly with ZANU-PF for a new constitution in Kariba (a resort town in Zimbabwe). Despite the fact that Thabo Mbeki (then South African president) facilitated the negotiations for this so-called Kariba draft, many civil society organisations contested such elite-driven constitutional deliberations. The NCA and its advocacy campaigns in fact persistently criticised such kinds of constitutional engineering. Instead, the NCA and other civil society groups demanded a constitution reform process realised through a participatory citizen-led process.

The role of the MDC-T in furthering constitutional reform is discussed more fully in the following chapter. The next section investigates the role of the MDC in fighting for a level playing field in the electoral process, including electoral reforms and increasing citizen engagement and participation in electoral politics. In so doing, it also analyses the many challenges which stifled the MDC in its bid to realise and attain electoral democracy and democratisation in Zimbabwe.

5.6 MDC and Electoral Democratisation in Zimbabwe (2000-08)

Among one of the roles political parties can play in a democracy is participation and contestation in elections (Randall and Svåsand, 2002a; Lindberg, 2004; Salih and Nordlund, 2007; van de Walle and Butler, 1999). As can be seen from Zimbabwe's electoral history, elections are convened consistently (since 2000, there have been national elections in 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2013). In other words, Zimbabwe has conformed to the tenets of 'procedural' minimal democracy, as is evinced in its conduct of regular elections. This however does not imply that, in practice, Zimbabwe is a shining example of an electoral democracy – far from it. In fact, the developments in post-colonial Zimbabwe are consistent with what is denoted in the democracy literature as the "holding of multi-party elections without democratising" (Levitsky and Way, 2005:30). It is from this premise that I move on to discuss the role and contribution of the political opposition in Zimbabwe (the MDC) in influencing electoral democracy in Zimbabwe prior to the GNU period.

At least since the formation of the MDC (and its subsequent entry into the Zimbabwean electoral contest), the credibility and integrity of Zimbabwean elections has raised eyebrows. This has been reflected in part by the increasing involvement of the ZANU-PF party-state in undermining the electoral processes. The party-state has succeeded in this endeavour using various strategies and different forms of power (visible, invisible and hidden) (Gaventa, 2005) to undermine opposition party competition. This includes the deployment of state sanctioned political violence, coercion and intimidation of voters, restricted access of the opposition to political society (the electorate) and therefore to campaign space, and the monopoly and domination of the state media by ZANU-PF during election periods (MDC-T, 2012).

Over the years, the political party opposition, domestic civil society organisations and international election observer missions have raised the above-mentioned concerns on the character of the Zimbabwean elections. For instance, in 2002 (again as South African president), Thabo Mbeki sent two justices (Sisi Khampepe and Dikgang Moseneke) to monitor and observe the Zimbabwean elections in that year. The findings of their report were kept under wraps and not released for many years until 2008. The report established that ZANU-PF had used massive violence and intimidation which undermined the integrity of the 2002 Zimbabwean presidential elections (Khampepe and Moseneke, 2002). It is within such closed electoral spaces that the MDC continued to push for the conduct of free, fair and credible elections in Zimbabwe. Global state and non-state actors also complemented the efforts of the MDC in delegitimising Mugabe's rule during the 2000-08 period. For instance, post the 2005 elections, then USA Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice lambasted the 2005 elections for being skewed in favour of the incumbent ZANU-PF and she dismissed the election results as not being credible (Rice, *Press Statement*, Zimbabwe Elections, 2005).

In seeking to beat back the democratisation tide, ZANU-PF employed different strategies (covert and overt) including the use of state sponsored violence in the post-2000 phase. Such violence involved the use of the army, security services (intelligence), police, war veterans and para-military youths in what Louis Althusser would term as the 'repressive state apparatuses' (Althusser, 1971). Examples of the violence directed at the MDC includes incidences of torture of MDC officials including Job Sikhala in 2003 (Columbus Mavhunga, *Daily News*, 17 January 2003). The MDC party also claims that, owing to the character of the political contestation and elections (post-2000), its supporters, members, activists and officials were murdered. In the opening remarks in the 2013 MDC election manifesto, Tsvangirai elaborates on this point. He notes that:

We have lost some cadres along the way, limbs have been broken, livelihoods destroyed and homes have been burnt down. Many of us including myself have suffered grave personal losses (MDC Election Manifesto, 2013:1).

To show how ZANU-PF used brute force to constrain the conduct of free elections in Zimbabwe, the MDC-T compiled a list of 323 members, activists, officials and supporters allegedly murdered by ZANU-PF (MDC-T Roll of Honour, 2011; MDC-T, 2012:37-53). Though this total figure also involves post-2000 violence, most of the alleged actions took place before 2008.

Thus, in a bid to block electoral democratisation, ZANU-PF deployed visible forms of power (Gaventa, 2005) and brute force. These factors, coupled with an un-level electoral playing field, indeed played a role in constraining the agency of the MDC in seeking to spearhead and entrench electoral democracy in Zimbabwe. This claim resonates with perspectives raised in the existing literature (Olcott and Ottaway, 1999; Carothers, 1999) which contends that the playing field in semi-authoritarian regimes is always uneven and un-level. It was difficult for the MDC to push for democratic outcomes within such a political and institutional context. Although the MDC raised the 'victimhood' card through the naming and shaming of ZANU-PF, this did not stop the latter in unleashing terror and violence on MDC supporters.

The private media complemented the efforts of the MDC in publicising ZANU-PF's atrocities against MDC members, supporters and officials through compilation of a list of MDC victims of the ZANU-PF party-state orchestrated violence under the banner of 'Zimbabwe's Wall of Shame' (see published list in the *Nehanda Radio* newspaper, 27 September 2013; *Nehanda Radio*, 3 May 2013; MDC -T, 2012). Private owned newspapers such as the *Daily News* also played a significant role in exposing ZANU-PF violence against MDC supporters (Ruhanya, 2014). As such, the fourth estate (the media) sympathetic to the MDC exposed human rights abuses and the authoritarian traits of the ZANU-PF party-state.

The MDC party remained resolute in its demand for democracy and political liberalisation regardless of its subjection to state sponsored violence and treason charges levelled against its leadership (Morgan Tsvangirai, Welshman Ncube and Renson Gasela) after the year 2000 (Zimbabwe Institute, 2004). Even on the defensive, then, the MDC sought to challenge ZANU-PF's electoral hegemony through its ongoing participation in post-2000 elections (Interview with Gonese). As one respondent commented:

We started participating in elections in June 2000. ZANU-PF was shocked, as we were a party hardly nine months old. The MDC participates in an election and it literally got

half of the elected seats and the establishment was not amused. That marked the arrival of the MDC as a political force in Zimbabwean politics (Interview with Gutu).

After arriving on the political scene, and by continuing to participate in elections, the MDC at least offered voting choices to the electorate. As enunciated by an interviewee from the MDC-Renewal (a splinter party from the mainstream MDC):

The MDC party has in a sense given lost hope to the electorate, which was nearly cowed into accepting the Chinese model one party state. Creating a formidable political party stopped ZANU-PF into reconsidering its de facto one-party state mantra. With a modest vocal opposition representation, the civil society and the voters have gained confidence in both numbers and expression of their views. MDC may have been robbed [through electoral fraud] or suffered extreme violence but its presence and continued evolution is fundamental in shaping the future politics of Zimbabwe (Interviewee, anonymous, 4 March 2015).

Another respondent echoed this claims by arguing that:

The coming into being of the MDC changed the whole political complexion in Zimbabwe. The MDC appeared as the best alternative to ZANU-PF – the MDC added to the voices that were there. This changed the political landscape – many players came in to air their displeasure of ZANU-PF’s misrule and misgovernance (Interview with Mwonzora).

The above claims also resonate with the comment by one commentator, namely, that “the emergence of a viable opposition party in the form of MDC radically changed the way politics and national discourse would be conducted” (Shana, 2006:3).

The very fact though that Mugabe and ZANU-PF have been amenable to the mere conduct of elections as stipulated in the constitution yet, simultaneously, retained authoritarian traits makes Zimbabwe a classic semi-authoritarian regime. Writing on semi-authoritarian regimes, Olcott and Ottaway (1999:1) hold that:

These regimes have adopted some of the formal traits of democracy, such as constitutions providing for the separation of powers and contested presidential and parliamentary elections, and they allow some degree of political freedom to their citizens; nevertheless, they are able to protect themselves from open competition that might threaten the tenure of the incumbents.

It is within this analytic backdrop in mind that I am examining the role of the MDC in fighting for electoral democracy in a semi-authoritarian regime, since the turn of the new millennium. By also deploying the power cube matrix developed by Gaventa (2005), I argue the MDC has fought for democracy within closed spaces where the state often uses hidden and invisible

forms of power, such as by way of electoral fraud. It is widely acknowledged, at least outside ZANU-PF circles, that electoral fraud took place on a massive scale in all the elections in which the MDC-M and MDC-T participated, though this has been difficult to prove.

It is therefore unsurprising that the fight for the realisation of electoral democracy in post-independence Zimbabwe has not been without challenges. As one MDC-T official points out:

One of the major challenges has been on how to fight a non-violent struggle to win elections against an enemy which, when faced with stiff electoral competition, reclines into quasi-military outfit. Look at ZANU-PF's behaviour in the 2001 Bikita-West and 2006 Budiriro by-elections. The challenge we have faced is how to fight for democracy with a regime with a monopoly of violence – a regime which controls the army, security, police and the youth militia. We [the MDC] have been fighting for democracy with limited resources. Imagine fighting against an opponent with an army, police and security (Interview with Shambare).

Despite violence against it, the MDC-T party has always stressed its commitment to a “non-violent approach to a democratically driven transition” as illustrated in the party’s Agenda for Real Transformation policy handbook (MDC-T, 2013:1); though at times acts of violence have been undertaken by party activists.

In the midst of almost systemic violence against it, the MDC-T continued to push for the consolidation of electoral democracy in Zimbabwe. One civil society activist enunciated that:

The MDC-T influenced a number of electoral reforms within 2000-08, reforms which were implemented in Zimbabwe culminating in the MDC winning the March 2008 elections (Interview with Grace Chirenje, then Vice-Chair of Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, 18 August 2015).

This point is collaborated in the 2013 African Union *Election Observation Mission Report on Zimbabwe*. It states that the opposition party in conjunction with civil society organisations played a key role in reforming election management bodies in Zimbabwe:

Following recommendations by political parties, Civil Society Organisations and the ESC [Electoral Supervisory Commission], the country re-modelled its electoral management system taking into account the SADC *Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections* adopted by the SADC Heads of State and Governments in Mauritius in 2004 (African Union Election Observation Mission Report on Zimbabwe, 2013:11-12).

Undoubtedly, this may have involved changes to electoral processes at the formal level only, but it does serve to show the role of the MDC (with others) in reforming the Zimbabwean electoral management bodies as well as in spearheading the credibility and integrity of elections in Zimbabwe.

The entry of the MDC party into the Zimbabwean political arena deepened the existence of electoral competition and facilitated electoral democratisation. This change was manifested for example in increased voter participation of the citizenry in local, parliamentary and presidential elections from 2000 onwards. In an interview, Tinashe Chisaira (a civil society activist) asserted:

The MDC entry made Zimbabwean politics more vibrant. In the past, especially around 1995, there had been very low voter-turnout as people were not greatly interested in politics (Interview with Tinashe Chisaira, ProJusticeZim Trust, 25 May 2016).

On a related point, one interviewee argued:

MDC has been a primary source of change; we smashed the one party state. When we started there was no freedom of association; Zimbabwe was not only a police state but also a closed state. We have demonstrations every day in Harare that is all because of the MDC. No other political party, no other NGO or CSO has played as critical role as the MDC, even if we have not become the government, we have in fact changed Zimbabwe completely (Interview with Cross).

Although the MDC won 57 seats, whereas ZANU-PF received 62 out of the contested 2000 parliamentary seats, this is not to say (as indicated earlier) that Zimbabwe then became an example of a flourishing electoral democracy. In this context, Sekai Holland made the following remarks:

The MDC party, we managed to generate civic courage amongst the Zimbabwean citizenry. When we entered into politics in 2000, we managed to fight voter apathy among Zimbabweans. Most Zimbabweans became interested in political issues and in voting. What we however lack in Zimbabwe is institutional memory to keep check of our victories (Interview with Sekai Holland MDC-T founding member, 13 October 2013).

The point here is that victories for the MDC in terms of electoral democratisation were often short-lived or shallow, as ZANU-PF continued to stifle the efforts of the political opposition.

The MDC at times turned to the judicial system in litigating for democracy through bringing election petitions to the courts. In the 2000-08 period, elections (in 2000, 2002 and 2005) stoked claims of electoral fraud, vote rigging and a series of electoral malpractices. In

this respect, the MDC waged lengthy court challenges. The then party's Legal Secretary for Legal Affairs states that:

39 electoral challenges were brought following the June 2000 general elections, a major electoral challenge was brought challenging Robert Mugabe's election in March 2002 and some 15 electoral challenges were brought following the March 2005 general elections (Coltart, 2006a:1).

Another example of how the MDC has litigated for democracy is the matter of Thokozani Khupe (an MDC legislator) who filed a court case against some sections of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) at the Bulawayo High Court in 2005 (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 11 February 2005). These are just examples of how the MDC party has pursued the struggle to realise electoral democracy in Zimbabwe by using judiciary spaces. However, it proved to be a Herculean task winning the court cases due to the conflation of the ZANU-PF party and the judicial arm of the state. This is mainly because of the dominance of, and interference by, ZANU-PF in the judiciary system, a scenario that resembles the capture of the judiciary by the party-state. Thus the MDC sought electoral democracy in the context of a highly manipulated and politicised judiciary (Zimbabwe Institute, 2004:8). In an interview with the MDC-T national spokesperson, it was highlighted more broadly that it was a tall order on the part of the opposition to fight a deeply entrenched party of liberation (ZANU-PF) which had been in power for so long and which had strong roots and a domineering presence in nearly all sections of Zimbabwean state and society (Interview with Gutu).

In the section that follows, I discuss the contribution and role of the MDC in pushing for broader democracy in Zimbabwe within the legislative spaces.

5.7 MDC, Democratisation and Parliamentary Spaces (2000-08)

MDC's entry into the single-dominated parliament in the year 2000 had the potential to transform the Zimbabwean legislature into a strong and vibrant two-party dominated parliament. In fact, the presence of the MDC seemed to shape the course of parliamentary debates, policy formulation and even policy implementation with specific reference to the promotion of accountable governance and progressive legislative reforms. In this respect, the MDC claims to have enhanced dramatically the quality of parliamentary democracy in Zimbabwe. Often cited are the political reforms and progressive legislation especially those around human rights and good governance. One founding MDC member and former legislator noted that:

When the MDC entered into parliament in 2000 it managed to play an oversight role in parliament; before, ZANU-PF used to ordinarily whip its members into line. It was a parliament where opposing views were unheard of (Interview with Gwiyo).

Another MDC-T official highlighted that:

The MDC actively participated in political contest in an increasingly [one-party] dominated parliament [as it arose historically] and this has forced open debate in parliament, and actually to an extent forced the regime to abandon some of its singular attitudes to governance. Especially considering that, prior to the MDC formation, ZANU-PF could just pass laws willy-nilly and, with the entry of the MDC on the Zimbabwean political scene, they could not do that. ZANU-PF was forced to share committees in parliament and a semblance of inclusivity has been forced on them (Interview with Nyamukachi).

Thus, the MDC party articulates the view that it made significant contributions in discharging its parliamentary duties. In raising the issue of the constitution-reform process (which also feeds into the GNU period), one respondent noted the importance of parliamentary involvement in this regard:

If one has to write the history of the MDC, the first thing that one would really have to acknowledge is the role that the MDC played in the constitution making process. We can safely say that was our best achievement, which came out of a parliamentary driven process. Of all things that we have done in parliament, the achievement to come up with a new constitution is key. As a party, we are not happy with some clauses. Nevertheless, this is a better constitution, looking at the one we had [previously] (Interview with MDC-T official, anonymous, 9 November 2016, Harare).

In examining the influence of the MDC-T in Zimbabwe's democratisation, reference is also made often to the role of MDC-T legislators in pushing for Amendment No. 18 which sought to democratise the electoral laws prior to the holding of the 2008 elections (Interview with Mwonzora). The significance of the role of the MDC in parliament is reaffirmed by one academic:

The birth of the MDC in late 1999 helped in diffusing ZANU-PF's sole dominance in parliament (Interview with an academic at the University of Zimbabwe, anonymous, 15 July 2015, Harare).

Undoubtedly, the entry of the MDC into a hitherto one-party dominated national parliament enabled the opposition political party to push for deepened forms of both horizontal and vertical accountabilities. The former refers to institutional oversight, or the process of

ensuring viable checks and balances within the different spheres of the state (for example, between different arms of the state, that is, the legislature, judiciary and executive) (Randall and Svåsand, 2001:6). The latter (vertical accountability) refers to the power relations between citizens and the state. The former form of accountability is relevant for this section.

At a public seminar which I attended, and in commenting on the role of the MDC in influencing horizontal accountability in Zimbabwe, one party official noted that:

Since its formation, the MDC has always played a watchdog role on the ruling party. The MDC has never hesitated to point out political and economic evils committed by the ruling party (Jessie Majome, MDC-T legislator public seminar presentation at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 19 August 2015, Harare).

This often entailed trying to minimise the abuse of parliament by the ruling party and facilitating the holding of the state executive accountable to parliament, as well as ensuring robust debate in parliament about crucial public matters including legal reforms pertaining to the functioning of parliament itself (Interview with Charles Moyo, former employee in the MDC-T Research and Policy Department, 8 July 2015, Harare). Indeed, in her public seminar, Majome stressed that her party managed to keep the Zimbabwean government in check through playing a functional role of legislative oversight vis-à-vis the executive. Laasko (2007), in his study of the MDC party, concurs on this point.

Despite the fact that the MDC persistently makes such arguments about the significance of its parliamentary presence, this needs to be subjected to critical examination. Thus, one MDC-T official claims that:

Over the years, the MDC legislators did not do much in parliament. Most of the times, the MDC failed to take advantage and capitalise on their heavy presence and numerical edge in parliament. This point was even more apparent during the later years [in the parliament of the GNU era] (Interview with Mandeya).

Here Mandeya is expressing particular concern about the fragmentation of the MDC into two parties, with MDC-T being dominant over the other (MDC-Mutambara) but still being weakened in parliament because of this split. Even before the split, though, the MDC legislators failed on numerous occasions to block the passage of retrogressive legislation due to their minority numbers in parliament. The passage of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and Public Order and Security Act (POSA) in 2002 are glaring examples of this. Consistent with this, one respondent commented that:

We as the [MDC –T] parliamentarians – we made so much noise in parliament. Nevertheless, we have not done much in terms of changing laws the way we want.

Another major issue is that we have been beaten by numbers when it comes to voting in parliament. For instance, when AIPPA and POSA sailed through in parliament, we were beaten in terms of numbers (Interview with Elias Mudzuri, MDC-T vice president, 10 January 2017, Harare).

Without doubt, legislative behaviour among members of parliament across the party system constrained the passing of certain progressive bills and legislative reforms within the fragmented Zimbabwean legislature. One can note in this respect the polarisation which marked the debates over the motions to amend and repeal draconian legislation such as AIPPA and POSA (see for example motion raised by then MDC-T legislator Pishai Muchauraya, *Hansard*, 12 June 2012). The polarisation within the party system played a role in slowing legislative reforms especially in the deeply divided legislature post-2000, with ZANU-PF parliamentary members by necessity voting along party lines.

Some respondents believe though that MDC-T parliamentarians managed to at least resist – albeit unsuccessfully – retrogressive legislative reforms and raise crucial issues in the process. As one civic actor from ProJusticeZim Trust stressed:

In the beginning [2000s] the party made immense contributions to parliament. These were the days of the passage of a very progressive labour Act. The party also made loud noises, though unsuccessful, against the passage of POSA and AIPPA and the Land Amendment Act (Interview with Chisaira).

This point reveals the limitations of the minority status of the MDC in enhancing legislative reforms and the rule of law. In written responses on the role and contribution of the MDC in the Zimbabwean parliament, the ZCTU Information Department commented that, after the entry of the MDC into the legislature:

Debates became robust and there was no mere rubber-stamping. The MDC legislators were able to expose bad things; unfortunately, because the ruling party had numerical advantages, these robust debates did not have much effect as they were overridden by the voting system (ZCTU Information Department, email correspondence, 22 August 2015).

It is worth noting that ZANU-PF maintained a two-thirds legislative majority (both in the Senate introduced in 2005 and in the Lower parliamentary house). This effectively meant that the ruling party still enjoyed legislative dominance. Consequently, despite the presence of the MDC, ZANU-PF was able to block the passage of bills and policies unfavourable to the party-state interests. During an interview in 2011, the then ZANU-PF spokesperson (Rugare Gumbo) illustrated this point. He said that “we will implement the issues that we think are

relevant” (Interview of Rugare Gumbo, *Openspace*, 2011:119). Such behaviour has been a major obstacle to the consolidation of both liberal and electoral democracy in the Zimbabwean polity. Though being a minority in parliament, the MDC still played a role in influencing legislative politics. As one respondent outlined:

The virtue of having an opposition in parliament presents a deterrent measure against a ruling regime. The MDC legislators indeed managed to argue against some of the policies articulated by the ruling ZANU-PF party (Interview with Edknowledge Mandikwaza, former employee in the MDC-T research and policy department and now Programme Officer in Heal Zimbabwe Trust, 5 January 2017, Harare).

Besides its minority position in parliament, other factors also contributed to the MDC party’s failure in pushing for progressive legislation in parliament in the period from 2000 to 2008. These include for instance the calibre of the MDC opposition legislators. As one analyst observed, the competence and even level of education of some of the opposition parliamentarians negatively influenced the quality of parliamentary debate as well as these parliamentarians’ contributions in the House of Assembly (Interview with Alois Matongo, independent political analyst, 6 February 2015, Gweru). The current MDC-T party spokesperson echoed this point by indicating that:

The MDC legislators have brought forward several significant motions, for example the issue of police brutality, and our legislators have been pushing hard. Without looking down upon some of our MPs, ... the calibre of some of our members of parliament had a bearing on the quality of contributions in the august House. However, some without higher education levels have done a good job. We [the MDC] appreciate that some need capacitation. Because in parliamentary debates, you need some certain level of academic sophistication to grasp issues to be able to stand up, argue, and debate issues (Interview with Gutu).

This appeared to be a problem as well at local government level. For example, the Harare Mayor – Bernard Manyenyeni – from the MDC-T party, in reflecting on the past, lamented about the lack of adequate technical skills and the poor level of education of some of the MDC-T councillors. He noted that such inadequacies in turn affected the level and quality of debates regarding local governance issues (Moses Matenga, *Newsday*, 28 August 2015).

Incapacity was not always related to the social background (and particularly previous occupation) of legislators. Despite the fact that some MDC MPs were former trade unionists, lawyers and media professionals, their parliamentary contributions were often insignificant (Anonymous Interviewee, former MDC-T legislator in Harare Urban, Harare, 15 October

2016). The other challenge then that affected most legislators from the MDC was their absolute lack of any prior experience in government (or legislative experience) and this affected detrimentally their agency in pushing for democratic reforms, particularly given the vast experience and knowledge of the state by ZANU-PF parliamentarians. Some MDC parliamentarians even failed in giving their maiden speech (Anonymous interviewee, MDC-T party activist, Harare, 14 October, 2016).

5.8 Deepening Crisis, 2008 Elections and GNU

While the MDC was engaging in processes of democratisation, the economic and political crisis in the country was deepening, with the implications of the crisis being borne out in the national elections in 2008 and the subsequent coalition government or GNU. During the era from 2000 to 2008, Zimbabwe was afflicted with a persistent and profound political and economic downturn stemming from a myriad of factors. Some of these originate historically and broadly they extend from the ESAP era to the post-2000 fast track land reform programme period.

After the ‘no’ vote in the February referendum of 2000 and the ensuing nation-wide land occupations led by war veterans, the Zimbabwean government embarked on the chaotic fast track land reform programme that affected agricultural production at a national level detrimentally. Consequently, these state-led land seizures dealt a heavy blow to the country’s food security situation. Overall, the ZANU-PF government was presiding over an unprecedented economic decline resulting in large part from gross economic mismanagement. This economic meltdown was characterised by a drastic fall in the standard of living, high levels of unemployment, the breakdown and collapse in the delivery of social services characterised by poor water and sanitation facilities, shortage of essential drugs in hospitals, and incessant cuts in electricity supply. This period was also punctuated with scarcity of basic foodstuffs and essentials such as fuel, mealie-meal, bread, sugar, milk and cooking oil. Company closures and decline of industrial output, cash shortages as well as hyperinflation were ongoing events.

The economic collapse coupled with the hyperinflationary environment further engendered a rise in the informal urban economy. This was so as the urban population was trying to eke a livelihood in an economy termed by Jones (2010) as the ‘*kukiya-kiya* economy’. This entails an economy where everyone literally becomes a vendor (or vendorised economy). In 2005, the Zimbabwean government embarked on the massive demolition of ‘illegal’ urban housing, slums and settlements in high-density suburbs in Harare, Bulawayo and other small

urban cities in an operation code-named ‘Operation *Murambatsvina*’ (‘Restore Order’/‘Clear the Filth’) (Tibaijuka, 2005). This ‘clean-up’ operation exercise destroyed the livelihoods of many urban dwellers (who relied on vending). The clean-up process also affected the MDC support base, which is largely urban-based.

There was thus a general hardening of state authoritarianism as exemplified in massive human rights abuses, abuse of the rule of law and state orchestrated violence. The violation of basic liberal democratic tenets seemed to be all-pervasive. Thus, in the period following the controversial land reform programme in 2000, the ZANU-PF government went on to interfere in the judiciary especially concerning election and land related court cases (Raftopoulos, 2002:414). This excessive political pressure (the politicisation of the judiciary) and the heavy executive interference in judicial proceedings saw the forced resignation of Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay (Magaisa, 2016). In 2002, the government (as intimated in an earlier discussion) introduced several pieces of draconian legislation to cow and intimidate the private media and the fledgling opposition: the Access to Information and Public Privacy Act (AIPPA) and Public Order and Security Act (POSA). The former legislation was aimed at curtailing media freedom. The closure of the *Daily News* and the *Tribune* are but two examples of the effects of AIPPA. Under the latter, the political opposition were supposed to notify and seek for permission to hold rallies (*The Standard*, 15 March 2006). The enactment of such draconian pieces of legislation laid bare the state’s increasing use of visible forms of power to suffocate the spaces of participation (Gaventa, 2005) within the Zimbabwean pro-democracy movement.

It seemed that mismanagement, bad governance and corruption knew no bounds. This can be illustrated more fully in the case of the diamonds discovered in the Chiadzwa/Marange area in eastern Zimbabwe in 2006. Although the government initially allowed small-scale miners to extract these diamonds by allowing a free-for-all situation (Mwonzora, 2011), it soon seized, secured and securitised the Marange diamond fields. In the process of acquiring the diamond mines, the government resorted to the use of brute force and indiscriminate shooting of illegal miners (Human Rights Watch, 2009). Such a massive violation of human rights stoked concern among domestic civil society organisations (for example, the Centre for Research and Development, and Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition) as well as among international human rights organisations (such as Partnership Africa Canada and the Human Rights Watch), and to a lesser extent from the opposition MDC political party. The discovery of the diamonds also fuelled opaque political elite and military business networks. Characteristic of rentier economies, the ZANU PF *chefs* parcelled out and distributed mining claims, concessions and

loot among themselves and their peers (through rent-seeking relations) and even to the so-called foreign investors, pre-dominantly the Chinese and the Russians.

In 2008-09, further attempts were made to arrest the economic downfall. Gideon Gono (then central bank governor) introduced a series of quasi-fiscal policies. This included price-cutting and stabilisation measures under the Basic Commodity Supply Side Intervention (BACOSI) (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 2009). More controversial economic policies also emerged. For instance, on 17 April 2008, the government passed into law the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Bill. In this regard, the eventual Act required that indigenous (black) Zimbabweans own a 51% share ownership in foreign businesses. This populist move led the decline in foreign direct investment by foreign owned companies.

5.8.1 March 2008 and June 2008 Elections: Tale of Two Elections

It seems clear, then, that – post the MDC's formation – ZANU-PF continued to act as the one and only political party 'in town', and that it was able to do almost as it willed despite the existence of a strong opposition party and the devastating economic consequences. However, this was to come back and haunt the ruling party when the elections took place in 2008.

On the political front, Zimbabwe experienced a tale of two contrasting presidential elections in the year 2008. One was held on the 31st of March (along with elections for the legislature) under the ambit of the SADC Guidelines on Democratic Elections (adopted in Mauritius in 2004) and the other one was held on the 27th of June. In the first presidential plebiscite, the MDC-T garnered 47.9% of the votes whereas ZANU-PF received 43.2%; Simba Makoni (of Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn), who had defected from ZANU-PF, received 8%. In terms of the Zimbabwean electoral laws, none of the three contenders reached the 50% + 1 threshold required to become an outright winner. Such a development forced ZANU-PF to push for a run-off election (in June) in which it went on to use coercive force and state violence to intimidate real and perceived opposition supporters. MDC-T, because of this violence, refused to participate in the June presidential run-off, in a development which saw ZANU-PF holding the elections uncontested.

The outcome of this plebiscite and the legitimacy of Robert Mugabe were widely questioned, contested and disputed locally, regionally and beyond. Several respondents in my fieldwork highlighted that Mugabe and his party suffered from a severe crisis of legitimacy following the heavily disputed June 2008 run-off election. There were two examples of SADC heads of states who took a principled stance in delegitimising and criticising the Mugabe regime. These were Seretse Ian Khama (president of Botswana) (*BBC News*, 15 August 2008)

and the now late Patrick Levy Mwanawasa of Zambia (*CNN News*, 21 March 2007). At a global level, the United Nations Security Council condemned the massive violation of human rights, arbitrary arrests, torture, displacements and increased political violence against opposition activists in the run-up to (and during) the 27 June elections (United Nations Security Council Resolution, 8 July 2008). In a way, such negative publicity helped in naming and shaming ZANU-PF for continuing to undermine the rule of law and for incessant human rights violation. And this began prior to the 2008 elections.

Thus, in the foreword to the MDC-T party's 2008 policy handbook, Morgan Tsvangirai claimed that the dialogue spearheaded by SADC (starting in fact from 2007) managed to bear "[p]ositive developments, particularly reforms in POSA (the Public Order and Security Act), AIPPA (the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act), and the Broadcasting Services Act" (MDC, 2008: v). ZANU-PF agreed to amendments to AIPPA, POSA, the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) and the Electoral Act in late 2007 as a result of pressure from the domestic opposition (*The Zimbabwean*, 16 January 2008) as well as from the SADC regional grouping. Media organisations such as Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe Chapter (MISA-Zimbabwe) lamented over what it termed as the 'fast-tracking' of such amendments through parliament without robust debate (MISA-Zimbabwe, 12 January 2008). Indeed, this 'fast-tracking' was evident in the swift and smooth-sailing of the amendments through the Zimbabwean parliament on the 18th of December 2007, a process that was subsequently followed by the signing into law of the AIPPA, POSA and BSA amendment bill by President Robert Mugabe.

Although some African heads of states spoke out at times on the Zimbabwean political and economic crises, they were certainly not the principal elements behind any democratising efforts in Zimbabwe. The most important elements were the MDC, both before and after the 2005 split, along with domestic civic actors. In conjunction with domestic non-state actors (civic society organisations), the MDC-T also frequently submitted dossiers exposing the excesses of the state, ongoing human rights abuses, organised violence and torture to the SADC, African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) (*The Zimbabwean*, 28 January 2005). Such advocacy efforts helped in keeping the regional and continental organisations abreast with the unfolding developments in Zimbabwe. In some way, this strategy likely contributed to the SADC and AU later pressuring Zimbabwe (after the June run-off election in 2008) to find a lasting solution to her economic and political crisis. Both the SADC and AU observer missions widely discredited the outcome of the June presidential re-run election.

Taken together, the contested legitimacy of Robert Mugabe at home coupled with external diplomatic pressure (from SADC, AU and EU) as well as pressure from domestic economic factors subsequently triggered events which led to the formation and consummation of the inclusive government on the 15th of September 2008.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter began by discussing the MDC party's rise and formation in late 1999, which took place in the context of a deepening economic and political crisis, including evidence of increasing state authoritarianism from the year 2000. The MDC, from its beginning, was always a loose coalition of disparate political elements with a seeming multiplicity of ideologies, which perhaps provides a partial explanation for the party splits and fissures, most notably the one in 2005. The chapter went on to discuss various elements of democratisation with reference to the constitution, elections and the legislature, and it highlighted any contributions made by the MDC (and later the MDC-T) in these processes of democratisation and the challenges the party faced in pursuing democratisation. Despite the formal existence of multi-party democracy in post-2000 Zimbabwe, it seems clear that ZANU-PF remained as the dominant party and it used its access to the reins of power to thwart any meaningful advances by the MDC and later the MDC-T. Because of this, the effectiveness of the opposition party in enhancing democratisation was limited. In this light, in the following chapter, I go on to discuss the MDC-T and democratisation during the GNU period and beyond.

CHAPTER 6: MDC-T AND DEMOCRATISATION IN THE GNU ERA AND BEYOND (2009 TO 2016)

The GPA [Global Political Agreement] is a compromise, born of bargaining, but it includes a package of reforms and by extension opportunities for engagement, including a constitutional exercise that should encapsulate many of the steps needed for a new social contract (International Crisis Group, 2011:3).

6.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the discussion of the MDC-T and processes of democratisation but now with a focus on the GNU period, and to a lesser extent, on the post-GNU period. I examine the emergence of the GNU as well as its internal functioning, and then go on to engage with the ways in which the MDC-T sought to pursue democratisation. As with the previous chapter, I distinguish between three aspects of the democratisation process, namely, constitutional reform, electoral reform and legislative activities. It is clear that, although now part of the government in the GNU, the MDC-T for a variety of reasons encountered numerous challenges in seeking democratisation. This was even more so the case after the end of the GNU and the party's status once again as a party of opposition. In my discussion, I also locate the role of internal non-state actors and external actors with specific reference to complementing the efforts of the MDC-T around democratisation between 2009 and 2016.

6.2 Negotiations and Formation of the Inclusive Government in Zimbabwe (2007-2008)

In setting the scene for an extended discussion on the role of the MDC-T in pushing for democratisation in Zimbabwe during the 2009 to 2016 period, I first offer a brief historical analysis of events which occurred during 2007 and 2008. These events played a role in triggering the events that ensued. Various domestic and international actors played disparate roles in the establishment of the power-sharing agreement in Zimbabwe in 2008. Externally, of particular importance was the involvement and intervention of regional organisations – and more specifically Southern African Development Community (SADC) – in seeking to resolve Zimbabwe's political impasse. As stated in one SADC Summit communique, SADC became involved in the Zimbabwean situation after having witnessed over time the escalating political and economic crisis (SADC Communiqué, 29 March 2007).

The involvement of SADC in the Zimbabwean crisis speaks to the role which international and regional organisations can play potentially in exerting diplomatic pressure on

a regime to undertake political and economic reforms. This facilitation of a process of democratisation in a polity is consistent with findings established in earlier global studies centring on democratisation processes (see, e.g. Carothers, 1999). As argued by Pevehouse (2002), though, these external actors may not only delegitimise an existing political regime because they might at times also defend and legitimise a regime, with the latter position forestalling regime change.

In this regard, one study participant spoke highly of both SADC and the African Union (AU), claiming that the spaces provided by the AU and SADC member countries allowed the MDC-T party to engage in several diplomatic offensives to appraise heads of states in the region and continent about the deepening Zimbabwean political and economic crisis (Interview with Elton Mangoma, former MDC-T deputy treasurer general and negotiator, 12 August 2016, Harare). In these diplomatic offensives, the MDC-T used primarily the then secretary-general (Tendai Biti), who was also the party's chief negotiator for the unity government, Elton Mangoma (deputy party treasurer-general and chief negotiator) and Morgan Tsvangirai (party president). The party also had an additional team led by Jameson Timba (the party's secretary for international relations and cooperation) involved in diplomatic engagement and regional lobbying at the SADC, AU and global levels (*Bulawayo 24 News*, 6 May 2013). This utilisation of different spaces in which discussions took place, sometimes initiated by MDC-T and sometimes based on invitations to the party (Gaventa, 2005) was important in the party's push for Zimbabwe's democratisation as it eventually led to a broader recognition and understanding of the need for democratic reform in Zimbabwe.

The Global Political Agreement (GPA), which consummated the coalition government in Zimbabwe, in fact highlights that mounting pressure by SADC and AU on Zimbabwe forced Mugabe and ZANU-PF to concede to negotiations to find a lasting political settlement to the Zimbabwean crises (Global Political Agreement, 2008:3). One of the former MDC's chief negotiators corroborates this point. In his own words:

The AU and SADC had some influence in the power-sharing agreement. However, this is not to say external actors play an ultimate role in pushing for democracy in a country. They can only facilitate – as we can see from the Zimbabwean case example. The ultimate role rests with the people (Interview with Mangoma).

This point is also confirmed by the Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (IDASA)'s 2009 position paper which cautioned the two MDC formations for placing too much faith in SADC. The paper established that SADC was increasingly showing signs of compromise as reflected in the trend by SADC leaders of buying into the ZANU-PF

propaganda which projected the MDC-T as a puppet party fronting the West (IDASA, 2009). Trust in SADC by the MDC formations in resolving the Zimbabwean crisis and in pushing for a democratic transition failed to recognise the limitations of SADC as a regional grouping, including in relation to its internal dynamics and the historical relationships between SADC heads of states. For instance, SADC was hamstrung as it could not forcefully assert itself in addressing the Zimbabwean crisis, owing to the principles of non-interference and sovereignty of domestic member states. Further, as an ex-liberation movement which became a ruling party at independence, ZANU-PF shared a similar history to other ruling parties in the region, including in Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Angola.

It terms of external influences in the inter-party negotiations, Western states through their diplomatic missions (i.e., ambassadors) also influenced the MDC-T party's positions in the negotiations which culminated in the power-sharing government (Hoekman, 2013). Apart from these external pressures, several internal domestic developments were crucial in compelling the Mugabe regime to engage in talks that led to the formation of the coalition government. Chief among these was the deepening crisis as detailed earlier, including the worsening Zimbabwean economic crisis (Interview with Mandikwaza; MDC, 2013:5). Put somewhat differently, the deteriorating economy precipitated the importance of a political solution among the three main political parties in Zimbabwe (ZANU-PF and the two formations of the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara). In this sense, there may be a correlation between economic crisis and the quest for legitimisation by incumbent regimes. Some scholars of democratisation even argue that "in times of crisis the need to establish the legitimacy of both the ruling elites and the political system itself becomes all more important" (Murphy, 1998:72).

In the case of Zimbabwe, the role of the economic crisis in precipitating the formation of the interim GNU provided a degree of legitimacy to ZANU-PF which it otherwise lacked. In this way, ZANU-PF envisaged the GNU as a kind of soft-landing for the party, giving it a space in which to first and foremost reorganise and stabilise itself in the face of the multi-faceted crises facing the nation. In addition to the above, ZANU-PF likely conceded to negotiations for a power-sharing pact out of the reputational effect, namely, because of the heavily questioned and illegitimate June 2008 presidential run-off plebiscite. This election dented Mugabe's reputation regionally and beyond to the extent that the regime was confronted with a severe electoral legitimacy crisis. This point is valid despite the fact that, in many quarters, Mugabe's reputation was already soiled owing to for instance: the *Gukurahundi* of the 1980s, fast track land reform from the year 2000, likely election fraud in the years 2000,

2002 and 2005, and *Operation Murambatsvina* ('Clear the Filth') which destroyed thousands of houses and business structures after the 2005 elections.

To succeed in striking fear amongst MDC-T supporters when it came to the 2008 presidential run-off, ZANU-PF carried out an orgy of violent activities. The war veterans, military personnel and party youth hooligans (the so-called *Green Bombers*) engaged in such activities during broad daylight as well as at night vigils (*pungwes*). These ZANU-PF stormtroopers routinely embarked on witchhunts with reference to perceived opposition activists and supporters especially those alleged to have voted for MDC-T in the March 2008 plebiscite. Data from several studies document how the para-military groups embarked on an operation codenamed *Makavhotera Papi* (Who Did you Vote for?) (Chitiyo, 2009; Masunungure, 2009). It was within this context, which further eroded the domestic, regional and global legitimacy of the ZANU-PF party-state, that SADC and AU then gave a political lifeline to the ZANU-PF regime in the form of the GNU. SADC therefore continued to perform a very crucial role in facilitating a peaceful transition after the contested June 2008 run-off election. Such diplomatic efforts compelled ZANU-PF though unenthusiastically to sign the Global Political Agreement. The comment below illustrates this point:

The Government of National Unity was a forced sharing of power with the help from SADC, where the regime was forced kicking and screaming to negotiate with the opposition for some form of inclusive governance (Interview with Nyamukachi).

There are varied interpretations as to why regional institutions like SADC intervened so stridently in seeking to end the Zimbabwean political and economic crisis. However, particular events stand out. On the 11th of March 2007, the MDC together with churches and a broad alliance of civic society organisations – under the banner of the Save Zimbabwe Campaign – organised a Prayer Rally in Highfield suburb in Harare¹². The police descended heavily on the leadership of the campaign at the rally, including beating up Lovemore Madhuku of the National Constitutional Assembly, Morgan Tsvangirai, Arthur Mutambara of the MDC-M, MDC-T party official Sekai Holland, and journalist and MDC-T member, Grace Kwinjeh. In the milieu, the police fired shots and killed one NCA activist, Gift Tandare (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2007). The pictures of Madhuku (with a fractured elbow), Tsvangirai (with a swollen face) and Mutambara received wide circulation and viewership on

¹² The researcher actively participated in the Prayer Rally representing the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (a farm worker trade union).

the internet, and this then stoked much attention not only in the local media but also in the global media. The visual images of the injured leaders stirred further interest within SADC and AU to intervene in resolving the Zimbabwean multi-layered crisis (Masunungure, 2009; Masunungure and Badza, 2010).

At its summit on the 28th and 29th of March 2007 in Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, SADC appointed Thabo Mbeki (then South African President) to mediate between the MDC-T, MDC-M and ZANU-PF as the three main parties in the country (SADC Summit Communiqué, 29 March 2007). This summit implored Mbeki and Jean Ping – then African Union chairperson – to expedite efforts in addressing the Zimbabwean political impasse by continuing inter-party negotiations, as articulated at the African Union Summit held in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt on the 30th of June and 1st of July 2008 (African Union Eleventh Ordinary Session, 2008). It can be said that the AU augmented the role of SADC through summits and troikas (for example, the SADC Troika on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation) in pushing for a political solution to the Zimbabwean crises, post the June 2008 run-off election.

After a long round of inter-party negotiations mediated by Mbeki, on the 15th of September 2008, the three parties agreed to an elite-negotiated power-sharing arrangement (hereafter Global Political Agreement or GPA). In the words of Eppel and Raftopoulos (2008:1): “The agreement was the culmination of a process that began in March 2007, itself preceded by various other attempts by African leaders, as far back as 2004, to bring an end to the Zimbabwean political crisis”. Such a claim is echoed in an extensive study focusing on the internal dynamics of the coalition government in Zimbabwe (Aeby, 2015). Under the GPA agreement, Morgan Tsvangirai was given the post of Prime Minister, vested with powers to lead a Council of Ministers and to oversee implementation of government policies (Global Political Agreement, 2008:14-15). Tsvangirai was deputised by Arthur Mutambara from the smaller MDC faction. However, Mugabe retained his position as state president, with powers to lead cabinet and to chair the National Security Council or NSC (Global Political Agreement, 2008:14). SADC and AU became the guarantors of the GPA (International Crisis Group, 2011).

However, it is important to highlight that Zimbabwean civil society played a peripheral role in the establishment of the GPA, as it was side-lined in the negotiations which birthed the inclusive government (Aeby, 2015). Talking about this issue, one MDC-T top official stated that:

The first blunder we committed [as the MDC-T party] when the negotiations for the Global Political Agreement started is that the three political parties became actors to the negotiation. In the process we isolated civil society and other stakeholders which

participated in the formation of the MDC [students, labour, NCA and churches]. This then created bad blood between us [MDC-T and its traditional civil society allies] (Interview with Komichi).

One informant also highlights that, within the party, there was only token participation of even many party leaders in the negotiations and deliberations around the GNU. In highlighting the exclusivity of the process, he commented:

Even within the Standing Committee [highest party organ] we were not able to reject decisions taken by the party negotiators [Tendai Biti and Elton Mangoma] or advise on the negotiation process. We were just told of positions already adopted (Interview with Elias Mudzuri, MDC-T Vice president, 10 January 2017, Harare).

Although the MDC-T viewed the GPA as a major step in Zimbabwe's incremental democratisation process, it also labelled the power-sharing pact as a "temporary government of convenience" (speech by former MDC-T legislator for Magwegwe constituency, Felix Magalela Sibanda, in the *Hansard*, 9 October 2012). Perhaps the opposition viewed the GNU as a 'temporary marriage' since the two MDC formations (which were for democratic reform) became subservient partners to the dominant ZANU-PF partner (which was anti-reform) in the coalition government. Tsvangirai even made the claim that ZANU-PF was an "insincere and dishonest partner" (Tsvangirai's speech at the launch of the 2013 Harmonised Election Campaign, 2013:7). At the same time, in its 2013 party election manifesto, the ZANU-PF party labelled the coalition government as "an awkward GPA government" (ZANU PF, 2013:1).

It is pertinent to note that the negotiations for the formation of the GNU were also not without hurdles. During 2008, it appeared there was broad acceptance and a warming up to the idea of the inclusive government within the MDC-T party membership and the general citizenry, in large part because of the collapsing economy and the need to put political governance back on track. Within the MDC-T leadership, at least in the initial phases of the GNU negotiations, there were though internal divisions at elite level on whether to participate in the GNU. Simmering divisions existed between party hardliners (a faction coalescing around Tendai Biti) who had serious doubts about the GNU, and a moderate faction led by Tsvangirai (Interview with party official, anonymous, 14 October 2015, Harare). In the end, secretary general and party negotiator Biti agreed to enter into the inclusive government, in which he went on to occupy the powerful post of Finance Minister. One respondent explains the internal tensions and dynamics within the MDC-T party on whether to participate in the coalition government or not, in the following words:

Some of our members and party elites were not receptive to the idea, as they feared it would have led to the co-optation and extinction of the MDC-T party by ZANU-PF. Just like what happened to Nkomo's PF-ZAPU during the 1980s. Save¹³ [that is, Tsvangirai] had to rise above everyone. He had to show his astute leadership. He knocked sense in all of us. Some argued entering into the GNU was equal to legitimising an illegitimate June 2008 run-off sham election. At last, the MDC-T party chose to enter in the GNU to save the people who were facing food shortages. Tsvangirai entered into the GNU to save the people and not to pursue individual interests (Interview with party official, anonymous, 18 October 2015, Harare).

With regard to the issue of elite divisions on whether to participate in the GNU, we can see that the 'hardliners' and 'reformists' were not only found in the MDC-T as they were also present in ZANU-PF. In a detailed empirical study on *Zimbabwe Election Scenarios*, the International Crisis Group (ICG) established that the hardliners (anti-reformist elements against the GNU) comprised of Emmerson Mnangagwa and some elements within the military who acted as a counterforce to political reforms (International Crisis Group, 2013:12). Pro-GNU elements amenable to democratic reforms were led by Joyce Mujuru, then a vice-president of Zimbabwe. These internal elite dynamics across the Zimbabwean party-system likely played a role in stalling the pace of negotiations and the full implementation of democratic and political reforms during the initial and later phases of the coalition government.

The fact that some elements within civil society and the labour movement were strongly against MDC's participation in the coalition government further complicated the inter-party negotiations for the establishment of the interim power-sharing agreement (Interview with Komichi). This also exacerbated the internal divisions and contestations within the MDC-T party on whether to participate in or boycott the GNU. In the 2007-08 period, a faction of the ZCTU (led by Wellington Chibhebhe, then ZCTU secretary-general) and Lovemore Matombo (then ZCTU president), together with the NCA, vehemently opposed and cautioned the MDC-T in participating in the inclusive government. For instance, after the announcement of the establishment of the GNU, the ZCTU Special General Council issued the following statement:

The agreement is a far cry from the ZCTU expectations as it is an outcome of a flawed process. From a labour point of view, the agreement is not acceptable. Any country must

¹³ MDC officials, members and supporters often refer to Tsvangirai by his totem.

be governed by a democratically elected government and the current arrangement means that the people would be led by an unelected government for the next five years [...]. The ZCTU views the arrangement as a temporary structure that denies Zimbabweans the right to put in place a government through a democratic process, which includes a people driven constitutional making process (ZCTU Special General Council Communique, 2008).

Clearly, NCA and ZCTU viewed the GNU as a top-down elite alliance devoid of the input of the generality of the Zimbabwean citizenry.

Such tensions need to be analysed in the broader context of the MDC-civil society-labour nexus. As discussed previously, the MDC, civil society organisations and ZCTU have a long history stemming from the opposition party's formation. However, the constitutional reform process, which began in 2009 and culminated in the new constitution in 2013, contributed to reshaping and straining the once cordial relations. The case of the ZCTU faction led by Lovemore Matombo and Wellington Chibhebhe illustrates this point (*Newsday*, 15 February 2013).

In returning to the question of external influences, SADC continued to influence and even try to spearhead specific democratic outcomes. Thabo Mbeki, as the SADC facilitator in a letter titled 'propaganda and the pursuit of hegemonic goals', in fact underscored the activities pursued by SADC in the whole negotiation process leading up to the GPA (Mbeki, 2016). One example is the pressure exerted by SADC on the three political parties to vote for Amendment Number 19 of the Zimbabwean constitution which paved the way for the establishment of the inclusive government. In addition, at the Extra-Ordinary Summit of the SADC Heads of State and Government held in Sandton, South Africa on the 9th of November in 2008, SADC mounted further pressure on the three parties involved in the negotiations to speed up the establishment of the GNU (SADC Heads of State and Government Extra-Ordinary Summit communiqué, 2008).

In emphasising the ongoing role played by SADC in seeking to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis, reference can be made to the Summit of the Organ Troika on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation held in Livingstone, Zambia on the 31st of March 2011, which made the following demands, among others:

- i. [...] an immediate end of violence, intimidation, hate speech, harassment and any other form of action that contradicts the letter and spirit of the GPA.
- ii. All stakeholders to the GPA should implement all the provisions of the GPA and create a conducive environment for peace, security and free political activity (SADC

Communique on the Summit of the Organ Troika on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, 31 March 2011).

Of course, these are merely declarations and resolutions, and to bring them into effect is a different point altogether. In outlining the limitations of SADC and AU in spearheading Zimbabwe's democratisation during the negotiation, implementation and post-GNU era, one of the MDC-T vice-presidents had this to say:

SADC and AU are just 'tea conferences'; nothing is ever resolved. Just to illustrate my point, during the GNU era – SADC Troika on Politics and Defence seconded four officials to come and work with the three political parties in Zimbabwe [MDC-T, MDC-Mutambara and ZANU-PF] under JOMIC¹⁴. But, sadly enough these officials never came and SADC did nothing about it (Interview with Mudzuri).

In the following section, I begin to discuss the inner workings of the GNU in Zimbabwe from 2009 to 2013, and to examine the contribution of the MDC-T in bringing about democratic change.

6.3 Internal Functioning of the GNU (2009 to 2013)

Although the three parties involved in the coalition government agreed to work together under the pretence of a 'sworn' peace, the inclusive government did not prove viable in its lifespan (Interview with Mangoma). This is aside from the fact that the GNU did bring about relative economic stability and some political reforms (Interview with Mudzuri; Interview with Happymore Chidziva, MDC-T, national youth chairperson, 6 January 2017, Harare). To explain the dysfunctional character of the inclusive government, the contested nature of the coalition – including ideological and party political polarisation – becomes important. As observed by one interviewee:

Political polarisation remained the order of the day during the era of the coalition government. In fact, one of the peculiarities of the GNU is that it was largely characterised by squabbles, disagreements, disengagements and re-engagements (Interview with Alfred Towo, former MDC-T employee, 23 November 2016).

The MDC-T national spokesperson echoed these views in giving the following account:

¹⁴ Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee hereafter (JOMIC), discussed later, was an inter-party organ comprising of four members from each political party involved in the GNU. JOMIC was established to monitor the implementation of the Global Political Agreement.

During the GNU, we faced several challenges. We were dealing with a deeply entrenched dictatorial system. Especially for deputy ministers from the MDC, we literally went through hell in insofar as we were dealing with actors who wished you were not there. Each day was a fight. It was a nightmare working with ZANU-PF ministers [in citing his personal experience as Deputy Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs] (Interview with Gutu).

The above interview highlights the challenges faced by the MDC formations in seeking to establish political reforms in a divided triumvirate government of national unity during the (2009-13) era. Further complicating the stalled reform process during the era of the GNU was the fact that parties involved in the coalition government had different objectives. Tendai Biti (then Finance Minister from the MDC-T party) enunciates that, in practical terms, the GNU failed to work properly due to policy contradictions and disagreements (*Hansard*, 18 July 2012). The policy divergences existed even in spite of the fact that all three GNU political parties continuously feigned commitment to the reform agenda. It became very difficult in fact to pursue democratisation in the polarised political climate as embodied in the GNU.

Equally important is that the inclusive government was marked by high levels of diminished trust, political bickering and contestation over the sequencing, objectives and impacts of the envisaged political reforms. On the one hand, the two MDC formations were concerned with moving towards the establishment of a democratic liberal state. This point is confirmed in a parliamentary contribution by one MDC-T legislator who posited that “the GPA is a rare window of opportunity for political democratisation of Zimbabwe by removing the yokes of repression that had become a culture for over 25 years” (Prosper Mutseyami, *Hansard*, 4 March 2010). Another MDC-T legislator also described his party’s commitment to reform but lamented over the lack of political will on the part of ZANU-PF. This is illuminated in the quote below:

We want to forget the past but it can never be a one sided affair. ZANU-PF, MDC – T and MDC – M willingly went into an agreement last year. We say, respect that agreement and respect your own signatures you affixed to the GNU and implement it *in toto*. Our parties are prepared to bury the hatchet and move the country forward. We are ready to assuage the wounds you inflicted on us for the sake of posterity but this has to be predicated on mutual respect of our independence of thought, action, and association and more importantly on restoration of our democratic rights (Contribution by Webber Chinyadza, MDC-T legislator, *Hansard*, 21 October 2009).

On the other hand, ZANU-PF (clearly, the dominant partner in the GNU) showed increasing signs of determination in maintaining the *status quo* (namely, its grip on the levers of state power). Commenting on this issue, one of the study's key informants said:

ZANU-PF was focused on power retention. Thus their resistance to transformative reforms. ZANU-PF focused on sovereignty of the state ... Mugabe refused reforms because he was the man in charge of the key pillars of the state, central intelligence organisation, police and the military (Interview with Komichi).

To compound the situation was SADC's behaviour as reflected by the regional bloc's concern with pacifying the political actors and in normalising the Zimbabwean crisis, rather than in democratising Zimbabwe. Because of these challenges, the MDC political opposition struggled in pushing for democratic reforms (Interview with Dorcas Sibanda, MDC-T Bulawayo central legislator and deputy chief whip, 5 October 2016, Harare). Another respondent shared a similar view and noted that:

SADC played a significant role in brokering and underwriting the Global Political Agreement which ushered in the GNU. But SADC became too fed up with Zimbabwe; for them they were more concerned in peace in Zimbabwe than anything else (Interview with Mwonzora).

Noticeably, during the initial phases of the GNU period, the two MDC formations and ZANU-PF were deadlocked on how to share and allocate power, including state ministries, provincial governors, ambassadors and permanent secretaries (Interview with Mudzuri; *The Zimbabwean*, 17 January 2009; *Zimbabwe Daily*, 22 September 2008). The *Irish Times* quoted Nelson Chamisa, then MDC-T national spokesperson, who spoke about the question of state ministries: "We have reached a deadlock over the issue of the allocation of ministries. We have referred the matter to the facilitator [referring to Mr Mbeki]" (*The Irish Times*, 16 October 2008). Such deadlocks, which often turned on the MDC-T's insistence on important positions within government and state, took place even though the MDC-T had done extremely well in both the parliamentary and presidential elections in March 2008. It seemed that MDC-T was failing to negotiate from a position of strength deriving from its electoral legitimacy. Its ongoing subordinate position within the GNU inhibited its capacity to effect substantive political reforms.

The manner in which power was allocated among the three parties in the inclusive government saw Mugabe retaining executive powers, and this bred a situation of an unequal balance of power (International Crisis Group, 2011:4). In this regard, Mugabe made sure that the process and dynamics of power allocation would restore and safeguard ZANU-PF's vital

interest (the retention of state power). It is by occupying, relatively speaking, unimportant zones of state power in the coalition government that the two MDC formations were left with little room to influence liberal democratic reforms. One respondent reiterated that:

We [the MDC – T party] we were given soft ministries, whilst ZANU controlled ‘hard’ ministries like Defence, Security, Home Affairs, Justice. We also concentrated in our service ministries and we actually performed well in most of these ministries. However, at the same time, ZANU-PF was busy consolidating [power] (Interview with Cross).

Another interviewee who also shares a similar point had this to say;

As a party [the MDC –T] we did not concentrate on politics. We exerted much effort in stabilising the economy, an area which we managed very well (Interview with Mudzuri).

The claims made by Cross are exemplified in the allocation of cabinet posts. Under the GNU arrangement, the MDC-T received the following ministries: Energy and Power Development, Finance, Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs, Information Communication Technology, Science and Technology, Water, Health and Child Welfare, Labour, Public Service and Social Welfare, State Enterprises and Parastatals, as well as co-sharing the Home Affairs Ministry with ZANU-PF. The MDC-T as well deputised the following ministries: Local Government, Urban and Rural Development, Mines and Mining Development, Justice and Legal Affairs, Media Information and Publicity, Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development and the Small and Medium Enterprises. This allocation of ministries, according to some of my respondents, meant that the MDC-T party leadership failed in negotiating for a power-sharing agreement which would cede more power to the opposition (Interview with former MDC-T provincial member for Midlands, anonymous, 23 September 2016, Harare; Interview with Mandikwaza; Interview with Mudzuri).

The MDC-T’s subservient role can in part be attributed to ZANU-PF’s adept manoeuvring – based on its nearly thirty years of experience in power politics – in retaining power despite the fact that the three parties were in principle supposed to share power equally. In effect, then, ZANU-PF was able to stall the MDC formations’ proposed reforms. In this sense, in the light of the notion of the power cube (Gaventa, 2005), ZANU-PF employed a combination of different kinds of power to block democratic reforms. The International Crisis Group clearly explains ZANU-PF’s perspective on GPA reforms in the following words:

ZANU PF’s approach to the GPA has involved agreeing in principle to reform, while frustrating implementation and aggravating conditions on the ground. It has skilfully maintained an upper hand in setting the agenda and determining what issues receive priority attention (International Crisis Group, 2011:8).

The MDC-T also expended considerable time and energy fighting for specific gains, such as the appointment of Roy Bennett as the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, and at the expense of pushing for important institutional reforms such as consolidation of the rule of law, economic reforms and addressing the scourge of rampant corruption. This was a point raised quite often by some of the study respondents:

The MDC-T spent much time insisting on the removal of Johannes Tomana [then Attorney General] as well as the removal of Gideon Gono [then Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor]. Yet, ZANU-PF was concentrating on consolidating its power and control in all the executive structures (Interview with Wilson Box, former employee in the MDC-T organising department, 2 February 2014, Harare).

This implies an all-too-often focus on personal appointments and positioning while ignoring perhaps the more important institutional structures and processes.

During the greater part of the GNU period, there were a series of divisions across the party-system pertaining to the implementation of controversial issues contained in the compromise GPA. The envisaged but contested reforms hinged on several themes including: land, foreign policy, sanctions, state institutions such as the security sector, traditional and local leadership and the judiciary (Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism, 2013; Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, 2013; Interview with Mudzuri). As the former advisor to Morgan Tsvangirai, Alex Magaisa points out:

Prior to the 2013 elections, as part of the reform agenda, we spent weeks trying to get an agreement on a Code of Conduct for the security services in regard to the election. It was drafted and discussed but there was no result, until the election came and went. The draft is probably buried somewhere. I cannot see how it will be adopted now, with the opposition no longer having the little advantage they had while in government (Alex Magaisa, *Nehanda Radio*, 17 April 2015).

Because of the complexities of the GNU, and likely due to its own internal incapacities and weaknesses, MDC-T failed to push effectively for Zimbabwe's democratic transformation, in terms of political reforms, during the era of the inclusive government. But the MDCs, and in particular MDC-T, also tended to focus on economic concerns:

The MDC-T was responsible for economic stabilisation. Short Term Economic Recovery Plans (STERP I and II) were initiatives of the MDC-T (Interview with Muswere).

In a public rally on the 11th of July 2015 held in Highfield, Harare (attended by the researcher), the MDC-T stated that it had played a key role in stabilising the economy and in initiating economic reforms. The MDC-T party leader declared:

The MDC-T managed to restore and rehabilitate the economy that had been run down by ZANU-PF when we entered into the GNU (Address made at Itai Dzamara Prayer rally at Zimbabwe Grounds, 11 July 2015¹⁵).

Another respondent reiterated this pre-occupation by the MDC-T with pushing for economic reforms, but seemingly at the expense of advancing governance reforms:

When the MDC formations were subsumed in the GNU, they concentrated on proving a point to ZANU-PF that they could stabilise the economy. They wanted to score political points. They did this at the expense of pushing for political reforms (Interview with academic, anonymous, 12 May 2015, University of Zimbabwe, Harare).

A former MDC-T employee also articulated this view:

The MDC focused more on political posts for their leaders and self-aggrandisement, as opposed to re-forming key state institutions (judiciary, the defence forces, police), as well as fighting for the improvement of the economy and social lives of Zimbabweans (Interview with Towo).

In fact, several empirical studies have concluded that the MDC-T failed in pushing for systematic institutional reforms during the GNU (LeBas, 2014b; Zamchiya, 2013; Booysen, 2014; Aebys 2015).

The seeming lack of strategic decision-making and choices on the part of the MDC-T party elites gave ZANU-PF considerable space during the 2008-2013 period to consolidate itself after taking a beating in the 2008 elections. This lack of strategic decision-making is consistent with findings in the existing democratisation literature which highlights that political actors' choices and decisions, strategic calculations and perceived interests play an important role in influencing democratic change and transition within a regime (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). In the case of Zimbabwe and with the benefit of hindsight, one respondent asserts that:

The MDC failed to negotiate and was naive. At the time the MDC negotiated, it did not appreciate the Zimbabwean statecraft. In fact, the MDC negotiated a bad deal. Also when the MDC-T entered into the GNU, it assumed that the Ministers were the most important people in the Ministries and it concentrated on the division and allocation of Ministries. However, the two MDC formations did not share the bureaucracy with ZANU-PF. At the

¹⁵ The researcher documented part of Tsvangirai's main speech during a public rally held at the Zimbabwe Grounds in Highfield, Harare on the 11th of July 2015.

end, it became apparent that running a Ministry with a hostile bureaucracy was a recipe for disaster (Interview with Mwonzora).

This is a critical point, as it also shows that power often lies behind closed doors, within the state bureaucracy in which resistance to change and inertia often prevail. Certainly, the state bureaucracy in the late 2000s was as well a partisan bureaucracy which was in many ways beholden to the ruling party (Raftopoulos, 2013:52). Consistent with the above point are claims by another informant who said the following:

The MDC-T failed completely in pushing for reforms. It focused on softer-issues [i.e humanitarian issues] and not security and intelligence issues [i.e security sector reform]. Real institutions affecting dictatorship were not affected but actually disaffected by the presence of the MDC-T in the GNU. This explains why the opposition failed to influence democratic reforms during the GNU period (Interview with Mandikwaza).

Apart from the strategic weaknesses of the MDC-T, the party faced resistance throughout the period of the GNU, from both (ruling) party and state; and the party did not simply acquiesce and give concessions, as it often sought to challenge and overcome resistance. There are many instances of ZANU-PF's resistance in implementing the proposed reforms (as explained earlier). Nelson Chamisa (an MDC-T party top official) described the challenges faced by his party in pushing for democratic reforms as follows:

When we got into the government, we budgeted for resistance, we budgeted for the refusal to accept reform because reform is always threatening to those on the other end of the spectrum – and that has been the case. So, you find that as much as you are trying to work on certain things in good spirit, it is construed to be a witch-hunt [against ZANU-PF] or to be motivated by ulterior motives, when in fact strong institutions are not just to the advantage of MDC; but also to ZANU-PF and to the rest of the country (Nelson Chamisa Interview, Open Space, 2011:117).

The ZANU-PF party's lack of co-operation, commitment and will to carry out necessary reforms, as well as its outright resistance, took place regardless of the immense political pressure exerted by the political opposition, civic society organisations, regional institutions (like SADC and AU) and the international community. Such behaviour by ZANU-PF is consistent with evidence found in the existing democracy literature. As Ake observes, "democratisation always faces a formidable opposition" (Ake, 2000:70). This observation rings true in the case of Zimbabwe. LeBas (2014b) therefore points out that the power-sharing pact "undermined rather than enhanced the prospects of democratisation in Zimbabwe". She adds: "The GPA also failed to address the biggest obstacles to democratisation in Zimbabwe: the

politicised nature of the military and police and the culture of impunity created by many years of state-sponsored violence” (LeBas, 2014b: 53).

In the same vein, it is important to stress that broad civic society organisations also played a significant role in pushing for the democratisation of Zimbabwe during the GNU era. One notable example is the way in which these organisations (including Zimbabwe Human Rights Lawyers, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, ZimRights and others) came together under the banner of Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism (CISOMM). This overarching network was aimed at reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the agreed-upon reforms contained within the Global Political Agreement (GPA) against the set timelines and benchmarks (CISOMM, 2011). But the relationship between the MDC-T and civil society became subject to further strains during the GNU, owing to what the latter saw as the underperformance of the former. The lengthy quote below by one student leader exemplifies this clash:

We bestowed a legal mandate on Tsvangirai on March 29, 2008. While we were in the trenches together with the MDC during the past decade, the students were never considered junior partners. We are concerned by the relegation of the higher and tertiary education sector by the new government [...]. We are saddened by the retention of the ‘deadest’ wood in the form of ministers who failed to perform or make a difference to the sector during the last government. [...]. It seems that the MDC is forgetful of the selfless role students played in its success. Some of our brothers and sisters paid the supreme sacrifice for this new dispensation (*Zimbabwe Standard letter*, 21 March 2009).

At a time when many civil society groups expected the MDC-T to push vigorously for GNU-related political and democratic reforms, the party itself became entangled in corruption scandals. Examples include urban municipalities in Bindura, Harare and Chitungwiza. Such a trend occurred despite party-centric claims by the MDC about its zero-tolerance to corruption. In the case of Chitungwiza, the corruption scandals included the illegal allocation of residential stands, illegal sale of commercial stands and vacant residential open spaces (in-fill stands), and the conversion of land reserved for community projects (such as recreational facilities and churches) (Mukonza, 2013; Clemence Manyukwe, *The Financial Gazette*, 19 February 2010). Other cases of corruption scandals implicating MDC-T council officials involved issues of ‘tenderpreneurship’ (the process of offering tenders to companies closely linked to MDC-T council officials) (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 12 February 2010).

In terms of the role of the MDC-T in promoting good governance at local government level, the MDC-T party’s shadow secretary for Local Governance and also member of

parliament for Bulawayo South, stressed that his party managed to deal heavily with malcontents fingered in corruption scandals by firing them in line with the party's strong anti-corruption stance (Interview with Cross; also interview with Mudzuri; *The Zimbabwean*, 25 August 2012). Tsvangirai reinforced this point in the following words: "This party does not tolerate corruption and that is why in Chitungwiza, we fired an entire council for corruption" (Morgan Tsvangirai, Christmas Message, 14 December 2016).

The party in 2010 managed to fire Emmanuel Chiroto (former Chitungwiza mayor) and others for corruption activities, but the party's involvement in corruption scandals went against the party's ongoing and strident claim of being an advocate of good accountable corporate governance (MDC, 2013:188). Such corruption scandals within the MDC-T urban-run councils and municipalities indeed brings to the fore questions around the party's commitment to issues of good governance and accountability (principles on which the party was initially founded, and which it relentlessly preaches and advocates for). In this regard, it was not only councillors who were involved and implicated in corruption scandals. MDC-T parliamentarians for example were implicated in the abuse of the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) meant to develop their constituencies (Bertelsmann Foundation, 2014:12).

Though the MDC-T claims it played a role in stamping out corruption at party level and even speaking out against it at national level (see parliamentary contribution by an MDC-T legislator, Webber Chinyadza, *Hansard*, 9 February 2010), the party did not do much in this regard during the time it was involved in the inclusive government (2009-13). This is so since rampant corruption raged on in public-owned parastatals in what came to be referred to as the "salarygate scandals" (Raftopoulos, 2014:92) during and despite the existence of the MDC formations in the inclusive government. Such scandals involved the obscene salaries paid: to Cuthbert Dube, then, head of the Public Service Medical Aid Society (PSMAS) who was 'paid' US\$50,000 per month, with Tendai Mahachi at Harare City Council netting US\$37,000; Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's boss Happsyon Muchechetere was 'earning' US\$40,000 whereas one consultant attached to the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), named Magara, netted US\$44,000 (Munyaradzi Gwisai, *Nehanda Radio*, 14 March 2014; Raftopoulos, 2014). This corruption trend occurred even though the minister responsible for public parastatals (Minister of State Enterprises and Parastatals) was one of the MDC-T's members (Gorden Moyo). The same applied for ZESA where the minister responsible was Elton Mangoma from the very same opposition MDC-T party. In practice, these ministers should have pushed vigorously for enhanced sound corporate governance and management (transparency and accountability) in these parastatals.

A further problem in the GNU for MDC-T was the fact that the two MDC formations contended with competing factional interests within their respective parties during the greater part of the inclusive government. For instance, Mutambara as head of the smaller MDC formation (MDC-M) devoted significant time in-fighting with Welshman Ncube over the leadership of the party (Richard Muponde, *Newsday*, 26 March 2013; *Radio VOP*, 1 February 2012). The latter claimed that he was the legitimate leader of the smaller MDC party and as such was supposed to be recognised as the principal to the GNU agreement, and not Mutambara¹⁶. Further, though the SADC recognised Ncube as the principal, other principals to the GPA, namely Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai, refused to recognise Ncube as the new principal (*The Zimbabwean*, 6 March 2013).

This played into problems of intense polarisation between the two MDC formations. Thus, Ncube relentlessly attacked Tsvangirai for supposedly colluding with Mugabe in blocking his recognition as a principal. In the end, intense polarisation between the two MDC parties existed during the GNU era and, as Cheeseman observes, “the deep divisions between the two camps undermined the prospects for reform” (Cheeseman, 2011:350). This view is also validated by Raftopoulos (2013:52-53). However, despite such animosity, the two MDCs in a rare feat of legislative unity and co-operation re-elected Lovemore Moyo as speaker of parliament in 2011 (International Crisis Group, 2011:5; *The Zimbabwean*, 8 April 2011).

Having discussed the inner workings of the inclusive government as well as some the internal failings of the MDC-T, in the following section I move on to investigate the role of the MDC-T in pushing for specifically constitutional reforms within the inclusive government.

6.4 MDC’s Struggle for a New Constitution During the GNU (2009 to 2013)

During the 2000-2008 period, the MDC and NCA were heavily involved in the process of trying to come up with a new constitution. With the consummation of the Global Political Agreement, the MDC-T saw it fit to seize the opportunity to press for a participatory people-driven constitution review process (Interview with Gutu). This was because the GNU provided spaces, not available otherwise, within which the party could press for its decade-long demand for a wholly new constitution as opposed to piecemeal constitutional amendments as enacted by ZANU-PF over a number of years (*The Zimbabwean*, 25 September 2007). Such spaces included the negotiators’ forum (comprising of the Management Committee – composed of the

¹⁶ As a result of this infighting, some referred to the party name as MDC-Ncube rather than MDC-Mutambara.

six negotiators from the three political parties), the meetings of the principals (comprising of Mugabe, Tsvangirai and Mutambara) and the SADC platforms. The urban-led civil society organisations such as the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC) also simultaneously took an active part in vigorously mobilising Zimbabwean citizens to participate in the impending constitutional reform processes. Tied to its lobbying and advocacy campaigns, the CiZC held routine civil society planning meetings with civic actors. Hence, combined, Zimbabwean civil society organisations and the political opposition (the MDC-T party) collectively pushed for the democratic transition in Zimbabwe through a new constitution.

In 2010, the MDC formations managed to exert immense pressure on ZANU-PF to concede to the constitutional reform process as provided for under Article VI in the GPA (Global Political Agreement, 2008). Following this, the three partners in the GNU formed a multi-party team consisting of twenty-five parliamentarians under the banner of the Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC). This diverse multi-party body was mandated with spearheading the authoring of the new constitution. The composition of COPAC included three co-chairs (Douglas Mwonzora from MDC-T, Paul Mangwana from ZANU-PF and Edward Mkhosi from the smaller MDC faction, MDC-Mutambara).

Important to note is that foreign actors including EU member states were involved in funding the constitutional reform process by channelling financial assistance to COPAC through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) donor basket fund (UNDP website, 2013¹⁷). Aside from financial assistance, the UNDP also provided technical expertise and assistance during the entire course of the constitution-making process (UNDP website, 2013). This involvement of foreign state actors in seeking to promote democratic transition in Zimbabwe reignites long-standing debates entered into by scholars about whether foreign aid is effective in promoting democratic transition and consolidation (Knack, 2004). In part because of this assistance, Zimbabwe managed to complete the writing of a new constitution, which was subsequently voted on in a national referendum in March 2013. The referendum succeeded despite the initial tensions between the three main parties and the fact that the MDC

¹⁷ For a detailed analysis on the role of the UNDP in funding the constitution making process in Zimbabwe during the era of the Inclusive government see UNDP website (2013) UNDP website (2013). <http://www.undp.org/content/brussels/en/home/presscenter/articles/2013/01/25/in-zimbabwe-undp-eu-support-development-of-new-constitution.html> Accessed 16 November 2016.

formations faced intense resistance from ZANU-PF, which seemed to be opposed to the entire constitutional reform exercise.

At the top of the COPAC organ was the Management Committee comprising of negotiators from the three political formations. These negotiators were involved in negotiation processes on, in particular, contentious issues to be included in the new constitution. Three lawyers though (seen as neutral actors) did the actual technical drafting of the constitution: Justice Moses Chinhengo, Mrs Priscilla Madzonga and Mr Brian Crozier. They did this of course on instructions from the three political parties represented in the GNU. Some respondents contend that it was mainly because of the contestations and give-and-take bargaining on the provisions to be included in the new constitution that the MDC formations finally conceded to certain clauses which were unfavourable to Zimbabwe's democratic development (Interview with Mandeya). One of the COPAC co-chairs described the negotiations for the new constitution as follows:

The process of crafting and coming up with the constitution involved several intense and at times frustrating inter-party negotiations between the parties in the GNU (Interview with Mwonzora).

As such:

The final constitution was a negotiated compromise document among the three main political parties involved in the coalition government (Interview with Gonese).

Thus, one consistent theme discerned from the interviews pertains to the conflict-ridden nature of the constitution review process. Despite the active involvement and participation of citizens in the constitution review process during the period of the inclusive government, the political parties involved in the COPAC led process pulled in different directions and with different ends in mind (Interview with academic, anonymous, 15 November 2016, Harare). To underscore this point, and as one example, Mutambara – who had severed ties with Ncube over control of the presidency of the smaller MDC faction – pushed strongly for the devolution of power (Interview with party official from MDC-Mutambara which later became led by Ncube, anonymous, 23 April 2015; see also *Newsday*, 9 January 2013). ZANU-PF though resisted reforms to devolve power as well as with regard to land, including rejecting the establishment of a Land Audit and the whittling of executive powers (Interview with Kadenge; Interview with Mudzuri). For its part, the MDC-T pushed for reforms to executive power (including limiting this power), security sector reform and wide-ranging electoral reforms (Interview with Sibanda).

The noticeable opposition from ZANU-PF was evident in the rowdy behaviour of war veterans who disrupted the First All Stakeholders COPAC Conference held at Rainbow Towers Hotel on the 13th and 14th of July 2009 (Peta Thornycroft, *The Zimbabwe Situation*, 15 July 2009). Arguably, this behaviour illustrates ZANU-PF's determination in undermining MDC reform initiatives through the use of various spaces and diverse forms of power (again, to borrow insights from Gaventa's (2005) power cube matrix). In light of this and other challenges, Morgan Tsvangirai contends that "it was the MDC that fought hard and drove the constitution making process" (Tsvangirai's foreword in the MDC Election Manifesto, 2013:1). This claim by Tsvangirai is plausible given his party's involvement in fighting for, and in contributing to, the new constitution during the entire period of the GNU (and even prior).

During the period of the negotiations around, and writing of, the new constitution, ZANU-PF kept on coming up with new and endless demands. One such example was the production of a 29-page document with a set of new demands (Njabulo Ncube, *Financial Gazette*, 8 June 2012; *The Standard*, 23 September 2012). As reiterated by one respondent:

The demands by ZANU-PF were a clear sign they [ZANU-PF] wanted to scuttle MDC formations' efforts to realise a new constitution for the Zimbabwean people (Interview with Mwonzora).

From my perspective, it still remains unclear on whether such new demands were part of ZANU-PF efforts to derail and sabotage the constitution review process entirely (as alluded to above). Viewed differently, these endless demands by ZANU-PF might have been its bargaining tactic to force the two MDC formations to concede to several constitutional demands favourable to ZANU-PF's interests.

Issues to do with the land question, sanctions, security sector reform (SSR), media reforms and electoral reform remained on the front burner of contested and divisive issues throughout the entire period of the constitution reform process (2009 to 2013). This contestation around the constitution, and lack of cross-party consensus on it, was part of broader conflicts within the GNU; and this highlights the deeply polarised context within which MDC-T was seeking to bring about democratisation. Further points demonstrate this, with regard to the COPAC-driven process. For example, during the COPAC nation-wide consultation phase, I noted how each political party mobilised and coached its supporters on the preferred party positions and indicated talking points to be raised during the constitution outreach meetings. This led to overtly partisan contributions during the constitution reform exercise.

In addition, ZANU-PF resorted to state power to intimidate MDC members. This was done for example through an operation called *Operation Chimumumu*, ‘Be silent and do not talk’. In doing so, ZANU-PF wanted to prevent MDC members and supporters in freely airing or contributing their views on the needed reforms to be included in the new constitution (*The Zimbabwean*, 8 June 2010). These manoeuvres by ZANU-PF speak to the difficulties in reforming what are in effect semi-authoritarian regimes, like Zimbabwe under ZANU-PF rule, in which, deliberately, there is “rhetorical acceptance of liberal democracy” and “essentially illiberal or even authoritarian traits” (Olcott and Ottaway, 1999:3). Though ZANU-PF allowed for the opening up of some civic and political space (as it has always done in the past), it went on to deploy intimidation tactics to restrict and even foreclose the democratic participation of citizens in the constitution review process.

Pertinent to note is that despite the (at least) initial resistance by ZANU-PF to the COPAC-driven constitution, the new constitution finally – as indicated – got a nod in the nation-wide referendum held in March 2013. But, even then, there were disagreements within the political opposition, which pitted the MDC-T formation against the NCA and ZCTU. The NCA and a faction of the ZCTU (led by Lovemore Matombo, Wellington Chibhebhe and Raymond Majongwe) heavily objected to the entire COPAC-led process. As well, a faction of the Zimbabwe National Student’s Union (ZINASU) led by Clever Bere advocated for a No Vote campaign (Interview with former student leader, anonymous, 12 September 2016, Harare).

To this end, the proponents of the No Vote campaign, for instance the NCA, encouraged Zimbabweans to reject the COPAC-authored constitution in the impending referendum through its ‘*TAKE CHARGE*’ campaign. In opposing the COPAC constitution review process, the NCA made claims to the effect that the proposed draft constitution was flawed in terms of content and process. As the NCA spokesperson said in October 2013, the NCA strongly asserted that the constitution building process had ceased from being people driven to being parliament (and therefore elite) driven (Interview with Chivasa). In addition, the NCA lambasted the MDC for having ‘sold out’ on the popular struggle for a new constitution in Zimbabwe, which had started back in 1997 with the formation of the NCA. In terms of actual content, the NCA raised concerns on several specific issues contained in the new draft constitution, such as:

Excessive and unlimited powers of the president (section 110[1]); Presidential powers to appoint all Ministers and deputy minister without the approval of Parliament (section 104). Powers to declare state of emergency (section 113); power to pardon political allies (section 112). Presidential powers to appoint five Ministers outside parliament

(appointed non-constituency MPs) (section 104.3). Bloated parliament increased to 350 MPs (section 120 and 124), lack of term limits for MPs, absence of diaspora vote and lack of devolution of power among a litany of other concerns (National Constitutional Assembly Leaflet: Vote No in the Referendum, 2013).

The evidence above shows the differentiated ways of involvement of the NCA and the MDC-T in pushing for the realisation of a new constitutional dispensation in Zimbabwe through articulating alternative and competing narratives and viewpoints about the proposed constitution. With this evidence, we can clearly see the points of divergence between the two (MDC-T and NCA). The former viewed the process of coming up with a new constitution through the GNU as an opportune space to push for incremental gains in Zimbabwe's democratisation process, whereas the latter envisaged the process as flawed fundamentally. The conflict and antagonism between the two signalled a turning point in the MDC-NCA relations as shown in how the NCA went on to withdraw its membership to the MDC and any alliance with it. Arguably, this also explains why the NCA transformed into a political party in September 2013.

In an interview, one civil society actor alluded to the fact that:

The MDC-T contributed immensely towards realisation of a new constitution by exposing key shortfalls in the ruling party's weak state institutions (Interview with David Takawira, civil society actor from Norwegian People's Aid, 3 July 2015, Harare).

MDC-T Bulawayo East legislator Eddie Cross also lauded the contribution of the MDC in championing the constitutional reform process in Zimbabwe during the 2008-2013 period. He stated that "the greatest success of the MDC-T in democratising Zimbabwe has been the realisation of the new constitution" (Presentation made at the MDC-T Without Reforms, No Elections document launch, 10 September 2015, Harare¹⁸). In fact, most respondents interviewed claimed that the constitution review process was a milestone achievement particularly in terms of a gradualist trend in Zimbabwe's democratisation. As the MDC-T party's national youth chair alluded to the researcher:

As a party [MDC-T] we played a pivotal role in coming up with the new constitution. Believe me, this new constitution contains all the different reforms we need. We have a good constitution – what is only missing is the implementation. Its only that we could not

¹⁸ This researcher attended the MDC-T Without Reforms No Elections document launch at the Anglican Cathedral in Harare on the 10th of September 2015. The quotation was compiled from my fieldwork notes.

stay in power for so long, we could have implemented it [the new constitution] (Interview with Chidziva).

The success of this constitution process was credited largely to the efforts of the MDC-T party. This is in spite of the fact the civil society organisations also played a crucial role in this regard. One respondent from the MDC-T party made the following remarks:

Above all, the MDC-T party lobbied and participated in the writing of the new constitution. The new constitution is arguably one of the most democratic constitutions in Africa despite its flagrant violation by the ruling party (Interview with Moyo).

In the light of these party-centric claims, it needs to be emphasised that a solid and progressive constitution, though a necessary element in consolidating democracy, does not in-itself lead to a polity becoming democratic. A formal constitution (as a paper document) needs to be underpinned by vibrant democracy-supporting institutions, political will and a culture of constitutionalism.

In this respect, after the constitution came into force on the 22nd of May 2013, the ZANU-PF party-state remained overly reluctant to implement the new charter. This was evident in its continued use of certain pieces of legislation which were *ultra vires* vis-à-vis the new constitution. An example of this is the continued reference and use of the previous clauses contained in the Local Councils Urban Act by the ZANU-PF minister of Local Governance and Urban Development, Saviour Kasukuwere. These clauses are in contradiction with the new provisions contained in the 2013 constitution. ZANU-PF in specific ways continued to undermine the constitution through blocking the realignment or the harmonisation of various existing laws in order to be in line with the new charter. Governments in Africa and elsewhere often deploy such overt and covert strategies to control the pace and momentum of reform. This is a clear expression of the role and power of the incumbent in blocking democratisation. As Ake put it:

The basic paradox of democratisation is that those who have power tangentially have no interest or inclination to democratise, for democratisation entails the redistribution of power against those who are in power and who are privileged [...] so it is entirely natural that, with minor exceptions, those who hold power in Africa are fighting democratisation so determinedly (Ake, 2000:70).

This was particularly troubling for MDC-T as some of its advocates were of the view that the new constitution was an almost perfect document as it progressively extended the frontiers of liberal democracy. They anchored their claims on the fact that the new charter

provided for a comprehensive Bill of Rights, including justiciable socio-economic rights. As one interviewee said:

MDC managed a number of reforms during the GNU. A major breakthrough was the constitution with its comprehensive Bill of Rights, which cannot be amended unless through a Referendum. Also we see through the same constitution the acceding to devolution of power and control of state institutions by the state and not by parties. All the reforms that the opposition is demanding today are contained in the new constitution. The only major challenge is the resistance of the governing party to implement the desired reforms (Interview with Nyamukachi).

In line with this point, one of the MDC-T vice presidents made the following remarks:

We have an excellent Bill of Rights in the new constitution. What is only lacking [as of now] is aligning the new laws contained in the new constitution to ensure that all rights are observed (Interview with Mudzuri).

In a related point, another interviewee stated that:

MDC effectively fought for a new constitution which on paper provides a strong Bill of Rights, key institutions of the state and an independent judiciary and a limited term of office (Interview with Mwonzora).

However, in campaigning in the referendum for acceptance of the constitution, the MDC-T party still had certain misgivings about some of its provisions. In an interview, the current party spokesperson declared:

The new constitution is not the best document we have. As you are aware, the constitution is a document that came out of immense bargaining and elite compromises. The process of coming up with the constitution was a give and take. Certainly, I am not comfortable with some clauses at a personal level. However, it is a better version, far much better than the Lancaster House constitution (Interview with Gutu).

Although the MDC-T would want to claim that it is almost single-handedly responsible for ensuring the coming into existence of the new (albeit flawed) constitution, it is vital to recognise SADC's efforts in the realisation of the new constitution. On numerous occasions, SADC implored the three parties in the coalition government to finalise the constitution review process on time. One such illustrative example is the summit of the SADC Heads of State and Government held in Luanda in Angola in June 2012, where they urged the three parties involved in the GNU to bring to finality the constitution reform process. The holding of the March 2013 referendum that culminated in the 'yes vote' for the new constitution was also in part due to the initiatives, efforts and engagement of SADC with the three principals in the

GNU (Mugabe, Mutambara and Tsvangirai) (SADC Communiqué, Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, 1 June 2012).

6.5 MDC's Struggle for Electoral Reforms during the GNU (2009 to 2013)

The previous section explored the role of the MDC-T in pushing for a new constitution during the GNU as well as the constraints and challenges they faced in doing so. In this section, I consider the role of the MDC in fighting for the realisation of electoral reforms in Zimbabwe during the same period.

After having won the March 2008 elections, which were relatively free and fair, the MDC-T refused to participate in the highly militarised and violent June 28 presidential run-off elections. Concerning the March 2008 election, one respondent enunciated that MDC-T succeeded mainly because of the electoral reforms initiated by and contained in SADC principles and guidelines governing democratic elections, as adopted by the SADC heads of states in Mauritius in August 2004 (Interview with Chirenje). In Zimbabwe, the SADC electoral guidelines were incorporated into the electoral laws to the extent that in the 2008 election:

Voting was done on a single day. Election results were displayed outside the polling stations. Translucent ballot boxes were introduced and this was necessitated by SADC reforms because of MDC demands (Interview with academic, anonymous, University of Zimbabwe, 15 July 2015, Harare).

This speaks to the role played by the MDC-T in pressuring the ZANU-PF led government – prior to 2008 – to domesticate international treaties and obligations that govern the conduct, organisation and management of democratic elections (i.e., the 2004 SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections).

Furthermore, the MDC-T party (within the GNU) continued to push for further electoral reforms to ensure the integrity of the Zimbabwean elections, and it used various spaces such as litigation. For instance, following the March 2008 harmonised elections, the MDC-T party “filed election petitions with the Electoral Court challenging the election results for 60 House of Assembly seats won by ZANU–PF” (*The Zimbabwean*, 30 April 2008). In addition to these election petitions, the party took the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to the High Court demanding the release of the Voters Roll. Although Morgan Tsvangirai (as a principal in the coalition government) agreed with Mugabe in appointing Justice Rita Makarau as the chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (the election management body), this

appointment failed to enhance the competence, integrity, neutrality and autonomy of ZEC. It is because of this that one respondent stated that:

The MDC has not fully influenced the electoral body. Up to now, ZEC is still not independent. ZANU-PF and the central intelligence organisation [CIO] largely influences ZEC's conduct. The MDC-T was naïve thinking that bringing a professional like Makarau will transform ZEC (Interview with academic, anonymous, 21 July 2015, Harare).

Likewise, the MDC-T vice-president noted that the ZEC chair, Makarau, was somehow compromised (Interview with Mudzuri).

Patrick Chinamasa (current Minister of Finance), who also served as ZANU-PF chief negotiator, reiterates that ZANU-PF and MDC-T jointly agreed on the appointment of Makarau to head ZEC. He says as well that “we also agreed on the composition of ZEC itself” (*The Sunday Mail*, 4 September 2016). As with previous election periods, ZANU-PF through its control of the ZEC and the Registrar General's office refused to release the Voters Roll for inspection by the opposition parties even in the midst of immense pressure from the MDC-T formation (Elias Mambo, *Newsday* 29 July 2013). But, because of the various initiatives from the opposition, the Electoral Amendment Act of 2012 came about and was enacted; and it contained a raft of electoral reforms (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012; Bertelsmann Foundation, 2014:8).

Some of the reforms contained in the 2012 Electoral Amendment Act included provisions on the appointment of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission commissioners by the president in consultation with the parliamentary committee – Standing Rules and Orders Committee (SROC) – and the judicial service commission. Other notable provisions included the clear spelling out of the functions of ZEC, and included clauses on the conduct and administration of special voting, permission of inspection of voters roll by interested stakeholders, delimitation of wards and constituencies, regulation of politically motivated violence and regulation of voter education (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). These however still required implementation.

Though the MDC-T exerted significant pressure for electoral reforms (by utilising for instance parliamentary spaces, SADC regional and AU continental summits, diplomatic offensives and the inter-party negotiators' forum), such efforts were often in vain. ZANU-PF determinedly went ahead in calling for elections prior to the satisfaction of MDC-T about the election reforms being put in place, and it was to be held on the 31st of July 2013. Towards the

2013 election, the MDC-T made the following demands as articulated by Nelson Chamisa, a top party official:

We have put two conditions for a free and fair election to (Zimbabwe Electoral Commission) ZEC and ZANU PF, to SADC, and to the people of Zimbabwe. These issues actually coincide with the expectations of the people – biometric voter registration, reforms of ZEC. We also have to deal with the issue of monitoring and supervision by locals, voter education and civic education by locals, supervision by foreigners six months before and six months after elections. Equal access to the media, freedom to hold rallies and campaign, cessation of violence, demilitarisation of the villages and disbanding the infrastructure of the militia (Chamisa Interview, *OpenSpace*, 2011:121).

During this time, CSOs such as the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC) played a critical role in sensitising the public in exercising their citizenship rights (namely, the right to vote). CiZC also engaged in civic and political advocacy campaigns clamouring for the holding of free and fair election under a campaign dubbed the ‘*Feya-Feya* campaign’ (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, 2013).

As the 31st of July 2013 elections approached, the MDC-T showed significant inconsistency on whether it planned to boycott or participate in the elections. In arguing for participation in the election, the party claimed it wanted to safeguard zones of autonomy and influence (such as in parliament). On the downside, it was worried about the lack of any further electoral reforms and how this might give ZANU-PF unfair advantages on an un-level playing field.

But the two MDC formations in fact lacked consistency in their demands for electoral reforms, and this was reflected in their ambivalence around the need for reforms. As one respondent said:

As a party we reneged on electoral reforms. Some within our ranks argued that our support [was massive] as reflected in the numbers that turned out at the 29 July Crossover rally at Sheraton grounds. Party officials argued that such numbers would overwhelm ZANU PF’s rigging machinery. We then entered the 2013 elections with no electoral reforms (MDC T party official, anonymous, 14 September 2016, Harare).

In other words, there was over-exuberance and overconfidence within the MDC-T about winning the next elections (in 2013) such that the necessity for electoral reforms was minimised, as was seemingly any consolidation of grassroots mobilisation and support.

Over the course of the GNU, ZANU-PF proved that it could not and would not allow for meaningful reforms, as this would have posed challenges to the regime’s survival. In its

2013 publication, the International Crisis Group fully explains ZANU-PF's rigidity to reforms in the following words:

There were some election-related changes in late 2012, but other reforms continue to be blocked, including those intended to address political violence, intimidation and repression; security and law and order deficits; broadcast media restrictions; and hostilities and tension among and between political parties (International Crisis Group, 2013:3).

In the end, Zimbabwe went into the 2013 elections with only minor electoral reforms. Talking about this issue, the MDC-T party spokesperson asserted that:

ZANU-PF was stubborn as it made sure electoral reforms were not implemented. Because they knew once they give in to electoral reforms they knew what it meant. Hence their reluctance. It appears already by the time we entered into the coalition government, ZANU-PF already had a game plan to win the 2013 elections. They were thinking five years ahead of us. In that regard they outsmarted us. We as the MDC were so engrossed in uplifting the economy, yet ZANU-PF was concerned with winning the upcoming 2013 elections (Interview with Gutu).

Thus, strategically, ZANU-PF outplayed the MDC-T. Consequently, ZANU-PF won the 2013 elections and these were pronounced as free by the SADC election observer mission – though it shunned from pronouncing them as 'fair'. Several non-state actors, for example regional CSOs also commented on the 2013 election and were more critical of the fairness of the elections. This was clear from a statement from a regional southern Africa civil society workshop about the Zimbabwe 2013 harmonised elections held in Gaborone (Botswana) in August 2013 (Mike Campbell Foundation, 2013). Such advocacy campaigns, though necessary, did not change SADC's positive perception on the Zimbabwean 2013 elections.

6.6 MDC, the Legislative and Democratic Reforms (2008 to 2013)

In this section, I give an account of the role of the MDC in fighting for democratic reforms through legislative spaces under the GNU. In the GNU period, the MDC proposed several far-reaching democratic reforms in relation to the media, elections, security sector, judiciary, traditional and local governance, and state-owned enterprises. At this time, the two MDC formations combined enjoyed a parliamentary majority in both the Upper (senate) and Lower (parliament) Houses.

Some respondents felt that MDC-T legislators had performed admirably, as they were:

Instrumental in changes to the fundamental law – in the grundnorm¹⁹ [main law] through constitutional Amendment number 19 and 20. Amendment 19 was to bring into existence the GNU and the creation of the office of the Prime Minister and so forth. Whereas amendment number 20 was for the new constitution (Interview with Mwonzora).

Thus, MDC-T did manage to score several successes using the spaces provided by parliament. As the former co-Minister of National Healing and Reconciliation in the GNU emphasised:

The MDC-T's participation in the coalition government and the pressure from the opposition legislators enabled the production of the infrastructure of peace; mainly through the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms, initiatives and organs such as the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) and the Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) (Interview with Holland²⁰).

But facilitating the creation of democracy-supporting institutions is a far cry from ensuring the effective operation of such institutions, which was deeply problematic and troublesome in the case of the JOMIC and ONHRI during the time of the inclusive government.

Within the polarised Zimbabwean context, the United States Agency for International Development Government (USAID) recognised some significant changes taking place in parliament and it claimed a role in assisting:

Reform-minded elements of the government in carrying out institutional reforms critical for moving the country towards democracy. For example, the Parliamentary committees are now regularly holding public hearings on key pieces of legislation including those addressing human rights and electoral processes (Cromer, 2010:3).

Indeed, MDC legislators were heavily involved in parliamentary business as exemplified in their active participation in Parliamentary Portfolio Committees, and the role of MDC-T legislators in such committees became particularly evident during the era of the coalition government (2009-2013). Some of the committees that were chaired by the MDC-T MPs include the Public Accounts Parliamentary Committee led by Webber Chinyadza, Portfolio Committee on Defence and Home Affairs chaired by Paul Madzore, Justice Legal,

¹⁹ Grundnorm refers to “ground rule from which flows the validity of other statements of law in the system”, see Swarap (n.d) available at: <http://manupatra.com/roundup/330/Articles/Article%201.pdf> accessed 15 January 2017. The concept is derived from Austrian Jurist and legal philosopher Hans Kelsen (1881-1973).

²⁰ The interview was conducted when she was still an MDC-T official and before she defected to the People's Democratic Party (PDP); however, she has also since left the PDP.

Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs chaired by Douglas Mwonzora, and Local Governance Rural and Urban Development led by Lynett Karenzi-Kore, among others.

Some respondents noted that certain parliamentary committees managed to play an oversight role in relation to the executive arm of the state (Interview with Mudzuri; Interview with Gwiyo). One example is exemplified in the work of the portfolio committee on Mines and Energy led by the fearless and (now late) Chindori Chininga which produced a damning report on the looting and underhand dealings which occurred in the Chiadzwa diamond mining area during the 2010-2013 period²¹. This committee also comprised of a number of influential MDC-T legislators, namely, Ian Kay, Moses Mare, Edmore Marima, Fani Munengami, Pearson Mungofa, Heya Shoko, Naison Nemadziva, Tofamangwana Kagurabadza and Shuwah Mudiwa²².

One former MDC-T legislator who also served in the Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare during the 7th parliament (parliament of GNU) recalled how, in seeking to expose bad corporate governance, a Certificate of Immunity was issued to members of the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Workers Union who appeared before the portfolio committee (Interview with Gwiyo). These people testified on how the Willowvale Madza Motor industry had bought fully assembled and defective motor vehicles from Thailand (*Herald*, 16 May 2014). In a further bid to expose corruption at the Chitungwiza municipality, the Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare issued a Certificate of Privilege to three whistle-blowers – Ephraim Katsina, Tamson Bamusi, Ngonidzashe Marau – who had exposed the corruption at Chitungwiza municipality and had been sacked from work (Interview with Gwiyo²³; *Herald*, 16 May 2014).

Significant criticisms have been made though of MDC-T in terms of pushing for democratic reforms through the legislative, in that it failed to make full use of particularly its parliamentary dominance. Commenting on this point, one MDC-T respondent argued that:

The MDC-T legislators did a poor job concerning pushing for various reforms during the GNU era. This is the time they could have pushed for a number of reforms. For example, the electoral reforms could have been solved that time because they could have

²¹ Chindori Chininga who was a ZANU-PF MP for Guruve South and who headed the Portfolio Committee on Mines and Energy during the 7th Parliament (parliament of GNU) died in a mysterious car accident on the 19th of June 2013 with some attributing his death to the publication of this damning report.

²² The Report by the Committee is available here: <http://nehandaradio.com/2013/06/25/diamond-mining-in-zimbabwe-the-chininga-report/> accessed 19 December 2016.

²³ Gwiyo served as a member of the Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare committee during the parliament of the GNU.

leveraged their numbers in parliament. They also pushed for security sector reform; again another total failure. Frankly, speaking on reforms, they did a very poor job in parliament. They were supposed to have used that platform to push for serious reforms. They were supposed to push for reforms inside parliament and not from the outside (Interview with Mandeya).

As well, at times, legislators from the two MDC formations seemed to be half-hearted in pushing for democratic reforms in parliament, notably with regard to security sector reform. In this context, as one interviewee alluded to:

Even during the period when the MDC-T was involved in the coalition government, most state institutions remained militarised leading to continued impunity for human rights abusers and a partisan military and police force (Interview with Towo).

Although it is fair to criticise the MDC-T legislators for failures in this respect, the legislature was highly polarised during the GNU period. This limited the MDC's capacity and chances in influencing and bringing about democratic reforms as several policy and legislative proposals were not viewed on the basis of their contents and rationality but on party-lines (Interview with Komichi). Put somewhat differently, every policy proposal and motion was viewed in binary terms by the two major parties, ZANU-PF and MDC-T. The presence of the MDC-Mutambara could not break this stark fracture which punctuated the legislature.

Also, though parliamentary procedures gave a veneer of democracy in practice, the ZANU-PF party used some undemocratic tactics to intimidate the opposition legislators during – and after the lapse of – the GNU. Classic examples are the constant 'death threats' made against opposition legislators such as Eddie Cross, Jessie Majome, James Maridadi and Prosper Mutseyami by national security and intelligence officers (*ZimDiaspora*, 11 November 2011; Verenanda Langa, *Newsday*, 16 September 2016). Although these parliamentarians were protected under the *Standing Rules and Orders Committee of Parliament* (SROC), which guarantees parliamentary immunity to legislators, the death threats persisted even post the GNU era. This in part contributed in frightening and muting MDC-T officials in speaking against the excesses of the state. This is in spite of the existence of the SROC, which allows Zimbabwean legislators to carry out their parliamentary business, including raising contentious topics in parliament, without any fear of reprisals either physical or otherwise.

Additionally, in the case of security sector reform, ZANU-PF dragged its feet and often showed outright opposition. Rugare Gumbo, as then ZANU-PF spokesperson, argued that there was no way ZANU-PF was going to reform the military-security establishment considering the 'umbilical cord' and deep historical ties which existed between the national liberation

movement turned ZANU-PF political party and the service chiefs (Rugare Gumbo Interview, *OpenSpace*, 2011:119). The security service chiefs thought likewise. As a result, the ruling party-state securocrats remained as one of the chief obstacles to Zimbabwe's democratisation. Overall, ZANU-PF sought and managed to deploy various strategies in order to "frustrate those reforms that it felt threatened its interests" (International Crisis Group, 2011:3), with security interests foremost in its mind.

In this and the preceding sections, I examined the establishment and functioning of the GNU with particular stress on critically analysing the role of the MDC-T in bringing about democratic change through for example constitutional and electoral reform and parliamentary activities. In general, the MDC-T did make a contribution to democratisation but it would seem that there were many challenges and stumbling blocks in doing so, such as strategic mistakes by the MDC-T and resistance from ZANU-PF. The following section moves into the post-GNU period by considering how the MDC-T sought to continue the push for democratisation through fighting for the implementation of the new constitution in the 2013 to 2016 period, after the party had left the coalition government.

6.7 MDC and the New Constitution (2013 to 2016)

The MDC-T and the generality of Zimbabweans lauded the new constitution as a progressive document which would act as a rite of passage to a liberal and electoral democratic dispensation. But, post-GNU, the implementation of the new constitution took place at a slow place. In fact, the ZANU-PF party-state seemed reluctant in repealing the previous existing laws to be in sync with the new provisions contained in the new constitution. This arose because of the defeat of the two MDC formations in the 2013 election, which saw ZANU-PF regain its undisputed electoral hegemony. This, in turn, saw a diminishing of the constitutional reform momentum on the part of the two MDC formations, as was also the case with regard to the pro-democracy movement more generally, including the urban-based civic organisations.

More specifically, the ebbing of the reform process came about in part because there was a decline in the spirit and efforts by MDC-T, which emerged out of the realisation that the political opposition had little in terms of leverage to influence an intransigent ZANU-PF party-state to implement the new constitution. During the GNU era, the MDC-T made claims about its legitimacy owing to the March 2008 elections in which the party defeated Robert Mugabe. However, after exiting the GNU, the main political opposition in Zimbabwe had to rely entirely on pushing for democratic reforms using legislative spaces only. This proved untenable because ZANU-PF enjoyed a legislative majority especially after the MDC-T recalled twenty-

one legislators aligned to Tendai Biti. One respondent captures this development in the following words:

It has proved to be difficult on the part of MDC to influence and push for democratic reforms from outside the spaces provided for during the era and tenure of the inclusive government. They lost a good opportunity to push through several reforms. Now the MDC-T can only rely on the parliamentary route, which in any case will not offer much space. As you are aware, the MDC is now a minority in parliament also given the fact that it recalled legislators aligned to the Biti camp. So it will be difficult for the party to demand for the full implementation of the new constitution (Interview with Mandeya).

Any efforts by the MDC-T to ensure the implementation of the constitution (in the period of 2013-16) were complemented through civic society organisations by supplementing the demands made by the MDC-T in pushing for the realignment of the existing laws to be consistent with the new provisions contained in the 2013 constitution. After the gazetting of the General Laws Amendment Act (GLAA) on the 1st of July 2016, which sought to align 126 Acts of parliament with the new constitution, the civil society group called Zimbabwe Election Support Network – ZESN – played an increasing advocacy role in further pushing for the harmonisation of the existing laws vis-à-vis the new constitution. In a press statement, it made the following remarks:

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) notes the gazetting of the General Laws Amendment Act (GLAA), which introduces some amendments to various laws including the Electoral Act to bring them into alignment with the Constitution. ZESN believes that the Act does not sufficiently address fundamental issues related to the Electoral Act such as the right to vote, the special vote, delimitation and media access among other issues. ZESN notes with concern that the GLAA offers piecemeal reforms and fails to align the substantive provisions related to the Electoral Act to fully comply with the Constitution. This appears to be a result of the omnibus approach taken by the legislature to amend more than one hundred legislative instruments via the GLAA. ZESN reiterates its previously stated position that there is need for a comprehensive process of amending all the Electoral Laws and bring them into conformity with the Constitution as well as regional guidelines on good governance and elections (ZESN Press statement, 5 August 2016).

As well, the work of domestic political opposition actors was complemented by international actors who were heavily involved in exerting external pressure for internal political and democratic reforms in Zimbabwe. For example, in 2016, the United Kingdom

(UK) Embassy through its Ambassador expressed concern about the lack of alignment of the existing laws with the new constitutional provisions. In an opinion piece by the current UK ambassador to Zimbabwe, Catriona Laing made the following remarks:

The Constitution is a major achievement, but what can be described as “constitutionalism” is not yet embedded as the foundation of rule of law and human rights. With an election less than two years away, it is a priority to ensure electoral laws are in line with the constitution so that the outcome of the election itself is not contested (Catriona Laing, Issued 16 October 2016).

Though democratisation in Zimbabwe is in the end a domestic issue, foreign democracy-promoting actors sought to shape the democratisation trajectory in the national polity. While the UK prides itself on the positive contribution it made in seeking democratic governance in Zimbabwe, others view UK’s involvement in Zimbabwe as a self-seeking exercise meant to effect regime change. Thabo Mbeki, former president for South Africa, shared this sentiment. He made the following remarks:

There were others in the world, led particularly by the UK, who opposed our approach of encouraging the Zimbabweans to decide their future. These preferred regime change – the forcible removal of President Mugabe and his replacement by people approved by the UK and its allies (Thabo Mbeki, *Politics web*, 22 February 2016).

If true, this seems to highlight the often-contradictory agendas of foreign actors when they fund and promote democratisation in foreign countries.

The MDC-T on countless times expressed its concern that existing legislation was not in line with the new constitution. However, such advocacy efforts did not bear any tangible results. As Eddie Cross (MDC-T shadow minister for local government) highlighted:

Three years on, it would be reasonable to expect that the Government of Zimbabwe would be completing the alignment of the 400 Acts of Parliament that need adjustments to bring them into line with the Constitution (MDC Press Statement by Eddie Cross, 3 May 2016).

But ZANU-PF was clearly not enthusiastic about implementing a new constitution which came with a whole set of transitional mechanisms and independent democracy-supporting institutions, such as the creation of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), Media Commission and the Human Rights Commission among others. To succeed in its endeavour to block the constitution’s implementation, ZANU-PF simply stalled the realignment of existing legislation to be in harmony with the new constitution, or passed legislation such as the General Laws Amendment Act (GLAA) which, from the perspective of

MDC-T, was wholly inadequate. This was easy on the part of ZANU-PF since it enjoyed a parliamentary majority (as previously underscored).

6.8 MDC and Electoral Reforms in Zimbabwe (2013 to 2016)

I now examine the role of the MDC in seeking to bring about electoral reforms in Zimbabwe in the period from 2013 to 2016. In a televised interview held in 2014, Tendai Biti (former secretary general of the MDC-T) conceded to the fact that his party floundered in pushing for electoral reforms when it agreed to participate in the 2013 ‘undemocratic’ elections that ended the tenure of the GNU. He comments that:

The MDC must also take responsibility for participating in an election where reforms had not taken place against the advice of the region and against internal advice from our experts (Tendai Biti, Interview on Africa at 360, 16 September 2014).

This position seems justifiable as, over the years, the MDC-T has been inconsistent in demanding for electoral reforms. The incapacity of MDC-T to ensure such reforms became evident when ZANU-PF went ahead in unilaterally deciding and proclaiming the election date in 2013. This was in spite of the demands by the MDC formations for the prior full-scale implementation of the election road maps and other outstanding GPA reforms. In an address to his supporters at the MDC-T 2013 election campaign launch, Morgan Tsvangirai indicated:

We have tried our best over the last four years, against serious resistance from our counterparts in Government, to ensure that this country is prepared for a genuine, free, fair and credible election. Regrettably, what we have witnessed in the last few weeks is a concerted effort designed to rob the election of legitimacy before it has even begun (Morgan Tsvangirai’s speech at the launch of the MDC-T Election Campaign; see MDC-T, 2013:3).

Concerning the above, it is important to note that the MDC-T raised a red flag in disputing the legitimacy of the 2013 elections. In its *2013 Election Rigging Report*, the MDC-T claimed that NIKUV, an Israel company, had rigged the plebiscite on behalf of ZANU-PF (see also Wonai Masvingise and Moses Matenga, *Newsday*, 10 August 2013). Such claims, however, failed to find traction within SADC and AU.

Post the 2013 elections, the MDC-T resorted to the use of various spaces (such as parliament, demonstrations in the streets, and engagement with the election management body, ZEC) in a further bid to push for the implementation of electoral reforms (Interview with Gonese; Interview with Mudzuri; Interview with Chidziva). It also resorted to litigation in challenging the 2013 election results. To this end, the party filed a case in the Constitutional

Court (*Reuters*, 9 August 2013). However, it proved a major hurdle in trying to force the election management body – ZEC – and ZANU-PF to accept any envisaged electoral reforms. ZANU-PF in fact queried why the MDC-T, which was involved in the inclusive government, was now pushing for reforms when it had exited from the GNU.

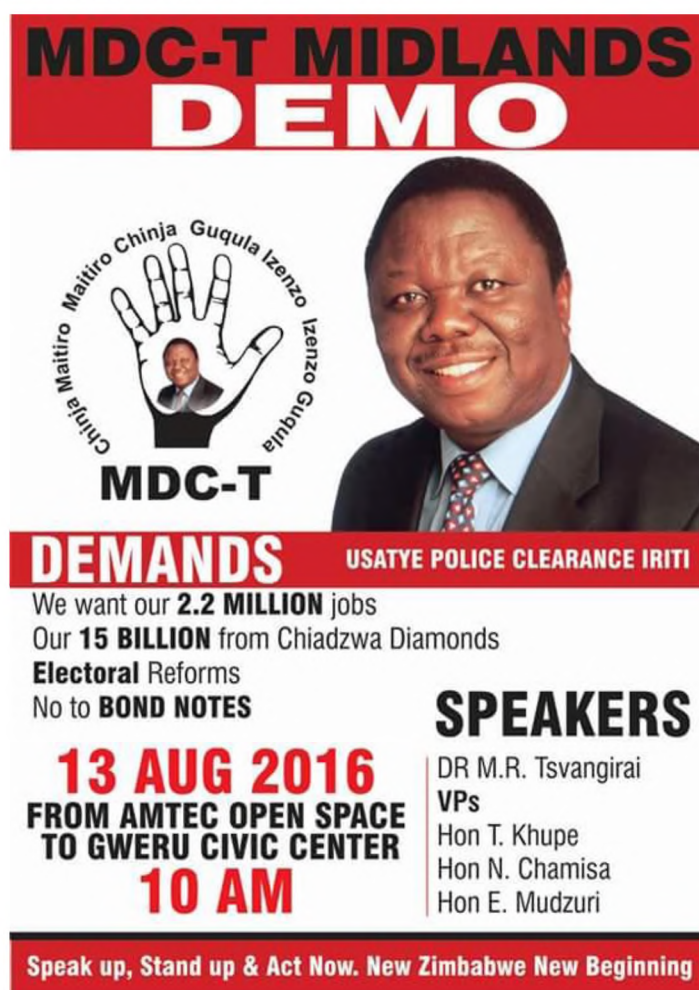
But it is understandable why ZANU-PF resisted electoral reforms, as thorough-going reforms would have a significant impact in possibly reconfiguring state power and in transforming the entire electoral administrative processes and architecture. To this end, ZANU-PF made its position clear that it would not agree to electoral reforms demanded by the opposition. ZANU-PF's spin-doctor, Jonathan Moyo, indicated that ZANU-PF would not concede to these demands as doing so would be the same as ZANU-PF reforming itself out of power (*The Chronicle*, 6 September 2016; Jeffrey Muvundisi, *Nehanda Radio*, 6 September 2016). Again, as on other matters, resistance from ZANU-PF and its power to resist was influential in halting the democratisation moves of the MDC-T.

In a further bid to influence the implementation of electoral reforms, the MDC-T party in 2016 adopted the strategy of boycotting by-elections. In this regard, it held several demonstrations under the banner of the National Electoral Reform Agenda (NERA) and launched a 'no reforms – no elections' campaign (Interview with Chidziva; Interview with Komichi). NERA comprised a coalition of eighteen opposition parties. In this regard, Figure 6.1 depicts one of the demonstrations rolled out by the MDC-T party.

Through whatever spaces were available or could be pried open if only minimally, MDC-T sought to ensure several electoral reforms including its key demand to disband the election management body, that is, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). The press statement below issued by the MDC-T more fully highlights its position on electoral reforms as articulated under the banner of NERA:

The MDC, together with several other opposition political parties under the National Electoral Reform Agenda (NERA), has been at the forefront of vigorously pushing for the adoption of electoral reforms that are meant to vaccinate the Zimbabwean political and electoral environment against the toxic virus of poll rigging (MDC-T Press Statement, 16 October 2016).

Photo 6.1: MDC-T Demonstration Poster



Source: MDC-T Information and Publicity: Harvest House, Harare, 2016.

Another press statement from the MDC-T read:

The MDC calls upon President Robert Mugabe and his entire Cabinet to immediately step down and to allow for the holding of free, fair and credible elections that will be run and supervised by the United Nations with the active participation of both SADC and the AU. As currently constituted, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) is completely incapable of running an election that will pass the test of legitimacy. Besides ZEC being broke, the ZEC secretariat is packed with hard line CIO agents and other security operatives who are determined to rig any election in favour of the ruling but crumbling Zanu PF regime (MDC-T Press Statement by Obert Gutu, national spokesperson, 7 June 2016).

Once again, civic organisations such as the Election Resource Centre, or ERC, complemented the role and efforts of the political party opposition in demanding electoral

reforms. They held nation-wide public hearings with citizens, petitioned parliament and issued public statements (*The Zimbabwean*, 23 October 2016). However, the strategies and activities of both the MDC-T and urban CSOs were not particularly effective in convincing ZANU-PF and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to concede to their electoral reform agenda. But in an optimistic view, one of the MDC-T party's vice presidents confided in me that ZEC by the end of 2016 had agreed to NERA's demands for the establishment of a multi-party liaison committee to shadow the work of ZEC, as well as to NERA's demands for a bio-metric voting (Interview with Mudzuri). However, he cautioned that it was too early to judge NERA's efforts, as ZEC could at any point in time change goal posts.

6.9 MDC and Democratic Reforms in a Fragmented Legislature (2013 to 2016)

The MDC-T party sought to influence good governance and democratic reform using the legislative spaces from 2013 to 2016. In this regard, the aftermath of the 2013 election brought several strategic challenges for the MDC-T. Reeling from a crushing defeat at the hands of ZANU-PF, the opposition found itself at the crossroads on whether to boycott parliamentary business or to participate. Some within the party felt that the MDC-T should disengage and withdraw from parliament as a way of delegitimising the 2013 election results – results which the party claim were rigged in favour of ZANU-PF (Peta Thornycroft, *IOL News*, 6 August 2013). However, some among the party elite and membership felt that participating in parliament would help in guarding opposition spaces and zones of influence (Interview with Gutu). This inconsistency on whether to boycott, disengage or withdraw from parliament has shown the lack of cohesion among the MDC-T legislators and party leadership in pushing for democratisation.

After failing to come to a consensus on the strategic way forward, all the elected legislators who won parliamentary seats in 2013 decided to occupy their parliamentary seats. In a further bid to exercise their oversight role on the executive, in 2016 the MDC-T parliamentarians mulled over the idea of impeaching Mugabe on the grounds of old age, frailty and increasing signs of incapacitation. The MDC-T's Mabvuku-Tafara legislator James Maridadi put forward this motion in parliament (*The Zimbabwean*, 10 May 2016). However, such efforts did not succeed mainly because the MDC-T was now a minority in parliament (weak in numbers and in voice) after it recalled twenty-one members of parliament aligned to the Biti faction (as indicated earlier).

Following this recall, the main MDC-T faction's hold on the legislature has significantly weakened as manifested in its limited voting strength. This fact is corroborated in

an article by the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper, which quoted an MDC-T official who said the following: “Our numbers in Parliament are too few, so we have lost the punch we had in the last Parliament, and who wants to fund an opposition whose role in Parliament is diminishing?” (*Mail & Guardian*, 7 March 2014). Despite the above, one respondent argued that the mere presence of the minority MDC-T legislators meant a lot, since the ZANU-PF government was still kept in check if only to a limited extent (Interview with Hlatshwayo). In line with this claim another MDC-T youth official said the following:

Our MDC-T parliamentarians have continued to play their role. That is doing their job as an opposition – providing checks and balances. They have continued to play a pivotal role around that. Our legislators have continued to expose corruption through the August House [parliament]. We are few in numbers, but we are directing parliamentary business (Interview with Chidziva).

This observation is in line with findings established in previous studies elsewhere. For instance, Hofmeister and Grabow (2011:17) contend that “without opposition a government tends to drift toward complacency and presumptuousness and fails to search for alternatives”.

Indeed, and as highlighted in the above quotation, the MDC-T legislators in 2016 continued to voice their concerns in parliament against high levels of corruption. In one parliamentary sitting, Honourable Prosper Mutseyami from the MDC-T challenged Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa to come clean on the disturbing trends of corruption by ZANU-PF cabinet Ministers. To corroborate this point, I refer to a parliamentary debate in the House of Assembly in which the former made the following submissions:

My question is as follows; we have observed that currently, our country is suffering in terms of the economy. As Government, what steps have you taken to ensure that we fight against corruption because it has now become endemic. What policy has Government come up with to manage corruption? What are we doing as Government to reduce corrupt activities or eliminating it completely? [...]. We have observed that there is endemic corruption in the newspapers especially concerning ZIMDEF²⁴ where there was a

²⁴ ZIMDEF stands for Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund and it funds manpower development in tertiary and vocational colleges. In 2016 there were alleged reports that the current Higher Education Minister Professor Jonathan Moyo and his Deputy Dr Godfrey Gandawa had swindled ZIMDEF of huge sums of money. The issue came to light when the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission made it clear that it was investigating the two in connection with the abuse of the aforementioned funds.

misappropriation of funds (Contribution by Honourable Prosper Mutseyami, *Hansard*, 12 October 2016).

In relation to such issues, the MDC-T national spokesperson said that MDC-T parliamentarians played a significant role in exposing ZANU-PF party-state corruption. He indicated the following:

In the year 2016, we have seen exposure of corrupt activities by our MPs, though unfortunately prosecution is lacking because of the ruling party's hold on state institutions. Our legislators have raised concerns over such issues in parliament (Interview with Gutu).

Outside parliament spaces, the MDC continued to issue press statements clarifying its abhorrence of corruption as well as demanding state accountability and transparency. The following excerpt from a press statement captures this point in a succinct way:

As a political party, the MDC has resolutely adopted a zero tolerance policy to all forms of corruption. Thus, without fear or favour, the MDC would like to call for the uncompromising enforcement of the country's anti-corruption laws as well as the arrest and prosecution of all suspects as long as the evidence against them is strong and unassailable. Put differently, the MDC fervently and passionately advocates for a policy where all corrupt persons, no matter who they are or what office they hold in the public or private sector, have to be hauled before a competent court of law whenever and wherever a *prima facie* case of corruption has been established against them. There shouldn't be any sacred cows in matters pertaining to the investigation and prosecution of anyone who, on reasonable grounds, has been alleged to have committed any act of corruption (MDC Press Statement, 13 October, 2016).

Of course, given ZANU-PF's dominance in the legislative as well as its tight grip on state power in the form of the party-state nexus, such protests by MDC-T have not made a significant dent in ending corruption or, more broadly, in bringing about democratic change through parliamentary processes.

6.10 Emergence of New Social Movements in 2016

While the MDC-T and well-established civil society organisations in urban areas have struggled for broad-based processes of democratisation, both during the GNU period and post-GNU, new social movements emerged. The year 2016 was indeed a turning point in the struggle for democracy in the sense that it saw the rise and emergence of unorganised and unstructured – or seemingly spontaneous – citizen movements. These movements have

articulated demands for good governance, an end to endemic corruption and high unemployment, restoration of the rule of law and observance of human rights among other issues. These movements differed from the more conventional constitution reform-seeking movements such as the NCA insofar as they primarily mobilised around a plethora of issues. These social movements also sought to claim back public spaces through open demonstrations. Indirectly and even unintentionally perhaps, they sought to complement the efforts of the conventional organised opposition parties and CSOs in seeking democratisation.

Such movements include the following: #ThisFlag #Tajamuka/#Sesijikile (‘we have rebelled’), #OAUS (Occupy Africa Unity Square), and #This Flower. The efforts of these ‘independent’ social movements, as they are not aligned to any particular political party, have been complemented by MDC-T party aligned social movements such as #BeatThePot and #My Zimbabwe (for the latter, see MDC-T Youth Assembly Press Statement, 25 July 2016; Interview with Chidziva). Further, the *Tajamuka/sesijikile* campaign mobilised citizens to reject the introduction of Bond Notes (as new Zimbabwean currency). Even though the #*Tajamuka/sesijikile* social movement claims to be independent from all political parties, one MDC-T official stated the contrary in an interview:

Tajamuka is our creation, we just wanted to create a faceless character; but it is an MDC-T initiative (Interview with MDC-T party official, anonymous, 29 July 2016, Harare).

However, this point is hard to authenticate since there has been a struggle for fame and publicity between the new social movements and the main opposition party (MDC-T) in the course of 2016.

During the greater part of the year 2016, the nascent social movements rolled out major citizen demonstrations in Harare. Using social media spaces, this #Flag movement (led by one cleric, Pastor Evan Mawarire) successfully called for a national shutdown, which saw businesses closing in Harare. ZANU-PF officials though dispute claims by the leading activists that the hashtag social movements have had a significant influence on Zimbabwean politics. This point is evidenced in a *BBC Africa Business Report* interview with Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa (*BBC Africa Business Report*, 10 December 2016).

The sustainability of the hashtag movement demonstrations stands in question as ZANU-PF passed legislation circumscribing these demonstrations, namely, *Statutory Instrument 101a of 2016* (Everson Mushava/Obey Manayiti, *Newsday*, 2 September 2016; *Reuters*, 2 September 2016; Tendai Mugabe, *Herald*, 2 September 2016). Scholars have also observed that:

The recent hashtag demonstrations in the informal sector driven mainly through social media, however novel their forms of organisation and refreshing their non-party political complexion, at least in their initial phases, have already tapered off. They are unlikely to be a substitute for more sustainable actions from formal opposition structures (Raftopoulos, 2016).

As in previous demonstrations, the governing ZANU-PF party has deployed various forms of power, including coercive ones such as arrests of demonstrators, to curtail the democratisation tide (*The Zimbabwean*, 26 August 2016; *BBC News*, 12 July 2016).

6.11 Conclusion

This chapter started by discussing the events which led to the formation of the interim power-sharing agreement in Zimbabwe in 2008. I then discussed the functioning of the GNU as well as the MDC-T's contribution in advancing democratisation during the era of the GNU; and thereafter examined its contribution in the current post-GNU period. For the GNU period, there is some evidence to the effect that the MDC-T party managed to play a reasonably significant role in pushing for democratic reforms, albeit as a junior partner in the GNU and in the face of ZANU-PF intransigence. Since the end of the GNU, the MDC-T finds itself almost in the political wilderness, particularly given its significant electoral defeat in 2013 and the party split in 2014 led by Tendai Biti. Under such conditions, the ruling party has almost free reign to undercut any democratisation initiatives and to consolidate its historically-rooted authoritarian tendencies. Clearly, many of the challenges faced initially by MDC from 1999 and the MDC-T from 2005 involve attempts by ZANU-PF to undercut the presence and significance of the party. But, as the next chapter demonstrates, the MDC/MDC-T has also been marked by internal weaknesses and deficiencies.

CHAPTER 7: DEMOCRACY WITHIN THE MDC-T PARTY

We are coming from a society, which has dictatorial tendencies, and we are trying to portray ourselves as developing democratic ethos, a democratic culture to confront this dictatorship with a democratic alternative. It is very difficult because internal democracy in a young, fragile organisation can also be a source of weakness. At the same time, being too dictatorial may actually put us back again, within the same tendencies we are fighting against (Morgan Tsvangirai, as quoted by Chan, 2010:56).

7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters discussed the different roles played by the MDC-T in seeking to usher in democratisation in Zimbabwe in the period of the GNU, and in the periods prior to and after the GNU. Building on the discussions in these two chapters, this current chapter examines the internal functioning of the MDC-T with particular reference to the presence or absence of democratic processes and practices. Hence, while the last two chapters in large part considered the MDC-T and its external relationships with others (including ZANU-PF and civil society groups), this chapter ‘internalises’ the analysis by focusing on intra-party dynamics around democracy. In this regard, it is important to emphasise that internal democratic processes or the lack thereof have important implications for the MDC-T in terms of seeking to democratise the wider polity and society. Thus, in order to fully understand the role, agency and influence of the MDC-T party in promoting democratisation more broadly, it is necessary to go beyond any treatment of the party as simply a ‘black box’ devoid of internal dynamics and complexities.

The chapter addresses several themes including internal election processes, candidate and leadership selection methods, party fragmentation, gender representation, policy-making within the party and intra-party violence. Either directly or indirectly, all these themes speak to the question of democracy within the MDC-T. Unlike the previous two chapters, though, I do not seek to periodise the internal dynamics within the party in this chapter.

7.2 Broad Overview of Intra-Party Democracy

The issue of the existence of internal party democracy within political parties has been the subject of considerable interest and attention among political scientists and political sociologists (Scarrow, 2005; Mimpen, 2007; Teorell, 1999; Rahat and Hazan, 2005). In this

regard, it is lamentable that most parties in southern Africa (either ruling or in opposition) have been afflicted with a pervasive trend of weak internal party democracy (Chimbganda, 2014). This trend is, however, not specific to southern Africa alone, as it is evident in other geographic regions as well.

For this thesis, I consider internal party democracy in terms of how internal procedures, processes and practices are respected, institutionalised, habituated and socialised within a political party organisation. Such a definition considers the regulation of internal dissent within political party organisations, intra-party decision-making processes, political contestation, and deliberation and divergence on policy and programmatic issues. In the literature, there is an established link between internal party democracy and external democratisation. For instance, scholars assert that “democracy within states is dependent upon democracy within parties” (Rahat and Hazan, 2005:1). This claim implies that, in order for political parties to instil and consolidate democracy within the wider polity, they should themselves be internally democratic. Viewed from this angle, we should therefore never understate the role of internal party democracy in shaping the party’s success or failure in consolidating liberal, electoral and substantive democracy within the wider polity. As Mersel (2006) puts it: “A party that is not internally democratic cannot really be externally democratic; in the long run the internal agenda and predispositions would be bound to influence the party’s external attitudes and activities” (Mersel, 2006:84).

A political party with lively democratic practices internally would be more inclined, compared to other parties, to institutionalise and consolidate democratic values in the broader political party system as well as the broader polity (including the state) and society. Simultaneously, well-entrenched democracy within a party would likely increase its legitimacy amongst the public (Young, 2013:70), including in the case of an opposition party like the MDC-T which seeks to form the government in the future. Scholars also contend that, in parties that allow internal democracy to flourish, there exists a higher probability of selecting likeable, proficient and capable leaders who are responsive to the electorate and in turn such parties are likely to have more chances in terms of electoral success (Scarrow, 2005:3). The importance of linkages between internal democracy and broader democratic processes is recognised within the MDC-T. As one ex-MDC national office employee put it, in the case of Zimbabwe, internal democratic practice:

Affects how the party will fight for electoral democracy at national level. If the party does not practice democracy in its own elections how will it influence democracy in external electoral processes (Interview with Moyo).

In this context, I discuss internal party democracy within the MDC-T party in Zimbabwe. Looking at internal party democracy within the MDC-T involves covering several themes, including the decision-making processes within the party, the conduct of primary elections (candidate and leadership selection) and how the party resolves internal conflicts. However, this study concurs with Salih and Nordlund (2007:79) who claim that “[i]t is a major challenge to decipher the inner working of African political parties”. Nevertheless, I start off by trying to decipher primary elections within the MDC-T.

7.2.1 MDC-T Primary Elections

Several respondents for this study expressed deep concern over the weak internal party democracy within the MDC-T party. To collaborate this point, several of them cited the loopholes which characterise the conduct of the party’s internal elections. Some also referred to the heavy involvement of members of the Standing Committee (the highest leadership party organ) (MDC-T website, 2016²⁵) as well as of some members of the national executive in the decentralised party primary elections.

Formally, or constitutionally, the MDC-T party is democratic:

On paper yes. The MDC-T is an extremely democratic party. It has a constitution, which prescribes that holding office is in terms of elections. The party emphasises the primacy of elections as a vehicle of attaining political office. In that regard, after every 5 years, it holds elections at various levels of leadership (Interview with Mwonzora).

Some within the MDC-T leadership, such as one MDC-T youth executive member, believe that this is also what happens in practice:

Yes. We hold our elective Congresses after every five years. Candidates are free to express and participate in [running for] their desired posts. We also conduct our elections with the help of reputable institutions and outsiders. We [the MDC-T] are a very democratic party which has a healthy and vibrant intra-party democracy (Interview with Hlatshwayo).

In a similar vein, though from a more critical perspective, another respondent – once in the MDC-T’s research and policy department – cited the frequency of congresses within the MDC-

²⁵ The MDC-T website has a detailed list of the current members of the Standing Committee; see <http://www.mdc.co.zw/index.php/about-us-1/party-structure>

T as an expression and yardstick of the party's adherence to internal democratic processes. The comment below illustrates this point:

Although the MDC-T party is not perfect in this regard, it subscribes to tenets of democracy. The party regularly holds congresses to choose leadership unlike in the ruling party where there is the so-called "one centre of power" with unbridled powers over the party organs and the party constitution. Party candidates are also not handpicked although the process of choosing candidates has been criticised in some quarters. In recent years, we have however, witnessed the heavy interference and involvement of the organising secretaries in the primary elections. The MDC has a high level of internal debate and free speech compared to the ruling party and other opposition parties (Interview with Charles Moyo, former employee in the MDC-T Research and Policy Department, 8 July 2015, Harare).

It was these kinds of more critical comments which were articulated quite frequently by respondents in the study, and perhaps particularly amongst those who no longer held positions of leadership in the party at the time interviewed. Thus many respondents suggested, at least implicitly, that there were major divergences between constitutional arrangements and actual practice in terms of internal democracy, including with reference to elections. One respondent thus noted the following:

It is debatable depending on the angle one is looking at. Given developments within the MDC formation itself, it is very difficult to say the party fully subscribes to the tenets of internal democracy. If you look at the splits within the MDC itself because of the failure to uphold democratic principles within itself, it shows the negation of what made the foundation of the MDC. The party later contradicted itself. There are challenges on the leadership in terms of adhering to internal democracy, which is vindicated in the recent appointments of two additional vice presidents in 2016. Many things are ultra vires democratic principles. For example, the recent appointments of the vice presidents clearly show to the contrary that there is no democracy in the MDC (Interview with Mandeya).

He further added:

A democratic party purporting to be democratic violating its constitution is really tragic and unacceptable, especially in modern democratic political dispensations. They failed to live up to the standards and values of democracy (Interview with Mandeya).

Another respondent, who used to work in the party's Organising Department, was more forceful in this respect:

In primary elections there has been quite a lot of manipulation, which led to the party's poor performance in the 2013 elections. A lot has been done on the structures with some people trying to destroy these structures. That manipulation frustrated quite a lot of party members and it distorted party structures and ultimately weakened the party. Hence the poor performance or poor show of the party in 2013. MDC-T entered into the 2013 elections fractured – there was no cohesiveness at that time because of the failure to uphold free expression of the selection of leaders by the people (Interview with Box).

Such comments indicate that the mere availability of internal democratic structures and processes within a party organisation does not guarantee the existence of a thriving democracy, particularly during times when there is fierce competition for positions through elections and these electoral processes deviate from the values of democratic practice. In the case of MDC-T, there are indications that internal elections have at times been marked by deficiencies in this regard. These problems have been noted as well by civil society organisations, including by the then vice-chairperson from the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, who responded to a question about internal democracy in the MDC-T in the following manner:

Generally, yes. However, imposition of candidates in some cases through the influence of the party leadership flies in the face of fair and transparent elections (Interview with Chirenje, Interview held on the 18th of August 2015).

The ZCTU though offered a more positive rendition of MDC-T party internal elections. For instance, it said, that within the party, *“its president can be openly criticised by party members, something unheard of in other political parties. Furthermore, members contest positions in any election without victimisation”* (email correspondence from ZCTU Information Department, 22 August 2015). It is noticeable, in commenting positively upon the party's democratic practices, that these practices were often compared to the practices within ZANU-PF, as if to imply that the MDC-T's practices are not perfect but at least they have not been subject to ZANU-ification.

But, over the years, the MDC party national leadership has been involved in vote-buying and vote-rigging with reference to the party's primary elections as well as manipulating party structures in the process. This is despite official claims which frame the party as internally democratic. The comment below by an MDC-T legislator confirms this assertion:

Historically, people with money, people with power, and people with influence have manipulated primary elections and there has been a considerable amount of interference with democratic processes at the primary level. We are trying to remedy the situation but

it is proving very difficult. We are facing fierce resistance from entrenched interests in the provinces (Interview with Cross).

The claims made by the above-mentioned legislator are supported by empirical evidence contained in a 2014 Zimbabwe Peace Project report, which states that:

MDC-T members in Ruwa held a meeting to elect the district executive in preparation of the congress that was scheduled for 31 October 2014. Some party members were disgruntled by the outcome of the election, as the number of votes did not tally with the registered voters. That conflict led to violent clashes among the party members. The police had to be called in to quell the violence (Zimbabwe Peace Project, 2014:3).

In another interview, one respondent spoke of the failure to design and implement an intra-party electoral system for free and fair elections and attributed such democratic deficits in MDC-T primary elections to the following:

In some recent elections I attended, voting was done by show of hands. Many members were excluded from the elections due to factional fights. Aspiring candidates were never asked to address voters so that they would be voted for known merits of their candidature (Interview with Matongo).

It may be that any weaknesses with internal democracy within the MDC-T, including when it comes to elections, have been subject to change over the fifteen-year history of the party. Mindful of the challenges that beset the MDC-T internal elections, one former staffer in the MDC-T party and now in civic society with Heal Zimbabwe Trust noted that democracy is a learning curve and that the MDC-T is still trying to get it right:

The MDC-T primary elections are held in fair and transparent manner. However, the fairness quality is difficult to qualify. In most cases there are allegations of people being bribed with money and some disenfranchised. However, it is important to underscore the point that the MDC-T is a learning institution trying to advance internal democracy (Interview with Mandikwaza).

In this regard, and in admitting that there are different views within the party on whether the party abides to the basic principles of internal democracy, the MDC-T's national spokesperson intimated that the opposite has been taking place:

Within the party, a certain school of thought believes that of late we have moved away from strictly observing the tenets of internal party democracy. Now people are saying we are actually departing from our founding values of constitutionalism. This school of thought believes here-and-there we are exhibiting some signs of intolerance and that

ZANU PF signs of dictatorship has rubbed off on us. Maybe they have their own reasons
(Interview with Gutu).

In fact, this recognition of a possible ZANU-ification of party structures has led to rethinking and revising the primary election process so as to enhance democratic practices. As one respondent claimed:

There has been challenges before, where internal primaries were confined to structures; therefore, it meant persons could manipulate the electoral process through the Electoral College. However, this has since changed after the 2014 Congress where every card-carrying member takes part in selecting candidates (Interview with Nyamukachi).

Regrettably, my study does not allow for tracing the ups and downs of the culture of intra-party democracy through time. However, it is clear that the party has witnessed factional infighting during its primary elections in successive years. One such example is the factional contestation between Giles Mutsekwa and Arnold Tsunga over the Dangamvura-Chikanga constituency.

The facts are as follows: Both candidates wanted to contest the parliamentary seat. The former – Mutsekwa – lost in the primary elections, though he was the preferred candidate of the national party leadership (including Morgan Tsvangirai). In clear contempt of, and in disregard of the provincial electoral college's choice, voice and will, the MDC national leadership (Tsvangirai in particular) imposed Giles Mutsekwa to stand as the party's parliamentary candidate in the 2013 national elections. But Arnold Tsunga refused to step down for Mutsekwa. As a result, the party entered the 2013 election with two candidates (Bernard Chiketo, *Daily News*, 21 July 2013; *Bulawayo24News*, 19 July 2013). Such acts of candidate imposition further divided the party, with some members voting for Mutsekwa, while others voted for Tsunga. Even though Tsunga eventually won the constituency, this fielding of two candidates fractured the party's local support base.

Another example that highlights the flouting of the basics of internal party democracy is the unpopular decision by Tsvangirai to reserve the Makoni Central parliamentary seat for Simba Makoni (president of Mavambo/Dawn) in the period leading up to the 2013 general elections. Makoni and Tsvangirai had entered into a gentleman's pre-election party coalition between Mavambo and MDC-T respectively to contest the parliamentary seat (*Bulawayo24News*, 24 July 2013). The reserving of this particular constituency for Makoni was done despite the fact that the MDC-T grassroots members had their own choice, Patrick Sagandira, who eventually refused to step down to pave way for Makoni's candidacy. In a different incident which all too well exemplifies the undermining of internal democracy is the

case of Makoni Central constituency where one of the party's founding members, Grace Kwinjeh, was at some point pronounced winner in the MDC-T internal party primary elections only later to be pronounced as having been defeated (Guthrie Munyukwi, *Daily News*, 27 June 2013).

These examples clearly raise reservations about the party's level of commitment in nurturing, instilling and institutionalising an internal culture of democratic elections. This is expressed quite ably in the following quotation from a former MDC national office employee, in claiming:

The primary elections in the MDC are problematic as there are sometimes cases of imposition of candidates, which in itself is an undemocratic practice. Imposition of candidates was problematic in Manicaland province during the last [2013] election. Sometimes candidates are picked according to seniority rather than merit (Interview with Moyo).

It is worth emphasising a point made above, namely, that there are many cases of the undermining of intra-party democracy by the MDC-T's top leadership, the very leadership which would be expected to defend internal democratic practices at all costs. One example is the involvement of Morgan Tsvangirai in unilaterally deposing Lucia Matibenga from her post as Women's Assembly Chair to openly support Theresa Makone's candidacy – wife to Ian Makone (chief advisor to Tsvangirai) – as Matibenga's successor in October 2008 (*New African*, 2007/08). Such interference in the affairs of the party by a few in the top echelons of the party resonates with Michel Roberts's (1952/1962) *Iron Law of Oligarchy*. Using the notion of oligarchical tendencies within political parties, Roberts contends that political organisations tend to be dominated by a small group of elites who in turn make decisions and choices favourable to their own interests; in doing so, they undercut the will and interests of the general rank-and-file party members.

Another example of the iron law of oligopoly at play is the case of Morgan Komichi and Xavier Edziwa. In 2013, the Zimbabwe Peace Project noted the high level of infighting within the MDC-T as follows:

The MDC-T intra-party conflict between Morgan Komichi and Xavier Edziwa was evidenced after Morgan Komichi allegedly declared that other party members should not contest against him as he should be respected as a national leader [at the time, he was the party's deputy chairperson, a position he still holds to date]. However, Edziwa argues that the MDC-T is for democracy and therefore no one was immune. The MDC-T Sanyati

District, which is reported to be against Komichi allegedly, signed a petition sent to the national executive challenging Komichi's decisions (Zimbabwe Peace Project, 2013:3).

Apart from any unilateral decision making processes by the party leadership, the MDC-T has also tended to adopt undemocratic tendencies of “*smuggling*” and imposing unpopular parliamentary candidates (Interview with MDC-T member, anonymous, 21 August 2015). In most cases, the imposed candidates were simply unknown in the local party structures (for example, in the branch and ward structures). Examples include the imposition of former Zimbabwe Broadcasting Cooperation radio presenters, Eric Knight and Ezra Sibanda, from the United Kingdom to represent Mbare and Vungu constituencies respectively in the 2013 elections. As alluded to the researcher by one respondent:

There were instances where candidates of a questionable association were imposed by the organising department e.g. Eric Knight in Mbare (Interview with Towo).

It seems that this persistent trend of candidate imposition by the MDC-T party leadership goes against the spirit and dictates of internal party democracy. Connected to this is evidence which suggests that, within the party, there are high levels of intolerance to internal criticism of its leadership, and specifically of Tsvangirai. For example, when party members raised the need for a leadership change in 2014, they received scathing criticisms from the MDC membership at both elite and grassroots levels. Those suggesting the need for a change in leadership included Ian Kay, Roy Bennett and Elias Mudzuri, as well as Tendai Biti and Elton Mangoma. I will discuss the matter of Biti and Mangoma later, as it relates to the 2014 split. As for Mudzuri, he had written a letter to Tsvangirai advising him to retire and become the ‘Mandela’ of the party (Mudzuri, 2014). In doing so, Mudzuri received a string of scathing criticism from the general MDC-T rank and file.

7.2.2 Candidate and Leadership Selection Mechanisms

I now discuss the candidate and leadership selection mechanisms within the MDC-T, with a particular emphasis on how these have engendered or constrained intra-party democracy. Selection methods are “the mechanisms by which a party chooses its candidates for the general elections” (Hazan and Rahat, 2010:1), with open and transparent leadership selection processes enhancing the legitimacy of the party leaders and democratic society at large (Michels, 1915; Duverger, 1959; Krouwel, 1999). In this way, transparent and inclusive processes of nominating and selecting party candidates and leaders contributes to shaping democratic politics both within and outside a particular political party (Rahat, 2009; Olayele, 2005).

In the case of the MDC-T, it would seem that some of its internal democracy challenges emanate from the candidate and leadership selection mechanisms adopted by the party. For instance, certain challenges exist because of the fact that the party uses a mixed-method approach in selecting its candidates and leadership into party positions, including appointments, confirmations and elections, as I show below.

The system of appointments is normally done at national level by the party leadership. This involves picking a candidate and placing him or her into a certain position of leadership within the party. As elaborated by one respondent:

Normally people who would have lost at Congress are appointed to a lower post within a particular level. They are usually given portfolio secretariats. They are then co-opted as portfolio committee secretaries. This is a way of trying to accommodate people and to minimise disgruntlements (Interview with Nyamukachi).

However, the system of appointments is far from perfect as many within the party become disgruntled because the system is open and prone to abuse. The MDC-T secretary-general acknowledged this:

Democracy has had its own limitations as well; limitations in the sense that the most popular [within internal party elections] are not necessarily the most able. In order to close this gap, we established a system of appointments, some through either co-optation by provincial, district and ward executives or by the president. However, this has often been abused. It is a good concept, which strikes balance between ability and popularity. However, candidate selection mechanisms have been abused to justify jobs for the 'boys' and 'girls' (Interview with Mwonzora).

In this respect, even Morgan Tsvangirai stresses that the party's procedures and processes of candidate selection have been profoundly divisive (Tsvangirai and Bango, 2011:403). One clear example of the divisive nature of leadership selection was the appointment of Nelson Chamisa and Elias Mudzuri as MDC-T vice presidents in addition to Thokozani Khupe. Such an appointment was viewed by some party elites and grassroots members as being 'unprocedural' while Tsvangirai claimed the appointment had been sanctioned by the party organ – the National Council – and was thus above board. His critics however maintained that the two vice presidents were supposed to be elected at Congress and not appointed. As a result, some members, Partson Murimoga and George Rice, filed a High Court application in quest of the nullification of the appointment of the two as vice presidents (Paidamoyo Muzulu, *Zimbabwe Situation*, 2 August 2016).

What we can see from the MDC-T party is that while appointments are meant to ensure that the ‘most able’ take up particular positions within the party, the system of confirmation and elections are supposed to prioritise the ‘most popular’. With reference to this, sitting MPs and councillors may need to go through two processes. First of all, the system of confirmation entails that incumbents do not compete with anyone to retain their status but are subjected to an electoral college which would either confirm or disconfirm their candidacy. In order to retain their status and hence be confirmed, a two-thirds majority of the electoral body must vote for them (Never Kadungure, *Nehanda Radio*, 25 May 2013). However, this process of confirmation has loopholes as explained by one respondent, who said:

This process is extremely undemocratic and not sensible. This could have explained the party’s dismal loss in the 2013 elections at the hands of ZANU-PF. For instance, a person could have lost 66% of the confidence [via the electoral college] but still become the candidate of the party (Interview with party official, anonymous, Harare, 3 December 2016).

A former member of the MDC-T’s Organising department made a similar point:

The process of confirmation was flawed as it sought to protect the incumbent from competitors. This might explain the MDC-T’s poor performance in the 2013 elections (Interview with Box).

The two-thirds voting regulation sets the bar very low when it comes to the possibility of bringing in party members as new candidates as possible MPs and councillors.

The process of confirmation goes hand-in-glove with elections, with the latter being the second of the two processes – that is, if the sitting MP fails to garner the required two-thirds majority. If a sitting MP or councillor fails confirmation by the Electoral College, then he or she is subjected to a primary election. In accordance with this approach, internal elections are also held in areas where the party has no sitting MP. In the case where the incumbent MP resigns or dies, the party opens up the space for primary elections to interested candidates but first they should receive nominations from members of the electoral college (Interview with Komichi; interview with Mudzuri).

In terms of leaders contesting for the top echelons of the party positions (i.e those contesting to enter into the Standing Committee as the top executive party organ), nominations from at least two provincial assemblies of the party need to be forthcoming. With these nominations, the party member is then eligible to contest for the desired position (for example post of secretary general) at an elective National Party Congress which is held after every five-year period.

The composition of the party electoral college includes party members in all the structures starting from the local levels. These structures comprise registered party members who are eligible to vote. What the MDC-T party refers to as an Electoral College, is often called a selectorate in other countries. It is simply the body tasked with selecting or electing candidates in a political organisation for public office (Rahat, 2009), with its composition varying considerably. In the case of the MDC-T, the dual confirmation-election process, like the appointment mechanism, has exposed the party's internal democratic practices as problematic and leading to democratic deficits. This point is nowhere more evident than in the following quote:

One of the weaknesses of the party has been the failure to properly and clearly set out the structures in a manner that does not cause dispute. This was a cause of serious problems in the primary election process before the 2013 election with disputes over who constituted the electoral colleges meant for candidates. This caused serious divisions, which caused resentment among members. There were serious complaints from across the country because of this weakness and going forward, the MDC needs to attend to it. As long as the structures remain unclear and vague, there will be problems in the internal electoral processes (Alex Magaisa, former advisor to Morgan Tsvangirai during the government of national unity era, *Nehanda Radio*, 3 November 2014).

In this context, I discuss the fragmentation of the MDC-T party and how this affected the party's agency in spearheading the democratisation process in Zimbabwe.

7.3 Fragmenting and Weakening of the MDC

The MDC party has over the years suffered from immense factionalism and fragmentation, a development that has weakened the party's agency in fighting for the entrenchment of democratic governance in Zimbabwe. Indeed, the impact of factionalism within the MDC-T has been apparent, as noted already, in the successive party splits (first in 2005 and then in 2014). Both splits had significant implications for party unity and cohesion. I provide a historical (chronological) account of the events that culminated in the split and fragmentation of the MDC starting from 2005. There has been and still is considerable contestation and debate on the factors behind the splits. One of the reasons for this polarity is that discourses around the splits have been articulated and narrated by interested and involved actors.

However, in analysing the splits, we see at least one recurrent pattern. This pattern relates to how the splits have emerged from the office of the Secretary-General. Nelson

Chamisa (party official) confirms this point. During one of his campaigns for the post of secretary-general in the run-up to the MDC-T 2014 elective congress, he stated that:

The position of secretary general has been a breeding ground of rebellion and arrogance, being that proverbial albatross around our necks as MDC family members (Bulawayo24News, 2 October 2014).

This trend of secretary-generals fermenting a MDC party split was apparent in the 2005 split which was led by then secretary-general Welshman Ncube, while the 2014 split was led by Tendai Biti (then secretary-general), though the project of splitting was fronted by Elton Mangoma (then deputy treasurer general). Another pattern is that both splits took place after electoral defeats, in 2005 and 2013 respectively.

Understanding the dynamics associated with the 2005 MDC split raises questions about the significance of internal and external factors to the party. Contrary to the dominant narrative which points to internal factors in accounting for the 2005 split, one respondent brought to the fore other factors. He stated that:

The 2005 MDC split occurred after the party had suffered a significant electoral defeat in the 2005 elections. There was a conclusion by certain members of our leadership that the MDC would never achieve power by democratic means. They felt that they had to make a deal with ZANU-PF. Thabo Mbeki [then South African president] who by that time had also fallen out with Tsvangirai supported them in this approach. He not only disliked Morgan Tsvangirai. He also thought the MDC was a major threat to the ANC in South Africa (because of our association with COSATU) (Interview with Cross).

He further added:

Consequently, after the MDC 2005 election defeat, Thabo Mbeki persuaded Welshman Ncube and his colleagues to break with Morgan Tsvangirai and the decision was taken backstage to force Morgan out of power. The principle player in that operation was Welshman but supported by four or five members of the top six²⁶ [within the party]. The issue of Senate then came to the fore. Welshman got the majority votes in the National Executive [about whether MDC should contest Senate elections] but only by

²⁶ The 'top six' is the colloquial term for the top party organ [Management Committee] within the MDC prior to the party split in 2005. After 2005, it was replaced by what is now known as the Standing Committee which has been expanded to include more elected officials. The top six comprised of Morgan Tsvangirai, as president; deputised by Gibson Sibanda; Welshman Ncube as secretary general; Fletcher Dulini Ncube as national treasurer general; Gift Chimanihire as deputy secretary general; and Isaac Matongo as national chair.

manipulating attendance. Some of us whom he knew would not support the motion were sent to South Africa on a pretext. Mutambara was recruited and imposed by Mbeki. The principle motivation was supported and funded by South Africa. Welshman led the local operation (Interview with Cross).

Though reference is made to the external machinations of Mbeki, Cross's explanation does not totally negate internal dynamics including tensions within the MDC leadership, including around the MDC's strategy on Senate. Despite the fact that most MDC accounts explain the 2005 party split through the anti-senate/pro-senate lens, issues of political ideologies also came into play, or so it is claimed. In this regard one informant stated the following:

In my view the 2005 MDC split was ideological. Most of the key leaders [the first MDC party leadership throughout the country] were trade unionists. Amongst this group there were solidarity elements which are found in the labour movement and such elements were a scarcity amongst people who came from other social organisations. So there was bound to be lack of common understanding on policy issues within the party. Party elites also differed in how to tackle the struggle (Interview with Komichi).

An official in the MDC-T youth executive highlighted both leadership wrangles and external interference (seemingly ZANU-PF's influence through the central intelligence office), and noted the prevalence of:

Personal interests, which surpassed the general interests of the people. Further, some of the leaders felt they could do better than Tsvangirai's leadership. Generally, the split occurred because of the misguidance of leaders by outsiders as well as infiltration by the central intelligence organisation (Interview with Hlatshwayo).

Undoubtedly, though, the issue of entering Senate or not features prominently in the discourses explaining the 2005 MDC split. The decision by the MDC party president to boycott the 2005 Senate elections, against the decision of the national executive, was interpreted by the pro-Senate faction (led by Ncube) as a disregard for internal party democracy and testified to Tsvangirai's 'undemocratic and violent tendencies'; thereby leading to irreconcilable differences (Mzila-Ndlovu, public seminar, 30 October 2013). Moses Mzila-Ndlovu, who went along with the breakaway pro-Senate faction, thus alludes to the defiance of crucial internal party resolutions by the party president. Overall, the pro-Senate faction places much salience on claims about power abuse and centralisation of power in fermenting the 2005 MDC party split. This point is evident in the excerpt below, in which Welshman Ncube makes the following assertions:

The split of the MDC was caused by Tsvangirai's repeated refusal to accept collective decisions, his penchant for unilaterally reversing collective decisions, his resort to violence as an instrument of political organisation, his frequent deployment of ethnicity as a political weapon and or shield (*NewZimbabwe*, 25 July 2014).

It is important to stress that, after the 2005 split, both the pro- and anti-Senate factions (the MDC-Mutambara and MDC-T respectively) traded insults and accusations (a trend still being reproduced to date). Such inter-party relations also militated against the re-unification of the two MDC factions so as to fight ZANU-PF as a united front in the 2008 and 2013 elections.

One particular nasty accusation, implied in an above quotation, was that Welshman Ncube was a central intelligence operative who infiltrated the MDC to weaken the opposition. This accusation appears to lack merit insofar as such narratives have been loosely deployed by members of the MDC party on other occasions in labelling and silencing real or perceived competitors from within. Such labelling and apparently smear campaigns pursued by MDC-T officials were popularised through the discourse of '*Uri muZANU-PF*' or '*Uri muC.I.O.*' (meaning 'you are either a ZANU-PF person' or 'you are an infiltrator from the Central Intelligence Organisation').

Such ascribed political categorisations and identifications are referred to within MDC-T circles as '*politikisi dzekusvibisana*' (meaning 'soiling of one's image by political opponents') (Interview with Gutu). The net effect of such negative identifications, however, has been to exclude, redefine, disqualify and delegitimise competing political actors. Nevertheless, MDC-T party-centric accounts still underscore the role of infiltration in undermining the strength of the opposition. This point is evident in the following quote:

The party has been infiltrated more than it was in the past years. As of now, it is difficult to plan ahead and make strategic decisions, as ZANU-PF would be aware of what will be happening from within the party. This infiltration started way back in the days of Welsh [Ncube] and company (Interview with party official, anonymous, 10 March 2016, Harare).

Talking about this issue of infiltration, the MDC-T national youth chairperson said the following:

The party has been heavily infiltrated by members of the central intelligence organisation. Even within the continuous MDC splits, you can easily locate the hand of external actors (Interview with Chidziva).

After having discussed the 2005 MDC split and how it weakened the party, I move on to examine the party congresses. I undertake a specific focus on the 2011 and 2014 congresses insofar as they were the most divisive in the history of the MDC party.

7.3.1 MDC Congresses and Factionalism

The 2005 MDC split certainly weakened the party's opposition to ZANU-PF, but even further problems arose with reference to MDC-T unity subsequent to 2005, including the 2014 split. In this context, I now move on to examine the divisiveness which existed at MDC-T party congresses in 2011 and 2014.

The MDC, and thereafter the MDC-T, has held four national congresses to date, including the first held in Chitungwiza in 2000 and a second one held at the City Sports Centre in Harare in 2006. The party then held its third congress at the Barbour Fields Stadium in Bulawayo in 2011 followed by the recent fourth congress held in 2014 at Harare City Sports Centre (Show Ground) in Harare. The last elective congress was in fact scheduled for 2016 but was brought forward to 2014 after Biti and Mangoma led a breakaway (Patrice Makova, *The Standard*, 16 March 2014).

Although scholars contend that “factionalism is a fact of life within most political parties” (Dewan and Squintani, 2015:3; Harmel et al., 1995: 7) , it would seem that – for the MDC-T – factionalism has been particularly persistent and deep, and has led to declining party membership. Ultimately, factions are “antithetical to the achievement of common goals” (Dewan and Squintani, 2015:3), and it would be a fair assertion to suggest that the MDC-T party has over the years spent considerable energy and time fighting within and against itself, rather than in recruiting and mobilising new membership and in spearheading the democratisation struggle in Zimbabwe. Though the party has a tradition of holding regular elective national congresses after every five years, these congresses have been riven with factional infighting.

One example is the internal factional fights which occurred during the 2011 congress held in Bulawayo (Levy Mukarati, *Financial Gazette*, 6 May 2011). The 2011 congress saw the eruption of factional violence among supporters, pitting candidate Gordon Moyo against Senator Matson Hlalo over the Bulawayo provincial chairperson's position. The tensions between these two individuals continued to tear the party apart in the succeeding years (*Bulawayo24News*, 24 March 2012). This is demonstrated by the continued factional fights and physical violence between the youth aligned to the two (*New Zimbabwe*, 22 April 2011). At the 2011 congress, there was a litany of other factional clashes, and many others took place in

the run-up to the 2014 congress held in Harare. As well, after Gordon Moyo left MDC-T with the Biti breakaway in 2014, the factional power struggles over the leadership of the Bulawayo province persisted between Matson Hlalo and Gift Banda. These internal power struggles weakened the MDC-T and also distracted the party in fighting for the consolidation of democracy within the wider polity.

Towards the 2014 elective congress, the party witnessed virulent factionalism (as exemplified through hate speeches, insults and conflicts) within the provincial congresses, as well as between the supporters of the then national organising party secretary (Nelson Chamisa) and the then secretary for information and publicity (Douglas Mwonzora) (Zimbabwe Peace Project, 2014). The two were competing for the post of Secretary General. In the 2014 MDC-T national congress, Mwonzora went on to garner 2,464 votes against Chamisa's 1,756. It is notable that, because of the high levels of infighting within the provincial party congresses, Tsvangirai as MDC-T leader was forced to undertake the personal accreditation of delegates in Manicaland province after violence had erupted on the 12th of October 2014 (Zimbabwe Peace Project, 2014:3). Again, these problems relate back to the party's candidate s/election processes and they tended to leave the party structures fragmented. One informant in the comment below illustrates this point: "By their nature internal elections are divisive, they divide people permanently" (Interview with Komichi).

Post the MDC-T 2014 congress, the party still experienced factional fights. This development in turn posed great challenges to party unity and to policy co-ordination. In reference to the MDC-T party, and writing on its blog, the Democracy in Africa stated that "the politics of factionalism within [the party] bruised and weakened political opposition" (Democracy in Africa, 2014). Commenting on the degenerative effect of factionalism within the party, one respondent described the party's state of affairs in the period after the 2014 congress as follows:

The party emerged weak and highly factionalised as a result of the 2014 congress, in particular because of the fight between Mwonzora and Chamisa (Interview with MDC-T youth, anonymous, 21 September 2016, Harare).

The factions which emerged in the run-up to, and at, the 2014 congress were not ones which could be termed as 'ideological factions'; rather they were 'leadership factions' (see Janda, 1993). Put somewhat differently, the factions had less to do with ideological tensions and more to do with the tussle for top leadership posts within the party. Perhaps in an attempt to limit the prospects for factional struggles, and to demonstrate a commitment to democratic procedures, the party sought the services of the ZCTU in conducting its 2014 elective congress. On this

account alone, it may be an unfair characterisation to dismiss the MDC-T congress elections as being ‘not free and not fair’.

At the same time, the MDC-T has always evoked the founder syndrome built around the personality of Tsvangirai in order to bar other contestants who would want to vie for the top job (of being party president) at the national congresses. This point is evident in the following quote by Nelson Chamisa (as a top MDC official) who in 2014 clearly warned those aspiring to contest against Tsvangirai. He said, reminiscent of ZANU-PF arguments about the status of Mugabe:

Tsvangirai is a commander of the struggle. In a struggle there is a commander, others are lieutenants and no lieutenants should say they want to be a commander; if you dream while sleeping on a mountain that you want to be a leader, we say no to that. He is the founding father of democracy in Zimbabwe, the doyen of constitutionalism. You can't replace a person chosen by God (Newsday, 4 March 2014).

In considering such a statement from the point of view of political discourse analysis, the reference to, and invocation of God, in the MDC-T party narrative is a strategy to perpetuate Tsvangirai's stay in power (as he is framed as being ordained by the Lord). Basing on this evidence alone, it might be concluded with a degree of certainty that the MDC-T is largely averse to internal competition. Because of this culture, the party has witnessed a recurrent trend whereby Tsvangirai has been re-elected uncontested at the successive MDC congresses.

7.3.2 MDC-T 2014 Split and Party Stability

In 2014, the MDC-T party further split with Tendai Biti and Elton Mangoma moving on to form a breakaway party called MDC-Renewal. One respondent explained the events that led to the party rupture in the following words:

This split was ... a manifestation of perennial problems of personalities and the problem of leadership succession within the party ranks. As a result, two groups emerged. One argued that the current party president must leave office and an arrangement of some sort be done. On the other hand, the other faction [aligned to Tsvangirai] argued that leadership renewal was supposed to be done through a democratic process via a special congress with the current leader eligible to stand. Those who felt they could not win at Congress [Biti faction] decided to breakaway (Interview with party official, anonymous, 21 November 2015, Harare).

However, a 2014 report by the International Crisis Group claimed that the 2014 MDC-T rupture emerged because of the party's crushing defeat at the hands of ZANU-PF in the 2013

elections (International Crisis Group, 2014). This point was also evident in the fieldwork interviews. Several respondents noted that there has been a point of similarity in the two main splits, with both emerging after election defeats (Interview with Chidziva; Interview with Komichi). It may be argued though that, if the party had won the 2013 election or at least had done considerably better than it actually did, then the issues raised by the Biti camp on the need for leadership renewal and on the lack of strategic thinking (on the part of Tsvangirai) might have not be raised. In the developments that led to the breakaway from the MDC-T, the Biti-Mangoma group traded accusations with the Tsvangirai-led group on the dearth and decomposition of intra-party democracy within the party (*Herald*, 28 April 2014; Biti, 2014b). Writing about the 2014 split and its effect on opposition party unity, the Bertelsmann Foundation (2014) commented that: “The 2005 split of the party was certainly a major setback to further consolidation, but perhaps a necessary step in the formation of the Zimbabwean party system” (Bertelsmann Foundation, 2014:15). Below I provide a discourse analysis of the speech acts around the contestations of Tsvangirai’s leadership and the general democratic deficit internal to the MDC-T party.

In pursuing the leadership renewal discourse, Elton Mangoma wrote a letter to Tsvangirai advising him to step down and pave way for a new party president (Elton Mangoma see, *Herald*, 27 January 2014). In this letter, Mangoma cited several reasons why Tsvangirai should step down including democratic deficiencies within the party, Tsvangirai’s messy love life which was in the public domain, and the party’s incessant electoral losses at the hands of ZANU-PF. In an interview aired on Zi-FM radio station, Tendai Biti summed up the reasons behind their split from the mainstream MDC-T party to form MDC-Renewal, namely emanating from:

Differences in principles and values, refusal of the reality of leadership renewal, transformation and change by Morgan Tsvangirai, and also the betrayal of the values in which the original MDC party was formed in 1999; and as an opposition to ‘Big Man’ politics within the opposition party (*Zi-FM Interview* with Tendai Biti on the Platform, 2015).

Contrary to these assertions, Tsvangirai resisted the party leadership renewal discourse (as put forward by Biti and Mangoma) as illegitimate and unconstitutional. He also equated their actions to a ‘boardroom coup’. In his self-defence, he argued that:

The other false narrative is that I want to die in office. I will state unequivocally that I have no intention of staying a day longer at the helm of the MDC without the people’s mandate. But, I will also pronounce, with the same vigour and vehemence, that I will not

be hounded out undemocratically through a hostile take-over outside a people's process called a party Congress. We cannot be self-contradictory as to claim to be democrats when at the same time we want to remove elected leadership through coup d'état (Morgan Tsvangirai, 2014).

As can be seen, Tsvangirai sought to portray and self-define himself as a democratic and responsive leader answerable to the party structures and membership. At the same time, he framed and categorised his internal competitors as intra-party 'dissenters' who were being power hungry and disloyal to the party leadership. He did this more specifically by conflating 'I' and 'we', as if he by definition was the party. In this way, Tsvangirai managed to downplay, overrule and mobilise against the discourse of leadership change and succession by rallying a collective identity and solidarity of party members behind his leadership.

Of course, Tsvangirai has loyalists who can speak on his behalf. For instance, Obert Gutu, who is now MDC-T's spokesperson, contested and rejected the idea that Tsvangirai had overstayed his mandate as the party leader. He said the following:

Morgan Richard Tsvangirai is the lawful and legitimate leader of the democratic movement; overwhelmingly and popularly elected by congress in Bulawayo in 2011. He has the mandate of the party to lead us and yes, he should continue to lead us. Now these shrill sounds from some sickly fake democrats calling for his unconstitutional removal from office simply won't cut. These fake democrats are wolves in sheep's skin. Publicly, they lampoon and lambast how July 31 was stolen [the 2013 election] but we know that deep down in their hearts, they never wanted Morgan to get to State House. They hold meetings, Nicodemously, at some dingy lodge in the avenues and some other such places where they scheme and plot. They cannot be trusted. They never mean what they say nor say what they mean. They speak in forked tongues. They are rabidly power-hungry. Enough is enough. The gloves are off. We will match them pound for pound. They might think they are intelligent but of course, some of us are smarter and more intelligent than them. We will expose them for what they really are (Obert Gutu, quoted in *New Zimbabwe*, 18 September 2013).

However, considering the ways in which the MDC-T party has dealt with internal power struggles, succession politics and dissent, it appears that the party often has been averse and antagonistic to internal criticism, or at least this is the view of those opposed to Tsvangirai. Thus, Jacob Mafume (spokesperson of the splinter formation led by Biti), based on his own perspective and personal experiences with Tsvangirai and with the MDC-T party in general, challenged the dominant political discourse that presented the party as a democratic

organisation. He summed up the state of internal party democracy and the lack of leadership succession in the MDC-T in the following words:

What we are witnessing from Mr. Tsvangirai is a serious “Zanufication” of the party processes as those who hold opposing views from him are being expelled without due processes and this is detrimental to the people of Zimbabwe’s goals of attaining a democratic transition in Zimbabwe [...]. What is clear to the people of Zimbabwe is that Mr. Tsvangirai is an undemocratic leader who has resorted to the use of violence, purges and intimidation to cow party organs into submission in pursuit of his selfish interest of maintaining his authoritarian grip on power. We are aware of the existence of a clique around him that is bent on decimating the party for fear of losing at Congress. It is sad that the people’s project is being sacrificed on the altar of expediency (Mafume, 2014: see MDC-Team Press statement, 11 April 2014).

The linguistic choices in the above text (for instance, the *use of violence*, *his authoritarian grip*, *purges and intimidation*, *without due process*, and *Zanufication*) are examples of how language (as political discourse) was selectively deployed by the disgruntled and antagonised MDC-T party members to frame the MDC-T party in general and the party president in particular as ‘undemocratic’. In this respect, Chilton and Schäffner (1997:212) conceive political discourse as any discourse whose linguistic traits and intended material effects centre on power or its counter (counter-power).

Like Tsvangirai, Mafume slips easily between his own personal thoughts, ‘we’ and even ‘the people’ – in Tsvangirai’s case, Tsvangirai presents himself as embodying a ‘people’s process’. Thus, in seeking to claim the soul and authenticity of the party, and in proposing or disputing the prevalence of internal party democracy and the need for leadership succession, both sides in the factional dispute constructed an imaginary collective or people or a shared sense of belonging by mobilising what is referred to by Snow (2001) as the notion of we-ness. It certainly seems that the deployment of such narratives provided a platform for both factions to collectively contest, legitimise and reproduce certain positions of power within the MDC-T party.

It is plausible to argue that the use of collective identities by Biti’s faction was a ploy for challenging Tsvangirai’s power, leadership and dominance. After all, for Mafume, Tsvangirai was simply supported by a ‘clique’ which does not have the interest of the party at heart. Simultaneously, for Tsvangirai, Biti’s team was bent on staging a coup, which implies a small minority involved in undemocratic scheming. Understanding these narratives as political discourses embedded in power struggles is essential in the sense that they help to show the

ways in which the different factions positioned themselves by framing each other as devoid almost inherently of all democratic values, culture and practices. Varied and competing interests, as well as power dynamics and personal motivations, combined to shape the factional discourses within the MDC-T during the time period of the 2014 split.

This can be illustrated by way of further quotations. The former secretary general of the MDC-T party (Tendai Biti) described the dearth of internal democracy in the MDC-T in the following words:

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

It is no surprise then that the Biti breakaway labelled itself as MDC-Renewal, as it sought to return to the foundational values of the united 1999 MDC. In the wake of such a call for leadership renewal, the Tsvangirai-aligned faction shaped and propagated its own counter-discourse favourable to the faction's own interests. This faction's discourse is illustrated in the excerpt below from Tsvangirai's spokesperson who sought to construct, express and sustain the identity (Snow, 2001) of Morgan Tsvangirai as a patriotic democrat:

Notwithstanding that the 45 district structures expressed their faith in the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai, he still encouraged debate in the party on this issue which in most political parties is sacred and sacrosanct. It is not every day that a leader in his second year of a five-year term can encourage open debate and discussion about leadership renewal. But being the democrat he is, Morgan Tsvangirai encouraged debate despite owing his mandate to Congress and not to individuals, including individuals in the Standing Committee. That several officials and leaders in the party, lately deputy treasurer-general Elton Mangoma, have publicly spoken about the need for leadership renewal and their wish to lead the MDC speaks to thriving and evident democracy in the party. It speaks to a leadership that does not censor or curtail ambition. It speaks to a party where robust debate and free speech are the currency (Tamborinyoka, 2014).

All this shows the extent of the polarisation, animosity, tensions and power struggles which characterised the MDC-T party at the time of the 2014 split. Undoubtedly, the pre-occupation with power struggles and (overt and covert) schemes over leadership succession which predate the 2013 elections, affected the party's internal cohesion and its efficacy to deepen and institutionalise a culture of democratic politics in the Zimbabwean political

landscape. Following the months of infighting, Biti finally led a breakaway formation. Importantly, many civil society organisations were caught up in this internal party politics, adopting positions in support of one of the two camps. Additionally, the Biti camp sought to align itself with civil society groups as well as with smaller opposition parties in order to form a united front (Diakonia, 2014:12).

There exist several similarities between the split of 2005 and that of 2014. A key similarity lies in the fact that during the MDC party's further schism in 2014, as in 2005, the MDC factions devoted significant effort in fighting over the party's name (contesting, so to speak, over the same identity). The two factions thus litigated over ownership of the patent rights to the MDC party name and identity (*Herald*, 24 June 2014; Fidelis Munyoro and Felex Share, *Herald*, 28 June 2014). It is also worth reiterating another discernible similarity between the 2005 and 2014 split – that they occurred after election defeats (Interview with Chidziva; Interview with Komichi).

Post the 2014 split, the Tsvangirai camp and the Biti camp became involved in further antagonising of each other at the expense of cooperating and pushing for substantive democratic reforms in the Zimbabwean polity. This constant fracturing and ongoing manifestations of power struggles as exemplified in the continued internal infighting within the MDC-T party undoubtedly militated against the building of a strong party organisation.

7.4 Women in the MDC-T

So far, this discussion of the MDC-T has remained silent about gender issues within the party. The question of women in the MDC-T is not a key focus of the thesis and it is certainly one theme which requires further study. In this section, I briefly consider how the party has addressed issues to do with women's emancipation and upliftment in governance processes within the party.

Issues to do with women's political participation in, and elevation to, top leadership positions in political parties has at times taken centre stage in several sub-Saharan African polities (Matlosa et al., 2007). To this end, there seems to be a general consensus that increased representation of previously marginalised and underrepresented social groups, such as women, helps in entrenching strong democracies. In the case of the MDC-T, numerous strides have been taken in uplifting women into top leadership positions within the party. As noted by the MDC-T party spokesperson:

The party has gone out of its way to say there should be a quota for female candidates. We have been hammering on the 50 – 50-gender parity [in both the party and parliament].

Nevertheless, it is not easy; we are far from achieving that. ... Given the nature of our politics, most women do not win. The political terrain is hazardous due to physical, psychological and emotional abuse ... Most ... women are disadvantaged in terms of resources to run campaigns (Interview with Gutu).

The party has pushed for affirmative action policies and measures in order to advance women's political representation, voice and participation, and in promoting gender equality and parity in both elective and non-elective positions at party level. To this effect, MDC-T has pursued the motto '*Equal Opportunities for All*'. The comment below illuminates this point:

The MDC-T is one of the parties that has strongly advocated for women's empowerment, representation and upliftment. ... We have strived to attain gender parity (Obert Gutu's presentation at Mass Public Opinion Institute public seminar, 28 July 2016²⁷).

The party has in practice ensured that women occupy some party leadership positions. In its Standing Committee (its top party organ), the party has several women who include the deputy president Thokozani Khupe, who was elected at the MDC-T party congress in 2006 as a replacement to the veteran trade unionist Gibson Sibanda. Other women in the Standing Committee include Paurina Gwanyanya-Mpariwa (deputy secretary general), Lynett Karenyi-Kore (women chairperson), Theresa Makone (Treasurer General) and Thabitha Khumalo (deputy secretary for Information and Publicity) (MDC-T website, 2016²⁸).

However, in Zimbabwe (as is the case elsewhere in Africa) women's participation in politics (at least in opposition politics) has been low. This is in part due to the patriarchal systems, practices and discourses which pervade Zimbabwean society such that the active presence of women in the public sphere is often frowned upon. The highly contentious character of politics in the country, as well as the violence pervasive within it, also tends to rule out women as unsuitable for party politics; with party politics seen as a space more suitable for masculinity than femininity.

At the same time, one analyst argues that the MDC-T only places women into party leadership positions to appear gender-sensitive (that is, as mere window-dressing) when in fact the party does not pay serious attention to, or value, the contribution of such women (*Zimbabwe*

²⁷ Obert Gutu, MDC-T National Spokesperson, Topic: Recent Popular Protests: Spontaneous Public Anger or Work of Third Force? Venue: New Ambassador Hotel, MPOI, Harare, 28 July 2016, seminar attended by the researcher.

²⁸ For a detailed list of the number of women in the MDC-T Standing Committee as of 2016 refer to MDC -T website: <http://www.mdc.co.zw/index.php/about-us-1/party-structure>

Independent, 29 July 2016). This view is underscored by one of the MDC's founding members, Grace Kwinjeh, who bemoans the gender-based inequalities, gender disparities, under-representation and marginalisation of women within the party leadership structures (a development which, she claims, is perpetrated by male counterparts) (Grace Kwinjeh, *New African*, 2007/08). In an interview, Dorcas Sibanda – a female legislator from the MDC-T – also confirmed this point. She stated that the issue of women participation and involvement in leadership at local and national levels was still a cause of great concern, and that the party had not pursued this vigorously enough (Interview with Sibanda).

In terms of promoting good governance, the MDC-T did play a role in lobbying during the GNU period for the inclusion of a women's legislative quota system in the new national constitution. Such efforts helped in addressing the malady of under-representation of women in governance processes (Public address by Lynett Karenzi-Kore, MDC-T women assembly chair, Prayer Rally, 11 July 2015 held in Highfields, Zimbabwe Grounds, Harare²⁹). As a result of the adoption and incorporation of such a clause in the new constitution, the MDC-T party then went on to field a sizeable number of women legislators for the national legislature (through the proportional representation quota system).

7.5 MDC-T Financing

Political party financing plays a significant role in sustaining the management, operations and development of political parties, the world over (Fomunyoh, 2001). It hence can enable or constrain the struggle for democratic transition and consolidation. As noted by the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, an election-oriented civic organisation, "political parties need funding to play their part in the political process" (ZESN, 2015:15). In the case of the MDC-T in Zimbabwe, it is undeniable that external funders have bankrolled most of its programmes (mostly governments in North America and the European Union) through their local embassies in Zimbabwe. The fact that the party continues to receive foreign funding from these governments is well-known (John Kachembere, *Daily News* 23 February 2014; Herbert Moyo, *Zimbabwe Independent* 15 February 2013). In a study by Chan (2011:176) he established that, in its early years, the party received significant levels of foreign funding from Scandinavian countries. Over many years, Roy Bennett (the former party treasurer general) acted as the party's key entry point into the donor community.

²⁹ I attended this prayer rally on the 11th of July in 2015 and the quote above is part of my field notes.

In spite of the existence of this evidence, the MDC-T regularly claims that it in large part funds itself from local sources. This claim is understandable given the stringent political party finance regulations in Zimbabwe as contained in the Political Parties Finance Act, with specific relation to section 6 of the act. In this regard, the party vehemently declines to disclose its sources of private funding, only declaring that it receives funds from its party membership. The following extract from a newspaper interview with one top MDC-T party member illustrates this point:

The source of finance for the MDC as a political party are the government grant, members' subscriptions and donations from its members and other people. It is normal to fundraise for the party, we are simply fundraising for our activities – it is a legitimate way for fundraising (Douglas Mwonzora, MDC-T secretary general, *New Zimbabwe*, 20 November 2016).

In a heated argument between the current MDC-T national spokesperson, Obert Gutu, and Jealousy Mawarire (national spokesperson of the Zimbabwe People First party led by Joyce Mujuru, former ZANU-PF stalwart), Gutu denied that the MDC-T was sponsored by white commercial farmers (Gutu, Mass Public Opinion Institute public lecture, 28 July 2016³⁰). On the contrary, Mawarire asserted that:

The MDC party flip-flopped on the issue of land reform, mainly because it wanted to please its financiers (the white commercial farmers). This is on public record and we saw the MDC leader, Morgan Tsvangirai in 2002 appearing on national television signing a cheque with commercial white farmers. However, there is nothing wrong or bad in white Zimbabweans financing a legitimate political party of their choice (Mawarire, 28 July 2016 Mass Public Opinion Institute seminar, 28 July 2016).

The question of white commercial farmers funding the party relates back to the early days of the MDC, even to late 1999 when it was first formed. The extant literature on the MDC also notes that the party gets its funding from “among others, white farmers and British Tories” (Alexander, 2000:385). This might have been the case in the early years of the party. Post the fast track land reform programme, few commercial white farmers still exist in Zimbabwe as most of them left or were chased away at the height of the land seizures and in subsequent years.

³⁰ Public Seminar attended by the Researcher, New Ambassador Hotel, Harare, 28 July 2016.

However, of particular concern has been the issue of lack of financial transparency or financial accountability and even allegations of misuse of the MDC-T party finances, including by the current party treasurer General Theresa Makone – claims which the party dismisses as false (Elias Mambo, *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 27 February 2015). To confirm the general absence of financial transparency regarding party finances, I cite one party official who stated the following:

We are not the new boys on the block anymore – we have been here for 16 years, we have not covered ourselves with glory in the way we have handled funds in the past – there has been abuse (Eddie Cross, PoliticsWeb 16 November 2016).

It is important to note that the MDC-T party's channels of finances are largely centralised within the office of the secretary general and that of the treasurer general. Despite this attempt to centralise party finances to maximise control, issues of financial abuse have always cropped up. This point is corroborated in a letter addressed to Tsvangirai in 2014 by then deputy Treasurer General Elton Mangoma, who forcefully acknowledges the lack of financial transparency within the MDC-T party. In his words:

How will we put closure to the question of misuse of funds, and ensure that our friends regain confidence that donations will be channelled to the people's project going forward? (Extracts from Mangoma's letter addressed to Tsvangirai; see the *Herald*, 27 January 2014).

The above admission clearly reveals the MDC-T party's poor financial accountability and management (and poor corporate governance). It is also reported, as intimated in Mangoma's letter, that most of the party's programmes have been heavily affected and compromised because most of the party's traditional donors (Western governments through their embassies in Zimbabwe) pulled out their funding in the post-2013 election period citing the MDC-T party's misappropriation of funds (*Sunday Mail*, 20 July 2014). However, I argue that, in some way, the donor withdrawal may be simply a reaction to the realisation of the diminishing electoral viability of opposition politics in Zimbabwe. To corroborate this, I refer to an interview by the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper in 2014 with one member of the MDC-T national executive (who spoke anonymously): "Tsvangirai has apparently lost the support of some of our traditional donors, and it looks like there is no quick way out of our funding predicament" (*Mail & Guardian*, 7 March 2014). This donor pull-out affected detrimentally the discharge of several MDC-T party programmes, since the party heavily depended on donor funding even though claims to the contrary exist.

In the same vein, it is worth noting that although the MDC-T valorises the principle of good governance, there appears to be a general tendency in the party to report on its financial expenditure only to external donors and not to its grassroots membership. This trend is what has been termed by Edwards and Hulme (1996) as upward accountability. This entails non-disclosure by the MDC-T party to the general party membership about funds received from external donors and party membership, as well as about levels and forms of expenditure; in other words, an absence of downward accountability. Such a flaw in financial reporting and lack of open public disclosure seems to go against the principles and imperatives of good corporate governance, namely, transparency and accountability to which the party purports to abide (see, MDC-T 2013 Election Manifesto). It is consistent though with the broader internal democratic deficits within the party as discussed earlier.

7.6 Policy-Making within the MDC-T

This leads me to discuss another issue central to internal party democracy, specifically the process of policy development within the MDC-T party. Generally, issues of policy development within political parties are defining features of how a party organisation accommodates its membership in the running of the party's internal affairs (Maiyo, 2008; Hofmeister and Grabow, 2011). The MDC-T party claims that, since the formation of the MDC in 1999, it has managed to involve grassroots members in policy formulation (Interview with Chidziva; Interview with Mudzuri; Interview with Komichi). This point is also highlighted for instance in the RESTART policy document, where it is claimed that the party has always had "internal participatory consultation processes" regarding the crafting of party policies (MDC, 2004:2). This might not be entirely true though. All the same, the party has managed to hold frequent national policy conferences. One such example is the National Policy Conference from May 17th to 19th of May 2013 held at the Jubilee Christian Centre in Harare (*AllAfrica*, 21 May 2013).

Notably, the party regularly relies on expert outsiders to craft its policies even though it does not normally disclose this to the public, as a former employee in the Research and Policy department of the party claims (Interview with Moyo). This point runs contrary to claims made by Tsvangirai and Bango who argue that: "One important feature that set the MDC apart from other political parties in Zimbabwe, past and present, was our engagement of our grassroots structures on policy formulation and scenario planning" (Tsvangirai and Bango, 2011:420). Writing elsewhere, Tsvangirai reveals however that external experts played a dominant role in

designing MDC-T policies over the years. He thus made the following remarks in a foreword to the 2008 MDC-T party policy handbook:

The MDC policy council, comprising the leadership of the movement in Zimbabwe, assisted by many friends and colleagues all over the world, has been working on a comprehensive revision of our economic and social policies since our second congress in March 2006 (MDC-T, 2008:v).

In spite of the fact that the party policy-making process has likely involved multiple stakeholders, the party leadership has always played a dominant if not overriding role in influencing internal policy development ahead of any involvement by the general party membership. This is evident in the key role played by the National Council of the party together with policy secretaries in shaping MDC-T party policymaking (see MDC-T Constitution, 2011³¹; MDC-T website, 2016)³². The MDC-T portfolio secretaries are the ones who engage with the day to day business of party policy formulation.

Admittedly, MDC-T also makes use of various spaces such as policy conventions, party organs (such as the National Council) and national congresses to engage party activists and members on policy development. But, in the main, this entails token inclusion of party members such that there is no effective, meaningful and broad-based participation of the grassroots party members in policy development. Indeed, in perusing through the MDC-T party's policy proposals and documents, it becomes readily apparent that the party's policy papers are often couched in technical jargon, which ordinary party members and delegates cannot easily comprehend. This is particularly true if policy documents centring on issues around micro- and macro- economic fundamentals such as foreign direct investment are scrutinised (see for example MDC-T JUICE policy document, 2012). Consequently, the token participation of the general party membership ends up as a window-dressing exercise. Policy making within the MDC-T is mostly done within party offices, with policy conferences and national congresses acting as platforms to endorse or rubber stamp already designed policies. This top-down and centralised policy making model is not only evident within the MDC-T

³¹ The original constitution of the party was adopted in 2000 and then amended and adopted in 2011. The constitution has since been amended again in 2014 and in 2016 to cater for the inclusion of the two additional vice-presidents.

³² See detailed role of the National Council in relation to policy formulation at the MDC-T website (2016): <http://www.mdc.co.zw/index.php/about-us-1/party-structure>

party in Zimbabwe as it seems to be the dominant trend within parties in sub-Saharan Africa as validated by a study on East African political parties (Maiyo, 2008).

It is also pertinent to stress that the MDC-T has had many challenges in reconciling policy issues pursued by the donor community against the party's own perspective. For example, though the party makes liberal claims, Tsvangirai has faced challenges in clearly and convincingly articulating issues around the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ) people (*New Zimbabwe*, 25 October 2011; *BBC News*, 24 October 2011). On many occasions, the donor community has quizzed the MDC leader on his party's policy stance on the rights of those with alternative sexual orientations (*BBC News*, 24 October 2011). On this account, it can be argued that the party's policy, at least with respect to sexual orientation, has been partly driven by donor interests due to upward accountability pressures. It is evident that the MDC-T party supports the rights of those with different sexual orientations but only under pressure from donors. Yet, in itself the party is uncomfortable with such policy articulations despite being a pro-liberal party that values the indispensability or inalienability of fundamental human rights.

The land question is another issue about which the MDC-T party's policy is marked by ambivalence. A study by Sims confirms incessant shifts in the party policy concerning land reform (Sims, 2015). In fact, the party has lacked a coherent and consistent policy position regarding the land issue. This point becomes clear when examining the convoluted party policy proposals on how to address the Zimbabwean land question as exemplified in the MDC-T's Agenda for Real Transformation policy handbook (MDC-T, 2013:44-56). For this reason, it is difficult to comprehend the claim often made by the MDC-T to the effect that it was the MDC which brought the issue of land to the fore, prior to it being hijacked by ZANU-PF (MDC-T, 2013:44; Interview with Hlatshwayo; Interview with Mudzuri; Interview with Gwiyo). It is because of the absence of clear policies on such critical matters that some observers have criticised the MDC-T for being more inclined towards propagating their "distaste for Mugabe" at the expense of generating clear alternative policy interventions and proposals (Maroleng, 2004:2).

7.7 Culture of Violence within the MDC-T

This section analyses how the MDC-T party has institutionalised, embraced and internalised violent political discourses and practices within itself. Publicly, the party pronounces itself as being a victim of state-sponsored violence and not a perpetrator of violence (MDC-T Press Statement titled *MDC is not a Terrorist Organisation*, 29 August 2016). Undoubtedly, its

members have been victims but this is not the complete story. To present itself exclusively as a victim is in part a diversionary tactic. In this way, the party tends to cover up the inherent violent tendencies within the party, even by shifting the blame for intra-party violence onto party infiltration by central intelligence operatives and ZANU-PF elements (MDC-T Press Statement, 29 August 2016).

It is simply too sweeping of a statement to entirely blame the ZANU-PF party-state for the internal violent episodes which have occurred within the MDC-T party over the years. At times, the party has resorted to the use of violence in solving internal squabbles. As well, if only in retaliation, the party has also mobilised violence against ZANU-PF, notably during election campaign periods. Such acts of retaliatory violence have led to ZANU-PF alleging that MDC-T youths often orchestrate violence through petrol bombing houses of ZANU-PF members, police stations and other public institutions (Human Rights Watch, 2007; Freeman Razemba, *Herald*, 5 June 2011). However, such acts might be ZANU-PF actions for purposes of maligning the opposition.

The MDC-T party has repeatedly made the pronouncement that the party is a party of 'excellence' which abides to peaceful non-violent democratic change (Morgan Tsvangirai's speech at the launch of the 2013 Harmonised Election Campaign, 2013:2). But evidence points to the contrary. For example, the party has deployed force and violence to maintain certain urban spaces (as its own zones of control). Two party activists aptly elaborated on this point with reference to a place in Harare:

In Epworth, we [the MDC –T] control an area called Pentagon. Even the party president Morgan Tsvangirai knows about the existence of the Pentagon. Whenever he visits Epworth he makes a stopover. It is an MDC-T stronghold ... where ZANU-PF could not enter. Now ZANU-PF elements led by Kasukuwere [Minister of Local Governance and Urban Development] is talking of acquiring the Pentagon area. ZANU-PF claims it want to construct a stadium there. We know these are all lies. Its motive is to destroy or dilute MDC strength in the urban areas (Interview with two MDC activists and members from Epworth, anonymous, 4 September 2016, Harare).

The respondents further explained that ZANU-PF could not penetrate and wrestle the 'Pentagon' from MDC-T mainly because the latter also used force to control and cling to this area. Clearly such practices, seemingly endorsed by the president of the party, deviate from values and principles of democracy and non-violence for which the party officially stands for (MDC-T, 2013:1).

The party's inclination toward violent politics is evident in the infamous speech by Tsvangirai in 2000 in which he boldly declared that "what we would like to tell Mugabe is please go peacefully. If you don't want to go peacefully, we will remove you violently" (Grant Ferett, *BBC News*, 30 September 2000³³). It may be argued that any political violence enacted by the MDC-T is in part attributable to the ZANU-PF party-state's role in normalising violence as an almost legitimate basis for politics across the party-system. As a result, opposition parties tend to mimic and mirror the existing violent tendencies which pervade the broader Zimbabwean party-system and polity. Whatever the cause, though, it does not bode well for any opposition party which becomes the sitting government in the future as violence – as a way of handling conflicts – may be internalised into the very fabric of the party. One could argue that this is the case with ZANU-PF, given its history as a liberation movement involved in violent struggle against the Rhodesian state during the 1970s.

Further, what is particularly disturbing is violence internal to the MDC-T, as the party has witnessed a persistent trend of rising intra-party violence stretching back to the 2005 party split (Coltart, 2006b). This is reflected in incidences in which party members who dared to offer internal dissent to the leadership were both physically assaulted and verbally attacked (by party youths and hooligans). The list stretches from the beatings and assaults of Trudy Stevenson (see Image 7.1), Timothy Mubhawu and Emmanuel Chisvuure, to the attack on supporters of deposed Women's Affairs chairperson Lucia Matibenga in 2008 (Mabasa Sasa, *New African*, 2007/08). Additionally, the recent assault on Elton Mangoma (then the party's treasurer general) in 2014 bears testimony to how internal dissent within the MDC-T party is sometimes met with physical violence (see Image 7.2). With regard to the second image, it can be noted that a key proponent of the leadership renewal discourse in the party, Elton Mangoma, was physically manhandled and assaulted at Harvest House (MDC-T party headquarters) by youths largely believed to be aligned to Tsvangirai (*The Zimbabwean*, 18 February 2014).

The seeming rise in these acts of violence exemplify the socialisation and institutionalisation of violence as a culture within the party. Sachikonye (2011b:65) has in fact equated the entrenchment of internal violence within the MDC-T party to the 'Zanufication' of the party with violence used to suppress internal dissent. Such undemocratic practices within the opposition are akin to what the opposition has always criticised ZANU-PF for doing. While

³³ Available online at : <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/950338.stm>_accessed 10 December 2015.

this might be expected of an opposition party existing for years under a semi-authoritarian regime, it goes contrary to any possible claim that the MDC-T is the antithesis of ZANU-PF.

Photo 7.1: Assault on Trudy Stevenson



Trudy Stevenson (then MDC Harare North MP) after being assaulted by MDC youths aligned to the Tsvangirai faction in 2005. **Source:** *Herald* 13 April 2011.

Photo 7.2: Assault on Elton Mangoma



Elton Mangoma (then MDC-T Deputy Treasurer General) after being assaulted by alleged MDC –T party youths in Harare (2014). **Source:** NZCN, 17 February 2014.³⁴

Apart from the almost institutionalised violent practices of the party, discourses of violence also exist as embodied in party slogans and messaging. Thus, one of the party's former legislators, Eric Matinenga, argues that the MDC-T party has propagated violent discourses within the Zimbabwean political landscape. In challenging the messaging of the party, he quizzically observed that:

We say hit 'someone against the ground'. Of what help to us is that slogan? ... We want constructive slogans. Translated into the Shona vernacular language, part of the MDC-T slogan reads 'Mugabe Mudenga, Mubatanidzei naGrace, waroverei pasi, Hezvoko Bwaa' (loosely translated: Lift Mugabe into the air, combine him with Grace (his wife). Smash them to the ground) (Advocate Eric Matinenga cited in the *Chronicle*, 1 February 2013). While some may argue that this simply entails the use of metaphorical language to make a political point about the need for regime change, Matinenga likens it to violent messaging and almost a call to arms. Through participant observation, I was able to witness MDC-T party activists, supporters and members chanting inflammatory and violent slogans during numerous rallies which I attended. One example is the Itai Dzamara Prayer Rally held at Zimbabwe

³⁴Retrieved at: <https://nzcw.wordpress.com/2014/02/17/mangoma-biti-beaten-at-harvest-house/> accessed 12 December 2015.

Grounds on the 11th of July 2015 where Amos Chibaya (MDC-T Member of Parliament for Mkoba) led the chanting in the ‘*Mugabe Mudenga*’ discourse referred to by Matinenga.

Overall, the party has shown a lack of commitment and decisiveness in stamping out intra-party violence, though in certain cases it instituted measures for combatting this violence. For instance, the party instituted a *Trust Maanda Commission of Inquiry* to investigate the intra-party violence which characterised the MDC-T congress held in Bulawayo in 2011 (*Daily News*, 16 June 2012). However, the conclusions of the *Maanda Commission* were never made public, and there is no record of any action against those likely fingered in unleashing the congress violence. This is despite claims and promises by the party that it would take action against those implicated (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 12 April 2012). Failure to do this only serves to reproduce the culture of violence which exists within MDC-T, as acts of violence come across as worthy of impunity. In this regard, Makuyana (2014:i) notes that “the MDC has been reading too much from the democratic script without having proprietorship of a robust disciplinary mechanism”.

Furthermore, the party’s failure to clearly dissociate itself from violent politics has reinforced undemocratic tendencies within it, and this problem also raises doubts about the prospects for broader democratic transition and consolidation within the Zimbabwean polity. As Randall and Svåsand (2001:6) observe, “parties that advocate for violence makes democratic consolidation impossible”. If a party such as MDC-T is unable to fully embrace and embody democratic principles and practices within or internally, then it simply does not have the commitment and capacity to externalise and consolidate democratic practices throughout the Zimbabwean post-colonial landscape.

The party bears the phrase ‘democratic change’ in its name (Movement for Democratic Change), and it rests its very existence and presence within Zimbabwean politics on the quest and pursuit of democratic change. In this regard one respondent commented:

We are a democratic party, just look at our name, Movement for Democratic Change
(Interview with Chidziva).

But, just as it is not possible to judge a book by its cover, it is not possible to judge a party by its name. Regrettably, any politics of violence within the party distracts fundamentally from the party’s name. More broadly, as this chapter demonstrates, there lies a mismatch between democracy-in-principle and democracy-in-practice within the MDC-T party. This is indeed a great paradox for the party.

7.8 Conclusion

The chapter began by exploring the nexus between internal party democracy and the agency of the MDC-T in spearheading Zimbabwe's democratisation from its formation in 1999 to the current period. Basing on various themes, including internal elections and selection processes, internal factionalism and splits, party finances and policy making, it became clear that the MDC-T suffers from significant democratic deficits. This deficiency exists even though the party officially articulates and affirms basic principles of democratic values, accountability and transparency, and has in place formal constitutional arrangements as well as party regulations and procedures which, if followed, would presumably facilitate internal democracy. Put somewhat differently, the chapter concludes that – in the main – the MDC-T party does not practice what it preaches, and this problem is prevalent even at leadership levels. Because of this, the challenges faced by the party are not reducible to factors and dynamics external to the party. Undoubtedly, though, the history of semi-authoritarianism in Zimbabwe, and the ruling party's involvement in establishing and maintaining semi-authoritarian tendencies, has had a severe knock-on effect in disabling the capacity of opposition parties like the MDC-T to internalise democratic practices and to bring about democratisation in the wider polity and society. In the next and final chapter of the thesis, I provide a comprehensive analytical overview of the conclusions to this case study of MDC-T and democratisation in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this final chapter is to provide concluding remarks to this study on the role of the MDC in the democratisation process in Zimbabwe from 2000 to 2016. The chapter in large part draws upon the empirical evidence presented and discussed in chapters five to seven, as well as the theoretical framing for the thesis, in order to show how the thesis objectives have been realised. The chapter thus seeks to accomplish two main goals. First of all, it underscores the relevance, applicability and utility of the theoretical framing adopted in terms of making sense of the MDC case study, therefore marrying theory to evidence. Secondly, it shows how the discussion of the case study addresses the theoretical objectives and particularly the main one. Additionally, the chapter demonstrates the overall contribution of the thesis to the existing literature as well as limitations of it; signposts possible areas of future academic research; and identifies concrete policy implications arising from the thesis.

8.2 Reflections on the Thesis Objectives

The *first subsidiary objective* was to trace, explicate and determine the ways in which the MDC party has contributed to the promotion of democracy in Zimbabwe, and the challenges the party has faced in doing so. Since its formation, the MDC has entered into and utilised a range of spaces in order to influence Zimbabwe's democratisation. These included parliamentary/legislative, electoral and constitutional spaces within the political party system and polity more broadly, as well as spaces in which they connected with internal groups like civil society and trade unions and regional and international actors. Into some of these spaces they were invited, while other spaces they created or sought to impose their presence. These spaces were rarely open and uncontested spaces and, at times, the MDC had to literally force its way into spaces to which the ruling party believed the opposition did not belong.

The study established that the MDC intervened in the democratisation process in various ways, including through initiating street demonstrations, engaging in diplomatic offensives, participating in the constitution reform process, and playing an oversight role in parliament. While these efforts were essential in animating Zimbabwe's democratisation, the ZANU-PF party-state employed various forms of power to block and stall MDC's efforts towards democratisation. This involved at times the deployment of naked violence against MDC officials, supporters and members.

The *second subsidiary objective* was to identify and clarify the linkages between the MDC on the one hand, and civil society organisations and external f/actors on the other hand and the ways in which this interface contributed to overcoming democratic deficits in the Zimbabwean society. The study identified the existence of a somewhat cordial working relationship between the MDC (and later, the MDC-T) and domestic civil society and labour organisations in Zimbabwe, notably the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU), National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition. This relationship relates back to the MDC's formation in 1999 in which ZCTU and NCA were actively involved.

However, evidence shows that the relationship between the MDC and these social groups deteriorated over time, with differences and disagreements on how best to prosecute the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe, especially when the MDC-T chose to participate in the negotiations in 2007 and 2008 which gave birth to the government of national unity in 2009. Though these groups often tried to complement the MDC's efforts in pursuing democratisation in Zimbabwe, the animosity with factions of the ZCTU and NCA especially with regards to the COPAC-driven constitution reform programme weakened the agency of the pro-democracy movement in demanding constitutional reforms. Such hostilities continued during the time that the MDC-T was in the coalition government and this put a strain on the democratisation struggle. When possible, the MDC sought out support from external actors such as SADC, AU and EU, and these relationships – which were not always reliable – added weight on occasion to the MDC's calls for democratisation.

The *third subsidiary objective* sought to investigate and understand the internal functioning of the MDC (including its splintering into different fractions) and the implications of this for the party's pursuance of democratisation. The MDC-T party failed in vigorously fighting for Zimbabwe's democratisation due to its numerous 'side-shows' or internal bickering, including its own internal contradictions punctuated by fragmentation and splits (in 2005 and 2014). Such a trend weakened and distracted the party from more forcefully effecting democratisation. In this way, internal party challenges, in particular democratic deficits within the party, had a bearing on how the MDC-T party enacted its agency and structured and discharged its struggle for democratic rule within the Zimbabwean polity. While in principle the party claims to subscribe to the tenets of democracy, in practice it sometimes replicated and mimicked the character of the ruling ZANU-PF party in terms of displaying oligarchic tendencies, which has dire consequences for wider democratisation within the Zimbabwean polity. At the same time, the strains arising from seeking democratisation under conditions of semi-authoritarian conditions likely intensified the tensions within the MDC.

The *fourth subsidiary objective* was to analyse how and why the Zimbabwean state has remained largely undemocratic and with significant authoritarian tendencies, as well as examining the ruling party's involvement in hindering processes of democratisation. The dominant ZANU-PF party sought sometimes to structure and flood existing spaces and thereby undermine the MDC's agency (such as through monopolising key state ministries during the GNU). At other times, it tried to make certain spaces irrelevant, by ensuring for example that power remained within the high command of the ruling party, so that the importance of the MDC's parliamentary influence became less important. In doing this, ZANU-PF consistently used its control of the state and state resources to undermine the MDC, such as through manipulation of election results and the repressive apparatuses of the state. In this way, parliament had the appearance of expressing a vibrant two-party democracy (for instance, pre-GNU) or during the GNU government which appeared as a thriving coalition between three parties, but in effect the ruling party continued to hold sway and act in a way which in effect undercut democratic reforms. The ruling party permitted the opposition to exist and to operate legally under the facade of democracy.

The *fifth subsidiary objective* was to studiously explore and understand any differences in the contribution of the MDC to processes of democratisation between the pre- and post-GNU periods on the one hand, and the GNU period on the other (when the MDC formed part of the Zimbabwean government). Although the coalition government existing from 2009 to 2013 provided various spaces and opportunities for furthering Zimbabwe's democratisation, the MDC formations failed in effectively utilising such spaces. This in part can be explained in terms of how the MDC-T party became preoccupied with pushing for election-related reforms at the expense of pushing for broad-based political and governance reforms. As a result, the party failed in realising judicial, media, security sector, economic, institutional, legal and local governance (traditional leadership) reforms. Outside of the GNU, the spaces and avenues available to the MDC within the Zimbabwean polity became less, as it had to rely almost exclusively on instituting reforms through parliamentary spaces. However, in existing outside the government, it also had an enhanced entitlement to initiating public demonstrations, as it did mainly around electoral reforms. But such efforts were met with a forceful response from the ruling party-state.

In this context, the main objective of the thesis is *to critically analyse the role of the Movement for Democratic Change in contributing to processes of democratisation in Zimbabwe from 2000 to 2016*. In terms of the main objective of the thesis, it seems clear that the MDC played a reasonably significant role in relation to the process of democratisation in

Zimbabwe and perhaps most notably during the GNU period. This conclusion though needs to be qualified. In relation to the three themes discussed for all three periods (pre-GNU, GNU and post-GNU) – it is quite likely that the MDC's involvement in constitutional reform was more successful than in the cases of electoral and legislative reforms initiated through parliament. Further, Zimbabwean polity and society remain marked by major democratic deficits.

The character of the party-state nexus in the country, characterised by semi-authoritarian tendencies, was a major stumbling block for the MDC, as the ruling party sought to thwart democratisation in various ways. It may be then that the MDC, though not in any way being able to consolidate democratisation in Zimbabwe, at least was able to limit the further slide into outright authoritarianism. It is from this lens that one can conclude that indeed the MDC played an important role in influencing Zimbabwe's democratisation process, albeit in a difficult context of ZANU-PF party-state's hegemonic dominance. But, in trying to positively influence Zimbabwe's democratisation, the MDC also floundered in failing to seize on several opportunities especially when the party became a subservient partner in the coalition government from 2009 to 2013. It failed to significantly push for several political and democratic reforms and, in part, this can be attributed to the MDC's internal flaws as well as ZANU-PF's rigidity to reforms.

8.3 Theoretical and Empirical Contributions of Study

In pursuing the main and subsidiary objectives of the thesis, I examined in detail the literature on democratisation, including literature which distinguishes between the transition to democracy and the consolidation of democracy. In doing so, I also critically examined modernisation theory and its views on democratisation. I foregrounded the notion of semi-authoritarian regimes and their prevalence despite the existence of seemingly competitive political-party systems, and highlighted the question of power by drawing upon power cube theory. This overall theoretical lens was crucial in analysing the MDC's involvement in processes of democratisation in Zimbabwe and the spaces it sought to enter, occupy and defend in seeking to further democratisation. But it also facilitated the identification and critical analysis of the numerous challenges faced by the MDC, including with reference to the presence and machinations of a ruling party resistant to democratisation. This unique theoretical grounding of the thesis provides new insights into the complexities of processes of democratisation, in particular with regard to the engagement of opposition political parties in such processes.

The use of semi-authoritarianism theory (Olcott and Ottaway, 1999; Ottaway, 2003), and the very notion of semi-authoritarianism provides the basis for properly characterising and understanding the party-state in Zimbabwe. It expresses the ways in which a ruling party (such as ZANU-PF), in its intimate intertwining with the state, at times opens up political and democratic spaces and at other times, closes down these spaces. Certainly, in the case of the MDC (and MDC-T), the closing of these spaces posed ongoing problems for the MDC in seeking to usher in democratisation in Zimbabwe. The shifting democratic and un-democratic dimensions of the semi-authoritarian regime, as in the case of Zimbabwe, presents numerous strategic problems for opposition parties like the MDC in manoeuvring their way through a political terrain in which the goal-posts, as set by the ruling regime are constantly changing.

In utilising political party-system theory, it became clear that the level and quality of democracy with the polity, and the possibilities for democratisation heavily depends upon the type of party-system in place and the competitive character of it. Despite the emergence and significance of the MDC since the year 2000, Zimbabwe is marked by the presence of a dominant-party regime (ZANU-PF). Arguments about the existence of a competitive two-party system in Zimbabwe during certain years (particularly the GNU period) would need to be subjected to critical appraisal. It is evident that, even during the GNU, ZANU-PF retained its almost unquestioned dominance, particularly given the loyalty displayed by the state to the ruling party and the use of state apparatuses to repress the opposition. This ongoing dominance was critical for ZANU-PF in stalling and even blocking the process of democratisation, despite the best efforts of the MDC and MDC-T. It should be emphasised that a dominant party does not necessarily mean hegemonic party, as the latter implies rule by consensus (or at least) significant levels of consensus within polity and society.

The power-cube theory (Gaventa, 2005) allowed for an analysis of how the ZANU-PF party-state used different forms of power, both visible and hidden, to limit and constrain spaces of participation for the MDC and thus to undercut the latter's agency in seeking democratisation. State-sanctioned violence is certainly a visible form of power directed against the political opposition, but there were also hidden forms of power which led to – for instance – the retaining of key state ministries by the ruling party during the GNU. The theory also facilitated an understanding on how the political opposition (in this case the MDC) utilises various spaces (claimed and created) in seeking to democratise society. The MDC did not always simply wait to be invited into spaces, but also sought to push its way in, whether successfully or not. It is hoped that, combined with semi-authoritarian and party-system theory,

power-cube analysis provides a novel approach to an understanding of, the MDC and processes of democratisation in Zimbabwe.

On an empirical level, the study is significant in analysing the MDC (and MDC-T) throughout the course of its entire history, during the pre-GNU, GNU and post-GNU periods, and with particular reference to processes of democratisation and the various spaces the party used in seeking to move these processes forward. In doing so, it contributes insights into existing debates on the actual role of post-colonial opposition parties in influencing democracy in African polities (Rakner and van de Walle, 2007; Dolo, 2006), a field of inquiry which continues to require nuanced case-study accounts of particular opposition parties.

8.4 Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The thesis examined the role, contribution and impact of external forces in support of the democratisation process in Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, I offer a caveat in that the thesis did not fully explore the relationship between external f/actors and domestic f/actors in facilitating Zimbabwe's democratisation. A fuller enquiry remains very pertinent as it helps in shedding more light on the vexed question of the ways in which democratic transitions are facilitated – if not sometimes imposed – by powerful external forces, as for example was seen at least in part during structural adjustment programmes and their emphasis on good governance.

The thesis also suffered from methodological limitations with regards to researching a highly factionalised party punctuated with fluid events. This posed several challenges as many respondents declined to open up fully to the researcher, fearing that their views would be quoted out of context or that their responses might identify them with a particular faction within the party. In fact, some MDC party officials and activists refused to participate at all in fear of possible repercussions and consequences. This of course is to be expected in such politically-charged environments when much is at stake. At the same time, the factionalised character of the MDC party provided an excellent opportunity for exploring internal party intricacies with the dynamics within parties being critical to understanding its practices in the broader polity. Any limitations in access to party members does not appear to have inhibited an insightful understanding of the party and its own internal processes and practices.

Related to this is the fact that the theme of internal party democratisation and its impact on broader democratisation in polity and society has received insufficient and scant scholarly attention within the literature on the MDC (Aeby, 2015; Raftopoulos, 2006; LeBas, 2011; Sachikonye, 2005; 2011b). In order to advance the frontiers of knowledge and deepen our understanding of the role of the MDC in the democratisation process, future studies should

focus more closely on the internal functioning of the party even by way of ethnographic work. Of course, this is not an easy task for an outsider and, in fact, it might mean waiting for an insider to provide such an account. An issue connected to this is the emphasis in the literature (and in this thesis) on discourse and texts, with the possible assumption that these necessarily provide an insight into the actual practices within the MDC. This would be a problematic assumption, as discourses do not necessarily guide practices as they often simply rationalise practices.

Though not disconfirming the significance of the findings of the thesis, another downside of the thesis which is also applicable to many previous studies of the MDC (see LeBas, 2011; Raftopoulos, 2006; Sachikonye, 2007, 2011a), is the tendency to read-off and analyse the MDC party basing on views and renditions of party elites – and mostly those in the capital city where the party is headquartered. Certainly, this mutes the direct voices of non-elite members (including grassroots activists) whose discourses and practices nonetheless are crucial to the study of any party formation. Future research should therefore attempt to counter top-down portraits of the MDC and democratisation by going some way towards including more non-elite voices.

In this current study, though I touched on the role and efficacy of the MDC as an opposition party in influencing democratisation within the parliamentary spaces, insufficient attention was given to this. This is important because, though it might be tempting to refer to parliaments as mere talk-shops and as spectacle only, with national power concentrated more within state institutions – a fuller understanding of the MDC within legislative spaces (including within the parliamentary committee system) would undoubtedly deepen our understanding of the day-to-day practices and effectiveness of the MDC in chipping away at undemocratic processes and procedures.

8.5 Policy Implications of the Study

The findings of this thesis have a number of practical and potential policy implications. Building on the study's findings, and at an empirical level, there are various strategies and mechanisms that can be utilised and adopted by opposition parties existing in semi-authoritarian regimes as they seek to design their advocacy and mobilisation campaigns. In this regard, the thesis hopefully is of significant value to policy makers, donor agencies, civil society groups and different political actors in seeking to understand and position oppositional parties in a manner which maximises their role in processes of democratisation. In particular,

the notion of ‘spaces’ and how particular spaces can be created, opened up and developed by opposition parties may be of great significance in thinking strategically and tactically.

The findings of the thesis will also offer excellent entry points to discussions and rethinking around the role and impact of donor support, aid policy programming and regional continental and international institutions (including SADC, AU and EU) in seeking to continue support for democratisation efforts in semi-authoritarian regimes in Africa (as is the case in Zimbabwe). Re-visiting the role of externally-pressured democratisation would inform strategic democracy interventions and perhaps challenge key donor assumptions and decisions on how to engage, co-operate with or confront semi-authoritarian regimes.

The study will also be of importance in providing pointers in tracking Zimbabwe’s transition to either a ‘consolidated’ democracy, or whether the country will remain in a stalled democratic transition, or even in receding into full-blown authoritarianism especially as the elections (in 2018) will soon take place. Finally, on a policy level, it is believed that the MDC-T party can glean and draw insights from this study’s findings and use such evidence in its programming. In other words, the study can act as a reality check on how political party organisations like the MDC-T party in Zimbabwe can be strengthened and institutionalised so as to effectively discharge their duty of building and consolidating democracy.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Interview Schedule

In conducting semi – structured Interviews with political actors (MDC officials/supporters) as well as academics I was guided by the following Interview Guide.

Background Information:

My name is Gift Mwonzora, I am a PhD Candidate at Rhodes University in South Africa. I am currently undertaking a fieldwork research study on the *role of the MDC in the democratisation process in Zimbabwe, from 2000 – 2016*. The research is purely for an academic purpose. Therefore your contributions and views will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity in line with the researcher's ethical considerations. All the responses will be used purely for academic purposes only.

a) Internal Questions on the MDC party

- What factors inspired the formation of the MDC?
- What ideology guides the MDC party (since the party formation to date)?
- How has the party addressed ideological differences over the years?
- Who are the actors that formed the MDC party?
- Who decides on crucial party issues within the MDC party?
- How are internal debates accommodated within the party?
- How are leaders selected into party positions?
- What your comment on the conduct of the MDC primary elections?
- In your view does the MDC party subscribe to tenets of Internal Democracy? If Yes/No. Explain Respectively.
- How are leaders s/elected within the MDC party
- What are the Reasons behind the Split of the MDC (in 2005 and later in 2014) and are such reasons justified?
- In your view is the MDC a democratic party? If yes/no. Why do you say so. Explain respectively.

External questions

- b) What role has the MDC party played in seeking to influence democracy and good governance in Zimbabwe since its formation to 2016?
- c) In what way has the MDC party influenced electoral democracy since 2000 to date?
- d) What has been the contribution of the MDC in Parliament? In what way (did this influence) shaped Legislative and Policy Reform(s)?
- In your view how has the MDC –T legislators influenced legislative debates over the years?
 - How has the MDC-T addressed issue of good corporate governance?
 - What is your assessment on the administration of the MDC-T in the local council administration?
- e) Of what contribution has been the MDC-T in the coalition government?
- Did the involvement of the MDC-T has in the coalition government contributed to Zimbabwe's democratisation? (and in what way?).
 - What has been the relationship between civic society organisations and the MDC –T party since 2000 to date?
 - What role did the MDC –T play in the constitution making process during the (2009 – 13) period?
 - What has been the achievement of the MDC-T party during the GNU?
 - What challenges did the MDC –T party face in seeking to influence democratic and political reforms during the GNU period?
- g) What are the reasons behind the failure of the MDC party in assuming and capturing political power since its inception to date?
- What factors have affected the MDC –T in its quest to democratise the Zimbabwean state?

Thank you for your honest and kind responses!

Interview Guide for Civil society actors

- What activities has your organisation carried out in seeking to promote democracy and in the protection and fulfilment of human rights in Zimbabwe?
- What is the relationship between your organisation and the state?
- To what extent do you think your activities/programmes have influenced democratic processes in Zimbabwe?
- What relationship does your organisation have with opposition political parties in Zimbabwe, specifically the MDC -T?
- In your view what has been the contribution of the MDC –T party to Zimbabwe’s democratisation process?
- What position did your organisation take during the constitution making process (2009-13)?

Appendix II: List of Interviews

- Interview with Alfred Towo (former MDC-T employee), 23 November 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Alois Matongo (an independent political analyst and lecturer), 6 February, 2015, Gweru.
- Interview with Austin Muswere (Deputy Secretary General of General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe [GAPWUZ], 29 July 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Charles Moyo (former MDC –T employee in the Research and Policy), 8 July 2015, Harare.
- Interview with Clifford Hlatshwayo (MDC-T youth executive member), 3 October 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Collen Gwiyo (former MDC –T legislator for Zengeza West Constituency and also founding member of the MDC), 4 August 2016, Harare.
- Interview with David Takawira, (civil society activist from Norwegian People’s Aid and former employee of Zimbabwe Europe Partnership for Democracy [ZEPAD], 03 July 2015, Harare.
- Interview with Douglas Mwonzora (MDC –T secretary general), 4 October 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Dorcas Sibanda (MDC-T Bulawayo central legislator and deputy chief whip), 5 October 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Eddie Cross (MDC-T legislator for Bulawayo South and MDC founding member), 17 August 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Edknowledge Mandikwaza (former MDC –T employee in the Research and Policy Department – now Programme officer at Heal Zimbabwe Trust), 5 January 2017, Harare.
- Interview with Elias Mudzuri (MDC –T vice president), 10 January 2017, Harare.
- Interview with Elton Mangoma (former MDC-T Deputy Treasurer-General), 12 August 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Earnest Nyamukachi (MDC –T official), 7 October 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Grace Chirenje (Vice chairperson) of Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition and [by then] Director of Zimbabwe Young Women's Network for Peace building (ZYWNP) 18 August, 2015, Harare.
- Interview with Happymore Chidziva (MDC –T national youth chairperson), 6 January 2017, Harare.
- Interview with Innocent Gonese (MDC –T chief whip and legislator for Mutare Central), 5 October 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Lovemore Kadenge (former MDC –T liaison officer in Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee or JOMIC and party official), 15 September 2016.
- Interview with Madock Chivasa [spokesman] of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) 13 October 2013, Harare.
- Interview with Morgan Komichi (MDC –T deputy national chairperson), 6 January 2017, Harare.
- Interview with Misheck Shambare (MDC –T official), 17 August 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Obert Gutu (MDC –T spokesperson), 29 August 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Robert Mandeya (MDC –T official), 18 August 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Sekai – Holland, [by then member of the MDC –T guardian Council and top – MDC –T official] 13 October 2013, Harare.
- Interview with Tinashe Chisaira (civil society actor-The ProJusticeZim Trust), 25 May 2016, Harare.
- Interview with Wilson Box (former MDC –T employee in the Organising department), 02 February 2014, Harare.

Interview responses from the ZCTU Information Department, [Email correspondence] 22 August 2015, Harare.

Anonymous Interviews

Interview with academic, (anonymous) 23 August 2014, Harare.

Interview with (anonymous) 4 March 2013, Harare.

Interview with MDC-T official (anonymous) 9 November 2016, Harare.

Interview with academic at the University of Zimbabwe (anonymous) 15 July 2015, Harare.

Interview with former MDC-T legislator in the Harare Urban (anonymous) 15 October 2016, Harare.

Interview with MDC-T party activist (anonymous) 14 October 2016, Harare.

Interview with MDC-T party official (anonymous) 14 October 2015, Harare.

Interview with former MDC-T provincial member for Midlands (anonymous), 23 September 2016, Harare.

Interview with MDC-T party official (anonymous) 18 October 2015, Harare.

Interview with academic at the University of Zimbabwe (anonymous) 12 May 2015, Harare.

Interview with academic (anonymous) 15 November 2016, Harare.

Interview with party official from MDC-Mutambara which was later led by Ncube, (anonymous) 23 April 2015, Harare.

Interview with former student leader, (anonymous) 12 September 2016, Harare.

Interview with academic, (anonymous), University of Zimbabwe 15 July 2015, Harare.

Interview with academic, (anonymous) 21 July 2015, Harare.

Interview with MDC T party official, (anonymous) 14 September 2016, Harare

Interview with MDC-T party official, (anonymous) 29 July 2016, Harare

Interview with MDC-T member, (anonymous) 21 August 2015, Harare.

Interview with party official, (anonymous) 3 December 2016, Harare.

Interview with party official, (anonymous) 10 March 2016, Harare.

Interview with MDC-T youth, (anonymous) 21 September 2016, Harare.

Interview with party official, (anonymous) 21 November 2015, Harare.

Interview with two MDC activists and members from Epworth, (anonymous) 4 September 2016, Harare.

Appendix III: Contributions at the 2012 Working People's Convention

WORKING PEOPLE'S CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

On 13 October 2012 at Raylton Club, Harare, over 300 delegates from Trade Unions, Women and Gender movements, Youths, the Disabled, Residents Movements, Student Movements, Rural Farmers, HIV/AIDS groups, Trade Justice Activists, Informal Sector, War Veterans, Ex-Detainees, revolutionary socialists, progressive academics and others came together under the banner of the **Working People's Constitutional Convention**, critically analyzing the **COPAC Draft Constitution** and interrogating the process and the content to determine whether it meets the criterion of a people – driven constitution as demanded by the people and promised under the GPA when the COPAC process commenced.

The Convention came up with the following **Working People's Red Amendments to the COPAC Draft Constitution** and which it calls upon all working people and progressives to rally behind at the COPAC 2nd All Stakeholders Conference, and without whose adoption to reject the COPAC Draft Constitution in the Referendum.

Working Peoples Red Amendments to COPAC Draft Constitution

Preamble and Founding Provisions

- COPAC Draft Preamble to recognize struggles against patriarchy and oppression of youth and the disabled and the need for gender, youth and disability equity and empowerment.
- Founding Values to recognize the Peoples Sovereign Rights over the country's major natural resources, minerals, land and strategic national economic sectors and their use to benefit all.
- Founding Values to recognize and support regional and international struggles against neoliberalism, capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy and environmental degradation.

National Objectives [Chapter 2]

- The following National Objectives to be removed from the non-binding Chapter 2 and modified and up-graded as Rights in the binding Chapter 4, the Declaration of Rights: Gender balance; Empowerment; Development; Youths objectives; Elderly; Marriage; Protection of family; Shelter; Social Welfare; Economic Rights and Work and Labour Relations.

Citizenship [Chapter 3]

- COPAC Draft to clearly and unambiguously permit dual citizenship for all citizens.
- COPAC Draft to allow citizenship by birth for all persons born in Zimbabwe and both or either of whose parents are or were from a country in the SADC region.

Declaration of Rights [Chapter 4]

- Declaration to recognize as basic Rights: shelter, education, health, food, water, public transport, recreation, social welfare and security. Claw-back clauses subjecting the enjoyment of these rights to the resources available to the State to be removed as in Malawi or Kenya.
- Declaration to recognize right to social welfare and social security for all covered by a mandatory and purpose –specific national social security scheme to cover contingencies of maternity, pregnancy, paternity, illness, disability, death, retirement and unemployment.

(1)

- Declaration to provide an adequate social grant for the elderly (above 60), the disabled, child-care and those incapable of looking after themselves due to AIDS/HIV or chronic illnesses.
- Declaration to abolish the death penalty for all women and men.
- Declaration to prohibit all forms of unfair discrimination under international law regardless of social, economic, personal or natural condition.
- Declaration to clearly specify time frame-works within which the State must fully realize the socio-economic and other rights guaranteed in the Constitution as in Kenya and South Africa.
- COPAC Draft to restore the Equalisation Fund with a minimum of 33% of gross government revenue to fund socio-economic rights of historically marginalized groups and regions.
- Declaration to provide for a Socio-Economic Rights Fund levied on mines, banks, major businesses and new foreign investments to fund recognized socio-economic rights.
- Amend Property clause of Declaration of Rights to provide for nationalisation without compensation and under State and workers, communities or disadvantaged collectives ownership and democratic control, of natural resources, minerals, land, banks and major businesses, to fund the socio-economic rights of the people, broad-based economic empowerment and national development.
- Declaration to provide for Peoples and Groups Economic Rights as under the African [Banjul] Charter, in particular Peoples Sovereignty over Natural Resources, minerals, land and strategic businesses; and Rights to Broad-Based Economic Empowerment, and Development for: women, youths, the disabled; the unemployed, rural farmers, informal sector workers, ordinary war veterans, and historically marginalised regions, including empowerment grants and loans and 33% retention of resources and profits extracted from communities.
- Declaration to recognise full Economic Rights to Work for the informal sector including: removal of all impediments, laws, and policies that inhibit or prevent right or ability to work or trade in the informal sector as in Malawi, Uganda, Venezuela, Bolivia; to empowerment; and to social security.
- Declaration to provide full Labour and Work Rights for all public and private sector workers:
 - right to strike without conditionalities of essential services – all jobs are essential;
 - a minimum PDL-linked living wage for all workers as in the NCA Draft and Venezuela
 - 50-50% gender balance in all jobs and positions in the public and private sector.
 - Right to organize and form trade unions for all workers including in the public sector and police and defence forces as in countries like South Africa.
 - Six months paid maternity leave and benefits and one month paternity leave and benefits paid from a national social security scheme. Free child-care facilities.
 - Compensation for all farm-workers who lost their jobs and plots for housing.
 - Prohibition of casualisation of labour or contract labour other than only in circumstances recognized under ILO Conventions; protection from unfair

dismissal

- Recognition of worker ownership of companies they work for of at least 50%.
- Provision of an unemployment allowance for those who lose their jobs.
- Establishment of Labour Court and Labour Appeal Court as superior courts with original and exclusive jurisdiction over all labour matters and powers of enforcement of judgments. Majority of judges to be nominated by workers and tripartite forum.
- A time limit of six months of finalization of all labour disputes from start to final appeal.
- Living pensions for all pensioners linked to the PDL and current wages and benefits.
- Establishment of a tripartite negotiation forum from labour, government and business to review minimum labour standards and ensure decent work for all.
- COPAC Draft to provide full labour rights for public servants, including:
 - Full and complete harmonization of labour laws of the public and private sectors.
 - Full collective bargaining in public sector. Removal of COPAC draft provisions authorizing President, ministers of finance and public service and Civil Service Commission to unilaterally set salaries and conditions of employment.
 - 50% representation of labour in Civil Service Commission.
 - Removal of the COPAC Draft prohibition of ordinary public servants actively taking part in politics or holding party positions. Public servants are citizens.
- Declaration to provide full women rights: 50-50 gender balance and parity in all public and private institutions, companies, policies, laws and budgets including Parliament, Cabinet, Presidency, Judiciary, Civil Service, security organs, traditional leadership; right of women to choice of termination of pregnancy; empowerment and affirmative action; marriage rights.
- Declaration to provide for full rights to students and youths including: free and quality education up to university level; living allowances for tertiary / university students; academic freedom at institutions; representation in all institutions and bodies of State; empowerment.
- Declaration to recognise full Disability rights, including a living disability social grant; full access to all public spaces; free and quality treatment and equipment; mandatory 10% quota in all jobs, institutions, policies, and budgets including Parliament.
- Free land for housing and stands for all in the urban areas and farming areas. Prohibition of title deeds for agricultural land; prohibition of multiple farm ownership and excessive farm sizes. Land audit and rectification of political partisan redistribution to give land to all.
- Draft to recognise right to rural development; to farm inputs and guarantee subsidised producer prices for rural farmers and establishment of a Land and Development Bank.

Legislature, Systems of Government, Political Rights and Elections

- COPAC Draft to provide voters with right to recall MPs, councillors, Senators and elected public officials, before the next elections. Right of citizens to initiate referendum on change of Acts and Constitution as in Kenya, Venezuela. Recognise right to vote for the Diaspora.
- All elected officials to declare their assets and to be removed if corrupt.

corruption.

- To provide for maximum two five year term limits for all public and constitutional offices, counting from 1980 just as the COPAC Draft does for the National Flag, Seal and Anthem.
- To provide an age limit of 70 years to all elected public offices as in Uganda.
- To provide clear provisions on Presidential Run-Off Elections run-off, where necessary.
- To abolish Senate; have a Parliament of not more than 150 MPs elected on a hybrid of constituency and proportional representation and at least a third of the membership reserved for persons elected by and from workers, youths, the disabled, war veterans, rural farmers.
- To provide for a Cabinet of not more than 25 and one Vice President, shared executive authority between President and Cabinet. Restore full power of Parliament to pass vote of no confidence in government without being dissolved by the President.
- To provide for devolution of powers with elected governors, elected provincial parliaments and executives and budgets and taxation powers as in SA, Kenya, Bolivia and Venezuela.
- Restore Public Appointments Committee of Parliament to process all appointments to senior positions in the State such as permanent secretaries, judges, commanders, commissioners and for Parliament to approve such appointments. President not to be part of legislature.

2nd All-Stakeholders Conference and Referendum

- 2nd All Stakeholders Conference to be inclusive with representation of civic society not less than 70% and not made on political party lines but autonomously by civic society itself.
- Drafting of the final Draft Constitution must be inclusive with drafters mandated from 2nd All Stakeholders Conference and to include at least 50% drawn from civic society.
- Parliament or Principals not to amend Draft drawn from 2nd All-stakeholders Conference and approved in the Referendum.
- Draft Constitution to be written in Shona, Ndebele, other local languages and Braille before Referendum.

**Todya Marara Here? Varombo Tamuka! Abayanga
Sesivhukile! Qina Msebenzi!
Nationalise the Diamonds, Platinum, Banks... under
workers and communities control to fund our socio-
economic rights!**

**DONE AT HARARE ON THE 13TH DAY OF OCTOBER
2012:**

**Democratic United Front; ZCTU Concerned Affiliates;
ZINASU; Social Movements; ISO**

**alliance.constitution@gmail.com Tel /Fax: 263-04-
762154**

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Appendix IV: Letter of Research from Rhodes University



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Where leaders learn

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January 27th 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Mr Gift Mwonzora

This letter confirms that Mr Gift Mwonzora is registered as a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at Rhodes University. I am his supervisor.

He is undertaking research in Zimbabwe for purposes of his PhD thesis.

Yours
sincerely

Kirk Helliker
Associate
Professor