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THESIS

**ZIMBABWE: INTERNALLY OR EXTERNALLY DRIVEN
MELTDOWN?**

by

Andrew L. Roddan

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Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Letitia Lawson
Robert McNab

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ZIMBABWE: INTERNALLY OR EXTERNALLY DRIVEN MELTDOWN?

Andrew L. Roddan
Major, United States Air Force
B.S., Aviation Computer Science, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 1997
M.A., International Relations, Webster University, 2005

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requirements for the degree of

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**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 2010**

Author: Andrew L. Roddan

Approved by: Letitia Lawson
Thesis Advisor

Robert M. McNab
Second Reader

Harold A. Trinkunas, PhD
Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe is a nation ostracized by the developed world and among the lowest per capita GDP countries in the world. While President Mugabe's governance is now recognized as untenable for the future of Zimbabwe, his choices seem to focus on the impact of external actors fueling opposition undermining Mugabe's capability to govern, causing an ever more autocratic rule, or a perpetual leadership style, against any opposition to maintain his position.

A consistent repression of opposition parties or individuals has continued to secure Mugabe's position over more than quarter of a century, using whatever methods he finds necessary. The international community must be more cognizant of post-war leaders, realizing that the leader of an armed conflict overthrowing an undesirable government is not always the right choice for a post-conflict, peacetime leader. Mugabe is a perfect example of the traits and trends such a leader can display that must be recognized early to avoid such a secure entrenchment that a failed leader cannot be successfully challenged by opposition groups to rectify the situation. Mugabe's early rhetoric against the constitution, combined with his consistent willingness to use violence and intimidation securing his power all indicated a leader not ready to forego his title or personal agenda for the good of his nation.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CCJPZ	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization (Zimbabwe)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EU	European Union
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
OAU	Organization of African Unity
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana)
RF	Republican Front
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SDP	Social Development Program
UANC	United African National Council
UN	United Nations
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (former military wing of ZANU-PF)
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People’s Union
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZCTU	Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (former military wing of ZAPU)
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since taking power in 1980, President Robert Mugabe has overseen the rise and fall of Zimbabwe as an economic, political, and social leader among southern African nations and the Non-Aligned Movement. The 1980s saw Zimbabwe leading the region's attempts to end apartheid in South Africa and provide economic strength and independence for South Africa's neighbors. The economy vastly outperformed that of the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, showing a 7 percent growth for the decade while the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa saw its per capita GDP decline. Minerals were a major export, and Zimbabwe was known as the "breadbasket of the region."¹ Zimbabwe was held up in the 1980s as a model for post-independence Africa as well as a positive government compared to both its apartheid neighbor, South Africa, and the communist bloc during the Cold War. Domestically, Mugabe faced opposition from the former Rhodesian government, now organized as the Republican Front (RF) party and led by Rhodesia's former prime minister, Ian Smith, and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the original opposition party to both colonial rule and then white rule. ZAPU was led by its leader of over twenty years, Joshua Nkomo.

Moving into the 1990s, Zimbabwe adopted economic structural adjustment programs (SAPs), liberalizing its economy, and removing much of the socialized protections its population and industries had enjoyed, but saw its economy suffer as a result. Reaching the end of the 1990s, a political opposition was firmly formed and some Zimbabweans started to question the leadership of Mugabe.

By the start of the twenty-first century, Mugabe had enacted catastrophic land reform, removing the white farmers, and plunging Zimbabwe into economic freefall. Today, Zimbabwe stands as a nation ostracized by the developed world and economically

¹ Paul Keetch, "Zimbabwe: Replenishing the Breadbasket," *Public Policy Research* 14, no. 2 (2007), 146.

situated among the lowest per capita GDP countries in the world.² While Mugabe's choices on land reform are recognized as a final cause of the economic decline, what explains these choices: the impact of external actors fueling an opposition undermining his capability to govern and causing a shift to ever more autocratic rule, or a perpetual leadership style, demonstrating a willingness to do whatever it takes against any opposition to maintain his position?

Understanding the path of decline can help Zimbabwe effectively move forward with economic, political, and social reconstruction in a post-Mugabe period. In addition, the analysis will identify lessons learned for other countries in similar situations. The U.S. has long-considered the Mugabe regime incompatible with global norms, particularly Zimbabwe's inability to undertake truly democratic elections. In 2009, the State Department stated it would only consider reducing or removing current sanctions when they see "evidence of true power sharing as well as inclusive and effective governance."³ By identifying the cause of Mugabe's autocracy, the U.S. can not only provide meaningful aid to Zimbabwe at a time when Mugabe relinquishes power, but, perhaps more importantly, aim to recognize steps taken or missed opportunities over the past three decades that can be better applied in similar situations elsewhere. If economic adjustment truly robbed Mugabe of the ability to govern acceptably, then the U.S. government must recognize the potentially catastrophic effects such adjustments can cause. If, on the other hand, Mugabe is identified as the sole cause of the current situation, then the U.S., and in particular the Department of State, must develop better ways to both identify and then handle such autocrats in the future, before they become entrenched leaders and have the opportunity to destroy their nation.

There are two schools of thought on Zimbabwe's decline: one sees the heavy-handed leadership style of President Mugabe and his cohorts over the past thirty years as

² CIA World Factbook, "Country Comparison: GDP – Per Capita (PPP)," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html?countryName=Zimbabwe&countryCode=zi®ionCode=af&rank=228#zi> (accessed March 19, 2010).

³ U.S. Department of State, Robert Wood, "Zimbabwe: Unity Government," February 3, 2009, www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/02/115909.htm (accessed August 19, 2009).

singularly responsible. Another sees Mugabe's leadership style becoming progressively more heavy-handed and autocratic over time as a result of international factors. This camp sees external actors, especially the IMF, as the most important determinant of Mugabe's increasingly autocratic style. Thus, there is a consensus that Mugabe's leadership style is a critical factor in the decline. However, while the first camp treats it as the independent variable, the second camp sees it as an intervening variable, identifying a different independent variable: the fallout from structural adjustment. Each side identifies positives or negatives that successfully validate its argument, with no one having undertaken a comprehensive start-to-finish analysis of the relationship between Mugabe's leadership style and economic outcomes since 1980. This thesis seeks to fill this gap. The initial hypothesis is that the first camp's position will be largely validated.

Those identifying the heavy-handed leadership style of President Mugabe as the independent variable causing Zimbabwe's economic decline argue this leadership style was evident since the early 1980s. While not denying the economic and social improvements of the 1980s, this camp maintains that there was always a "darker side" to his regime.⁴ Indeed, Coltart argues that Mugabe and his cohorts feel compelled to maintain power at all costs now because loss of power may lead to their prosecution for the "genocide in Matabeleland in the early 1980s" that killed over 20,000 people.⁵ Others argue that attacks on the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) after its creation in 1999 mirror the response to political opposition in the 1980s,

⁴ Robert I. Rotberg, *Ending Autocracy, Enabling Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 2002), 231; Chris McGreal, "Mugabe, 'the Black Mamba' Bares His Fangs," *The Guardian*, February 8, 1999, www.guardian.co.uk/world/1999/feb/08/6 (accessed 11 Mar 10); Hevina Dashwood, "Mugabe, Zimbabwe, and Southern Africa: The Struggle for Leadership," *International Journal* 57 no. 1 (2001/2002), 95; Maxwell Zhira, "Uncovering the Reality of State Violence in Western Zimbabwe, 1982–1987," *Past Imperfect*, no. 10 (2004), 67; Jacob Chikuhwa, *A Crisis of Governance: Zimbabwe* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2004), 92–95; Martin Meredith, *Mugabe: Power, Plunder, and the Struggle for Zimbabwe* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 74; John S. Saul and Richard Saunders, "Mugabe, Gramsci, and Zimbabwe at 25," *International Journal*, Autumn 2005, 959; Ian Phimister, "The Making and Meanings of the Massacres in Matabeleland," *Development Dialogue*, December 2008, 211; David Coltart, "A Decade of Suffering in Zimbabwe: Economic Collapse and Political Repression under Robert Mugabe," *CATO Institute, Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity: Development Policy Analysis*, no. 5 (2008), 11, <http://www.cato.org/pubs/dpa/dpa5.pdf> (accessed 9 Mar 10); Ralph Peters, *The Lion and the Snake: A Strategic View of South Africa and Zimbabwe*, (Quantico, VA: Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities, 2003), 10.

⁵ Coltart, "A Decade of Suffering," 1, 12.

demonstrating that the Mugabe government's response to political opposition has always been oppressive and autocratic.⁶ Some suggest that the failure of the international community to respond to Mugabe's early repression "created a sense of impunity in the minds of the ZANU-PF leadership," which emboldened decades of repression.⁷ This camp also cites the decision by Mugabe to intervene in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as another example of what they see as an autocratic approach Mugabe has consistently taken to decision-making. Providing initially 6,000—later 11,000—Zimbabwean troops to the DRC in support of Laurent Kabila, in return for mineral contracts, Mugabe failed to coordinate any part of the deployment with the Parliament, instead arbitrarily making troop commitments. Those in this camp argue that while Mugabe and his top generals personally acquired diamond and cobalt mining resources from southern Congo, Zimbabwe's economy paid \$5 million per week for the deployment, draining what little capital the state had to support its population as it emerged from SAP-induced economic hardship.⁸

The second camp views the 1980s in a different light, noting the strengths of the political system, as well as the positive development track Mugabe steered the newly independent country down.⁹ This camp argues Mugabe ensured a stable transition of power in 1980 and over the next decade oversaw the continued success of the economic powerhouse he inherited, expanding and supporting a system built to promote Zimbabwe's strengths while sharing the wealth with its black African citizens. Protectionist policies were in place for the agricultural and industrial sectors while state-

⁶ Ernest Kadembo, "Dynamic Positioning for Survival in Political Marketing Warfare: Mugabe's Maneuverings out of Crises in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Politics and Law* 1 no. 1 (2008), 2, 6, 12; Robert I. Rotberg, "It's Time to Loosen Mugabe's Grip," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 17, 2000, 11.

⁷ Phimister, "Making and Meanings of the Massacres," 210-11; Coltart, "A Decade of Suffering," 11; Peters, *Lion and the Snake*, 10.

⁸ Rotberg, *Ending Autocracy*, 233; Meredith, *Mugabe*, 148; Robert I. Rotberg, "Africa's Mess, Mugabe's Mayhem," *Foreign Affairs*, no. 79 (2000), 53; Marian Tupy, "Botswana and Zimbabwe: a Tale of Two Countries," CATO Institute, March 14, 2008, http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=9399 (accessed July 20, 2009); Robert I Rotberg, "Worst of the Worst: Dealing with Repressive and Rogue Nations (Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 2007), 169.

⁹ Lloyd Sachikonye, "Whither Zimbabwe? Crisis and Democratisation" *Review of African Political Economy* 29, no. 91 (2002), 13-14; Sandra J. Maclean and Fahimul Quadir, "Structural Adjustment and the Response of Civil Society in Bangladesh and Zimbabwe: A Comparative Analysis," *New Political Economy*, 2, no. 1(1997).

funded healthcare and education investment boosted social well-being for all Zimbabweans.¹⁰ According to this analysis, “Mugabe was an acknowledged authoritarian ruler, but the courts remained independent, and their judgments were respected.”¹¹ For Africa in the 1980s, his regime was liberal. This camp thus identifies the roots of Zimbabwe’s decline in the 1990s, not the 1980s. Drawing upon Collier’s argument that when national income declines below \$2700 per capita (in 2009 dollars), democracies become more prone to political violence,¹² the second camp asserts that SAP-induced economic downturn in Zimbabwe caused a social crisis, that led to political challenges for Mugabe’s rule, which in turn led to his increased autocracy.¹³ They point to increasingly draconian tactics used by the IMF to coerce Zimbabwe into following its programs as the 1990s wore on, including the withholding of new credit to ratchet up pressure, as the driving factor in Mugabe’s increasingly heavy-handed and autocratic style.¹⁴ They also suggest that the international community’s withholding of \$700 million intended to aid those adversely affected by liberalization and devaluation for over a year was a key contributor to economic, social and thus political decline. This lack of funding is argued to have set off upwardly spiraling government debt, as the government was forced to take new IMF and World Bank loans to backfill the costs of the social development programs (SDPs). These requirements for aid, in turn, opened the door to the international financial institutions (IFIs) to mandate accelerated adjustment programs.¹⁵ Finally, some in this camp suggest that the interlinked system of the IFIs and bilateral donors contributed to the decline, since this gave the IMF the power to

¹⁰ Tor Skalnes, “The State, Interest Groups, and Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe,” *The Journal of Development Studies* 29, no. 3 (1993), 401.

¹¹ Robert I Rotberg, “Worst of the Worst,” 168.

¹² Paul Collier, *Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* (NY: Harper Collins, 2009), 21.

¹³ Sachikonye, “Whither Zimbabwe,” 15; Donald Mavunduse, “Have the World Bank and International Monetary Fund Contributed to the Current Famine in Southern Africa?” *CQ Researcher* 12, no. 39 (2002), 937; Owen Sichone, “Zimbabwe’s Economic Policies, 1980-2002,” *DPMN Bulletin X* (2002).

¹⁴ Patrick Bond, “Zimbabwe’s Hide and Seek with the IMF: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the South African Proxy,” *Review of African Political Economy* 32, no. 106 (2005), 613.

¹⁵ Colin Stoneman, “The World Bank Demands Its Pound of Flesh,” *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 53(1992), 95.

disrupt all external funding in its effort to pressure the Zimbabwean government to force through economically and socially disruptive SAPs.¹⁶ This, they argue, left Mugabe unable to support the successful policies of the 1980s and instead forced him into a more and more autocratic defense of his leadership.¹⁷ Brown even notes Zimbabwe initially had a better, more gradual, plan for structural adjustment that could have smoothed the transition for those affected, but was forced by the IMF to adopt their more aggressive approach.¹⁸

The first camp responds to the second camp's argument by asserting that the design of SAP was determined by the autocracy and greed of Mugabe and those around him. Thus, heavy-handed autocratic leadership style is the driving factor, and SAPs and their economic and political affects an intervening variable. Dashwood and Cliffe state the Zimbabwean economy was not in such trouble at the end of the 1980s as was typically the case for countries adopting SAP. Instead, they suggest the SAPs were simply a means for profiteering by Zimbabwe's political elites who had used their status to acquire industrial and agricultural investments throughout Zimbabwe. This convergence of political and economic groups—what Dashwood calls the “embourgeoisement of the bureaucratic and political elites”—led to a shift away from expensive socialism towards a capitalist approach seeking more export profit (particularly from a desired increase in manufacturing exports).¹⁹ Others in the first camp accept the

¹⁶ Hevina Dashwood, “Inequality, Leadership and the Crisis in Zimbabwe.” *International Journal*, 57, no. 2 (2002), 82; Carolyn Jenkins, “The Politics of Economic Policy-Making in Zimbabwe,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 4 (1997), 600; Chikuhwa, *Crisis of Governance*, 274.

¹⁷ Mavunduse, “Have the World Bank and IMF Contributed,” 937; Rachel Swarns in her 2002 NY Times article, while not specifically supporting Mugabe, cites the needed support of those who rally behind him, “Criticized by the West, Mugabe is a Hero to Many.” *New York Times*, September 6, 2002; Sichone, “Zimbabwe's Economic Policies, 1980–2002”; Stoneman, “The World Bank Demands,” 94; Dashwood, “Inequality,” 71.

¹⁸ William Brown, “The EU and Structural Adjustment: The Case of Lome IV and Zimbabwe,” *Review of African Political Economy* 26, no. 79 (1999), 79.

¹⁹ Hevina S. Dashwood, *Zimbabwe: the Political Economy of Transformation* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 9; Lionel Cliffe, “Were They Pushed or Did They Jump? Zimbabwe and the World Bank,” *Southern Africa Report* 6, no. 4 (1991), 26; see also Jan Willem Gunning, “The Trade Policy Review of Zimbabwe,” *World Economy* 19, no. 5 (1996), 160.

appropriateness of the SAPs, but maintain that its adverse economic, and thus political, effects resulted from “the government’s unwillingness to adhere strictly to the adjustment programme.”²⁰

The debate in the literature revolves around the source of Mugabe’s autocracy. Those asserting that Mugabe has not changed, always demonstrating a willingness to use heavy-handed measures to maintain his power, assert that nothing outside of his decisions have been able to counter the effects of his autocratic actions. While they find examples of heavy-handedness throughout his leadership, this camp fails to identify how he managed to maintain economic success throughout the 1980s and then watched his autocratic methods ultimately destroy the economy by the turn of the century. Is this because each of his actions simply had a compounding effect or was there a singular tipping point that must have occurred? The second camp believes there was a tipping point, the mandate of SAPs. They argue the role of international organizations and their structural adjustment directive undermined the ability of Mugabe to maintain his power, established by the relative successes of 1980s Zimbabwe versus the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. As a result of this success, they seek a shift in the conditions providing Mugabe his support and see SAPs as that shift. Without a swing away from the socialized successes of the 1980s, Mugabe—still the hero of Zimbabwe’s independence struggle to many²¹—would not have faced the political challenges that he controlled with ever-increasing autocracy. What this camp fails to account for is the impact of Mugabe’s harsher actions in the 1980s while the economy was succeeding. This thesis will rectify these shortcomings by both camps.

A within-case comparison analyzing two distinct periods of Mugabe’s rule will be used to investigate which explanation is better supported by available evidence. The first period will cover April 1980, independence for Zimbabwe, to 1986. This period represents one of strong economy before the SAPs were implemented, international support, and the initial post-independence period as Mugabe established his government. It also covers the first post-independence national elections and the period of primary

²⁰ Maclean and Quadir, “Structural Adjustment;” Gunning, “Trade Policy Review of Zimbabwe,” 163.

²¹ “Criticized by the West, Mugabe is a Hero to Many,” *New York Times*, September 6, 2002.

opposition from Nkomo's ZAPU party before they were finally subdued to a point where a merger with Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party became inevitable, though not covering the entire period from the point of inevitable merger to the final signing of the merger agreement in December 1987. The second period will cover 1998 to 2003. This period represents one of sharp economic decline after the adoption of SAP, accelerated land reform, and the creation and establishment of widespread opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). It also covers three national elections, including the first national electoral loss Mugabe would encounter, as well as a period where international opposition to Mugabe's governance became far more widespread. By assessing the reaction, or lack of reaction, by Mugabe and his government to events during each period, an assessment of level of autocracy will be possible. Events signifying opposition to Mugabe's rule, such as public protests, strikes, media opposition, political opposition, elections, or formation of political opposition, along with the reaction, or lack thereof, of the government, will be identified utilizing media reports, secondary literature, election observer reports, and non-governmental organization reports. Unique to this case is a study by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ), that has consistently been used in the study of 1980s Zimbabwe and the brutal attacks carried out by the government and its army particularly in Matabeleland. Though not released until 1997 due to the commission's inability to accurately and safely collect data until then, it has compiled the foremost collection of data into the political violence inflicted on Zimbabweans during the mid-1980s using both data from other sources as well as the commission's own investigations. The CCJPZ itself is a "Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference" based in Harare, and other offices around Zimbabwe. It seeks to:

Make people aware of their rights and duties as citizens ... investigate allegations of injustice which it considers to merit attention, and to take appropriate action,... and to advise the Bishop's Conference on the human rights situation pertaining from time to time.²²

²² CCJPZ Home Page. <http://www.hrforumzim.com/members/ccjz/ccjptext.htm> (accessed May 31, 2010).

The primary media sources used for collecting data of opposition actions and government reactions comes from newspaper reports. *The Guardian* newspaper is primarily used until the end of the 1990s when local Zimbabwean independent newspapers reports become available in electronic archives. While *The Guardian* was certainly not the only newspaper reporting on Zimbabwe during this period, it was one of the few who maintained a dedicated reporter in Harare for the entire time, providing reporting from Zimbabwe itself, rather than a neighboring country, or even from a western capital headquarters of one of the international newspapers. Additionally, Kalley, Schoeman, and Andor have produced a chronology of key political events for several southern African countries, including Zimbabwe, from independence to 1997.²³ This will be used to offer a second source to provide a validation of information taken from newspaper reports and the CCJPZ report for the 1980–1986 period of study.

Once the two periods are analyzed, if it can be seen that similar events within each time period garnered the same reaction, then it is reasonable to conclude Mugabe’s leadership style has not evolved, but has remained constant. Should this be the case, it may be reasonable to conclude Mugabe has always been an autocratic ruler capable of the land reform decisions of the twenty-first century, while also providing a cogent case for further study to analyze the economic success of the 1980s versus the disaster later, having ruled out the level of autocracy as an explanatory factor. If autocracy is found prevalent in the 1980s in an escalating trend of politically convenient, but economically damaging, decisions, this could explain the 1980s versus beyond quandary, while still determining a perpetual case of autocracy for Mugabe. Finally, if public actions and government responses are seen to be altered during or following SAP adoption, then an evolution of Mugabe’s leadership style, resulting from the SAPs undermining of his governance, can be determined.

The research will perform the analysis of the two time periods over two chapters: independence to 1986 and 1998–2003, followed by a concluding chapter providing the

²³ Jacqueline A. Kalley, Elna Schoeman and L.E. Andor, *Southern African Political History: A Chronology of Key Political Events from Independence to Mid-1997* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999).

final, within-case comparative analysis. Chapter I assesses Zimbabwe as it emerged from independence up to the point where ZAPU had become a ‘lame duck’ opposition party resigned to an eventual merger with ZANU though still finalizing the terms of a merger with ZANU that would not actually occur until an agreement was signed in December 1987. Chapter I analyzes the social and economic successes of the 1980s, along with the handling of political challenges to Mugabe by his government. Levels of political challenge (for example, political opposition parties, negative media, protests, and strikes), and the extent of response, or lack thereof, are observed.

Chapter II encompasses the period of economic implosion, land reform, and establishment of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as a tenable opposition party across Zimbabwe. Changes in economic and social situations for the population, along with political challenges leveled at Mugabe, are ascertained. Reaction to these actions are identified. Key throughout the comparative analysis (Chapter III), is the level of heavy-handedness utilized by Mugabe. While there were differing reactions from Mugabe—ranging from alleged mass-murder, threats of prosecution or physical harm, closure of organizations opposing him, or denial of events he was accused of—the key question will be whether these differing responses always existed, and always in response to the same type of challenge, or if there were a shift in Mugabe’s tactics.

Chapter IV of the research assesses whether there appears to be a change between the actions of the 1980s, by either the population or Mugabe, and that of the post-SAP period, using the within-case comparison, and based on the findings of Chapters I and II. If the actions and reactions remained constant throughout, then it is likely that Mugabe’s decisions over the past thirty years can bear responsibility for the situation Zimbabwe finds itself in today. If, on the other hand, through comparative analysis of the two periods, a change in action and/or reaction can be identified, then it must be determined that Mugabe has evolved into the autocrat of the twenty-first century. By accepting that any change in opposition and the economy were caused by SAP, it almost overstates their significance, providing any possible bias away from my hypothesis and in favor of the other camp.

II. GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO OPPOSITION DURING ECONOMIC STABILITY: 1980–1986

This chapter seeks to analyze the initial period of Zimbabwean independence, from April 1980 through the first post-independence general elections in 1985 and the follow-on process by which opposition party eventually merged with the ruling party – a period generally regarded as one of economic and diplomatic success for Zimbabwe with a stable economy and positive international relationships. The first post-independence year (1981) was characterized by rapid growth, largely as a result of the removal of international sanctions imposed on apartheid Rhodesia. Zimbabwe’s economy showed limited growth but vastly outperformed the average economy of Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa), with an overall growth rate for the 1980s decade of 7.1 percent versus a decline of 8.2 percent for Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁴ “[C]ompared with many other countries at the time, Zimbabwe’s success record for the 1980s might be described as modestly successful.”²⁵ While Zimbabwe was viewed as a model of post-independence reform—particularly when situated next to the apartheid government of South Africa, that progressively became a more amplified global issue as the 1980s went on, and a larger western focus on the Cold War—with Mugabe overseeing a smooth transition of power within to a democratic regime, this chapter will show that in fact it was a period in which all forms of opposition were suppressed and a *de facto* single-party state attained. This analysis of government responses to opposition during a period of economic success will then be compared to the responses of the 1990s and early 2000s when the economy was imploding to determine how much of an effect the economic crisis had on the level of repression.

Emerging from independence, Zimbabwe was a multi-party democracy led by the victor in the war for independence and majority rule. The Lancaster House constitution called for a President, who was head of state, and a Prime Minister, who was head of government. Robert Mugabe led the government and nation, while President Canaan

²⁴ World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog> (accessed May 16, 2010).

²⁵ Maclean and Quadir, “Structural Adjustment.”

Banana assumed the less powerful presidency. As he took power, Mugabe called for unity, putting national needs before party desires, removing racial barriers, and progress to be achieved by “join[ing] hands in a new amity ... as Zimbabweans.”²⁶ In his address to the nation the night before Zimbabwe’s independence he made a personal pledge: “If yesterday I fought as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, rights and duties as myself.”²⁷ Having reassured those who had lost power of their security and inclusion, he set out his vision for the social development of Zimbabwe: “There are people without land who need land, people without jobs who need jobs, children without schools who need schools and patients without hospitals who need them.”²⁸ The social development plan was codified in the government release of *Growth with Equity: an Economic Policy Statement*, which laid out Mugabe’s vision for “the attainment in Zimbabwe of a truly socialist, egalitarian and democratic society in conditions of sustained growth with equality.”²⁹ With abundant natural resources, a strong agricultural system, an established manufacturing base, and international support, Mugabe possessed all the tools for a successful execution of the plan.

Joshua Nkomo, the original opposition leader to both colonial rule and subsequent apartheid rule, emerged at independence as the defeated leader of the ZAPU, now the main opposition party. Nkomo had expected a government to be formed by all the former fighters from the liberation movement, with him as leader, the position he felt he had held since the 1957 creation of ZAPU.³⁰ Instead, Mugabe’s ZANU-PF won 57 of the 80 seats open to black members of parliament (MPs). ZAPU won 20, and the United African National Council (UANC) led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa, which held power briefly as part of a failed Internal Settlement plan between the end of the Smith regime in

²⁶ Robert Mugabe, “Address to the Nation by the Prime Minister Elect,” *Zimbabwe Ministry of Information, Immigration and Tourism, Record No. 1* (March 4, 1980): 2.

²⁷ Robert Mugabe, “Address to the Nation on Independence eve 1980,” April 17, 1980, http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg/070221rm.asp?sector=OPIN&year=2007&range_start=31 (accessed April 22, 2010).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Zimbabwe, *Growth with Equity: an Economic Policy Statement*, February 1981, para 139.

³⁰ Martin Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002), 24.

Rhodesia and the creation of independent Zimbabwe, won three. An additional 20 seats were filled by representatives of the white minority, elected separately according to the provisions of the Lancaster House Agreement.³¹ Former Prime Minister Ian Smith led the Republican Front (RF), which won all twenty of the white seats.

Despite winning an absolute majority of seats in parliament, Mugabe initially offered Nkomo the seat of President, but Nkomo declined it, fearing he would be “deprived of [the] right to speak [his] mind and take a lead on matters of great national importance.”³² Following this, Mugabe instead allowed four of 23 cabinet positions to ZAPU, including the appointment of Nkomo as Home Affairs Minister.³³ The CCJPZ maintains that ZANU-PF did not challenge ZAPU’s role in 1980 and 1981, while Meredith asserts that Mugabe and ZANU were rallying against Nkomo and ZAPU from the very beginning.³⁴ This apparent contradiction arises from the different foci of the two studies. The CCJPZ focused on relations between the former armed wings of ZANU and ZAPU, the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA). It notes that while accusations of disruptive activities were made by Mugabe and Nkomo against ZIPRA and ZANLA, respectively, each avoided direct attacks against the other party and its leader.³⁵ In response to battles between the two former military factions in 1980, for example, Mugabe appointed a commission to investigate, without holding the ZAPU leadership responsible.³⁶ Other

³¹ United Kingdom, *Report of the Constitutional Conference, Lancaster House, London, September-December 1979* (London, UK: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1980), 27–28.

³² Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 39.

³³ Norma Kriger, “ZANU(PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980-2000: Discourse and Coercion” *African Affairs* 104, no. 414 (January 2005), 3.

³⁴ Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 60.

³⁵ Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ), *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace 1980 to 1988* (Harare, Zimbabwe: Legal Resources Foundation, 1997), 40.

³⁶ “18 Die as Zimbabwe Rivals Clash,” *New York Times*, November 11, 1980; CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence*, xv. The Dumbutshena Report was never made public. In a 2003 Supreme Court suit brought against the government to have the report released, it was formally declared lost by the Minister of Justice. *Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights and the Legal Resources Foundation v. The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and the Attorney-General*, Supreme Court of Zimbabwe 311/99 (2003).

high ranking government officials were more inclined to associate ZIPRA violence with ZAPU, suggesting in late 1980 that “ZAPU has become the enemy of ZANU.”³⁷

Meredith, however, focuses on relations between the parties themselves, arguing that differing views of the unified government created tension from the outset. According to Meredith, Mugabe saw the inclusion of ZAPU in the government as a first step towards absorbing ZAPU into ZANU, while Nkomo sought ZAPU inclusion in government decision-making as a separate party with independent and potentially opposing views. ZAPU took its opportunity to be included in government decision-making, but viewed itself as an opposition party, not part of a single voice for the government. Mugabe, recognizing the failure to suppress ZAPU through inclusion, bristled at the idea of opposition from within his government, declaring in June 1980 that there could be no reconciliation between ZANU and ZAPU as long as ZAPU was not willing to recognize the will of the people to be ruled by ZANU.³⁸ Thereafter, Mugabe sought to isolate and marginalize ZAPU ministers in general, and Nkomo in particular. When he met with tribal chiefs in Matabeleland, Nkomo’s support base, in July, his entourage included other senior cabinet ministers and officials, but excluded ZAPU and Nkomo in particular. The *New York Times* suggested at the time that “among Nkomo supporters the journey was bound to be seen as an attempt by the Prime Minister to cut away an important part of Nkomo’s political base, further isolating Mr Nkomo and enhancing the predominance of Mr Mugabe’s faction.”³⁹ Still, when nine ZAPU officials were detained by the security police in November, Nkomo asserted Mugabe had known nothing of the arrests, which had been ordered by the Minister of State.⁴⁰ The repression of ZAPU became undeniable in November 1980 when the government invoked the Emergency Powers Act to ban three ZAPU rallies while authorizing a ZANU rally.⁴¹ In January 1981 several newspapers were nationalized, including *the Herald* in Harare and

³⁷ Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 61.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁹ “Friction Grows in Zimbabwe Coalition,” *New York Times*, July 28, 1980.

⁴⁰ “Police in Zimbabwe Detain Officials of Nkomo’s Party,” *New York Times*, November 22, 1980.

⁴¹ “Zimbabwe Rallies Banned,” *New York Times*, November 2, 1981.

the *Bulawayo Chronicle*. Nkomo's criticism of this move included the statement: "this is probably my last free statement through our media."⁴² In response, he was demoted from Minister of Home Affairs to Minister in Charge of Public Service.⁴³ Thereafter ZAPU and other opposition groups were largely shut out by the state-owned media, forced to rely on the remaining independent and international media outlets to be heard.

In 1982 Mugabe retreated from the unity government, while simultaneously shifting power from the government to the ruling party. This move would prove pivotal in connecting the actions of the government that Mugabe led, and the party that Mugabe led. In early 1982, he announced that "all future government policies would first be approved by ZANU-PF"—a move immediately denounced by Nkomo.⁴⁴ At the same time, he seized upon opportunities to justify the removal of ZAPU members from the unity government. In February 1982, Mugabe announced that huge arms caches had been found on ZAPU-owned land. Despite these arms caches being no different from those found all around Zimbabwe since independence without accusations being leveled at ZIPRA or ZANLA,⁴⁵ Mugabe dismissed Nkomo and Josiah Chinamano, two of the four ZAPU ministers, accusing them of plotting to overthrow the government.⁴⁶ What indicates that this was in fact a political move, rather than a true feeling of threat to the government, was the timing of the announcement. Nkomo and Dumiso Dabengwa, a ZAPU member and former ZIPRA chief of intelligence, had formed a committee with Mugabe and his security minister, Emmerson Mnangagwa to resolve the very issue of arms caches throughout the country left from the two military wings as they initially clashed following independence. However, before the committee was able to conclude its recommended course of action, Mugabe announced the arms cache discovery he used to remove Nkomo from the cabinet.⁴⁷ In so doing, he warned "the elements responsible

⁴² "Zimbabwean Official Assails Takeover of Newspapers," *New York Times*, January 6, 1981.

⁴³ Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 61; *New York Times*, January 11, 1981.

⁴⁴ Chikuhwa, *Crisis of Governance*, 92.

⁴⁵ CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence*, 41.

⁴⁶ *The Guardian*, October 4, 1984; September 24, 1985.

⁴⁷ Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 63.

that if they wish to start another civil war they should be careful”⁴⁸ Mugabe asserted that Nkomo must stand trial⁴⁹ and likened working with him to having a “cobra in the house,” going on to say that “the only way to effectively deal with a snake is to strike and destroy its head.”⁵⁰ While Mugabe seized on the presence of weapons to link the opposition to a war, this would become a habitual pattern in future years whether weapons or violence were involved. Following the firings of Nkomo and Chinamano, the government continued its pressure on ZAPU to demonstrate the futility of opposition, arresting two senior members of ZAPU, General Lookout Masuku, Deputy Head of the Army, and Dumiso Dabengwa, a former national defense advisor, and charged them with treason and illegal possession of arms,⁵¹ while another ZAPU MP, Akim Ndlovu, was detained under the Emergency Powers Act.⁵² Finally, in June 1982, shots were fired into the houses of Mugabe and Minister of Defense Enos Nkala by ex-ZIPRA members.⁵³ Following the shootings, the accusations ceased to segregate the former ZIPRA members from the ZAPU leadership, instead the government declared a clear link between the actions of ex-ZIPRA and the current ZAPU leadership while imposing a curfews, detentions, and weapons searches throughout Bulawayo, the heartland of ZAPU support.

Mugabe would continue over the course of the 1980s to blame internationally sponsored violence on ZAPU, using this as a justification for the harsh treatment of both ZAPU leaders and the Matabeleland population supporting it.⁵⁴ Mugabe increasingly blamed ZAPU supporters for all criminal and political violence in Zimbabwe, describing those involved as “dissidents” aiming to overthrow the government in alliance with apartheid South Africa. Although such accusations had been made prior to the Nkomo

⁴⁸ “Mugabe Cites Discovery of Arms on Nkomo Farm,” *New York Times*, February 8, 1982.

⁴⁹ “Zimbabwe Premier Says Nkomo Must Stand Trial,” *New York Times*, March 1, 1982.

⁵⁰ Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 63.

⁵¹ “Zimbabwe Arrests Deputy Head of Army,” *New York Times*, March 13, 1982; Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 64.

⁵² “Nkomo Urges Zimbabwe to End Detention Law,” *New York Times*, March 15, 1982.

⁵³ “Dissidents Burn Harare Courts: Anti-Government Slogans Painted on Court Walls in Zimbabwe,” *The Guardian*, November 19, 1985.

⁵⁴ Zimbabwe. Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, *A Chronicle of Dissidency in Zimbabwe* (Harare, Zimbabwe, 1984), 4.

and Chinamano firings, they were directed at the leadership of ZAPU only thereafter, marking “the final rift.”⁵⁵ In reality, the vast majority of the violence was sponsored by South Africa and RENAMO rebels in Mozambique (themselves sponsored by the South African government) seeking to promote instability in Zimbabwe for the purpose of weakening the movement for majority rule in South Africa. CCJPZ concludes that “dissidents were few, numbering no more than around 400 at their peak.” While Mugabe’s actions were veiled as response to violence, the actions undertaken by his government vastly exceeded the levels of violence encountered. Despite the limited numbers of actual dissidents, along with Nkomo’s persistent denial of ZAPU involvement and repeated appeals for all dissidents to cease their activities no matter who they felt they were supporting,⁵⁶ the government pursued ZAPU members unrelentingly throughout the mid-1980s in the name of eliminating dissident violence. In response to increased violence in Matabeleland, in July 1982 a formal curfew was imposed in Bulawayo between the hours of 9 pm and 4 am. The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs threatened “worse things... if [Matabeleland residents] continued to support dissidents.”⁵⁷ In September the government restricted the movement of foreign media into Matabeleland⁵⁸ and banned political rallies scheduled by Nkomo and ZAPU.⁵⁹ In March 1983 Nkomo’s home was raided, and he was placed under house arrest, while as many as 1000 of his supporters were detained.⁶⁰ Nkomo and most of the ZAPU leadership fled to Botswana in fear for their lives.⁶¹ In February 1984 the government imposed a food embargo on Matabeleland South, the home of Nkomo and largely supportive of ZAPU, and detained an estimated 8,000 in the following months.⁶²

⁵⁵ CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence*, 29.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 42–43.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵⁸ “Zimbabwe Curbs Movements by Foreign Correspondents,” *New York Times*, September 14, 1982.

⁵⁹ “Zimbabwe Said to Ban Rallies by Nkomo Party,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1982.

⁶⁰ CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence*, xv.

⁶¹ “Zimbabwe: Nkomo in Exile” *Africa Research Bulletin (Political Social and Cultural Series)* 20, no. 3 (April 1983), 6781; “ZANU Goes on Rural Rampage: Political Factions Clash in Zimbabwe,” *The Guardian*, October 18, 1984.

⁶² CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence*, xvi, 56, 61.

Beginning in 1984 the ZANU Youth movement became a primary vehicle of intimidation in Matabeleland. Separate from the army, and particularly the Fifth Brigade, the ZANU youth executed violence and intimidation of the ZAPU population under the auspices of the ZANU party. It was involved in attacks on ZAPU and other minority parties, as well as coercing people to attend ZANU rallies.⁶³

Mugabe's pursuit of not only the leaders of ZAPU, but also its supporters, sought to marginalize the party, leaving it unable to speak out against the government and establishing a level of fear that would preclude support from its section of the population. The Army Fifth Brigade became operational in December 1982, made up almost entirely of former ZANLA forces and trained by North Korea. They wore different uniforms from the regular army and had an abbreviated chain of command, with their brigade leaders "answering directly to Mugabe's army commanders."⁶⁴ At the passing out ceremony Mugabe urged the troops to "start dealing with dissidents."⁶⁵ In January 1983 the Fifth Brigade was deployed to Matabeleland North to execute an operation named *Gukurahundi*, a Shona expression meaning the rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains. Fifth Brigade troops convicted of violent crimes and human rights abuses in 1984 were pardoned by Mugabe, reinforcing to the remainder of the Fifth Brigade the backing and assured protection of the Mugabe government.⁶⁶ In March 1983 journalists had uncovered decomposed bodies, part of a group of 17 or 18 young men killed in the previous three weeks by the Fifth Brigade troops.⁶⁷ Following an initial period when the Fifth Brigade had focused its attacks on former ZIPRA soldiers and ZAPU officials,⁶⁸ between March and November 1983, Fifth Brigade troops summarily executed accused dissidents, and undertook a wider campaign of attacks on anyone not carrying a ZANU-PF membership card. There were large numbers of disappearances at

⁶³ "Nkomo in Public Attack on ZANU: Zimbabwean Opposition Leader Attacks Government," *The Guardian*, July 30, 1984.

⁶⁴ Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 65.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁶⁶ CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence*, 62.

⁶⁷ "Zimbabwe: Nkomo in Exile," 6782.

⁶⁸ Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 67.

the hands of the Fifth Brigade with assistance from Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) officials, who “removed men from buses, trains, or from their homes, and they were never seen again.... Some men who were killed or detained were merely young men who were of ‘dissident age,’” and families of the dead were reportedly shot simply for weeping.⁶⁹ By the end of 1983, “possessing a ZANU-PF card became essential for safety.”⁷⁰ Responding to the growing criticism, the government established a commission to investigate the activities of Fifth Brigade in Matabeleland in September 1983, but its report was never made public, if one was even produced.⁷¹ By the end of 1986 approximately 20,000 people had died at the hands of the Fifth Brigade.⁷² The Fifth Brigade succeeded in stifling ZAPU. With the exception of limited reports of “dissidents” supportive of ZAPU carrying out retaliatory actions in Matabeleland, Nkomo and ZAPU were largely silent in 1983 and 1984.

National elections were scheduled for March 1985, though they were later deferred until June/July as a result of administrative delays in registering voters.⁷³ In July 1984 Nkomo had held his first rally in Harare in over two years in front of more than 2,000 supporters where he claimed had been unable to campaign in Matabeleland because of curfews and military presence and again denied ZAPU support for violence or maintenance of weapons caches.⁷⁴ As part of its efforts to demonstrate willingness for a free and fair election to the international community, the government lifted the ban on ZAPU meetings in the Midlands and Mashonaland West in September 1984⁷⁵ and withdrew the Fifth Brigade from Matabeleland.⁷⁶ In October, ZAPU held its national

⁶⁹ CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence*, 55.

⁷⁰ Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 69.

⁷¹ Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights and The Legal Resources Foundation v. The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and the Attorney-General, Supreme Court of Zimbabwe 311/99 (2003).

⁷² Phimister, “Making and Meanings of the Massacres,” 197.

⁷³ “Mugabe to Call Election: Zimbabwe,” *The Guardian*, August 16, 1984.

⁷⁴ “Nkomo in Public Attack on ZANU: Zimbabwean Opposition Leader Attacks Government,” *The Guardian*, July 30, 1984.

⁷⁵ “‘Atrocity’ Soldiers Held: Zimbabwe,” *The Guardian*, October 5, 1984.

⁷⁶ “Nkomo Retains Grip on ZAPU at Party Congress: Zimbabwe’s Main Opposition Party,” *The Guardian*, October 15, 1984.

conference at which Nkomo, already rallying the party supporters against Mugabe for the upcoming election, railed: “The ZANU leadership today is concerned with only one matter—that of maintaining themselves in power... in less than five years the promise of independence has turned into a reality of suspicion, terror and failure.”⁷⁷

1984:		
June	Gweru	mass beatings in Matapa and Mambu.
June	Kwekwe	150 injured by ZANU-PF Youth.
October	Gweru	66 homes, 3 stores, 6 cars destroyed by ZANU-PF Youth
November	Beitbridge	estimated 20 ZAPU supporters killed by ZANU-PF Youth
November	Beitbridge	estimated 200 injured, by ZANU-PF Youth
December	Plumtree	200 injured, 150 hospitalised, by ZANU-PF Youth. ⁷⁷
1985:		
	Matabeleland/ Midlands/ Harare	estimated 2 000 left homeless, mainly Ndebele speakers, after ZANU-PF Youth rampages destroyed homes in the following areas.
March	Tsholotsho	39 huts in 3 villages and 3 stores were destroyed by ZANU-PF Youth, leaving many homeless. At least one died and others were injured.
August	Silobela	166 homes destroyed, at least 4 killed, 1500 left homeless
August	Harare	"scores" wounded, "several dozen" killed and hundreds left homeless after ZANU-PF Youth rampages.

Figure 1. ZANU-PF Youth Attacks June 1984–August 1985⁷⁸

The pattern of repression established in the previous five years continued through the election season. ZANU ministers used the Emergency Powers Act to require ZAPU to seek police approval prior to any meeting or gathering.⁷⁹ CIO officials abducted opposition supporters⁸⁰ and were accused of killing members of ZAPU’s central committee.⁸¹ The UANC also accused ZANU of hiring killers who, in one incident, dragged 40 UANC supporters from a train and killed five party officials from the

⁷⁷ “Nkomo Retains Grip on ZAPU at Party Congress: Zimbabwe’s Main Opposition,” *The Guardian*, October 15, 1984.

⁷⁸ CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence*, 63.

⁷⁹ “Nkomo Forced to Cancel Rally: Zimbabwe African National Union Prevents Opposition Leader’s Political Appearance in Chinoyi,” *The Guardian*, January 21, 1985.

⁸⁰ CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence*, 67.

⁸¹ “Harare Accused of Intimidating ZAPU: Zimbabwe,” *The Guardian*, February 23, 1985.

group.⁸² The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights reported that in February 1985 alone 1300 people were detained in Bulawayo, and another 200 ZAPU officials detained in the Midlands.⁸³ The ZANU youth movement also expanded its intimidation of opposition supporters (Table 1). In addition, ZANU supporters used mass violence to limit ZAPU's ability to campaign.⁸⁴

While violence had underscored the build-up to the elections, the official election campaigning was limited to the month of June and saw little violence. Instead ZANU utilized restrictive timelines as ways to unsettle the opposition party from smoothly executing its campaign, while ultimately balancing the disruption with a demonstration of inclusion for the international community watching. Dates for the elections were announced by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs on June 3, 1985. White voters would vote on June 27 and blacks on July 1 and 2. Nkomo and other opposition leaders immediately filed an application to the court to have the poll delayed, on the grounds that the time allowed to register candidates—a process requiring ten signatures from that candidate's constituency⁸⁵—was too short given that the voters' rolls for constituencies were distributed June 7 and the deadline for submission was 1 pm on June 10.⁸⁶ The case was taken all the way to the Supreme Court before being finally denied. The government extended registration an additional 28 hours anyway, stating “we should bend over backwards to accommodate any sort of grievance to ensure for all concerned a free and fair election.”⁸⁷ There were only limited reports of violence during

⁸² “Mugabe Men ‘Shot Muzorewa Officials:’ Allegations Over Murder of Five Officials from Zimbabwe Opposition Party,” *The Guardian*, February 27, 1985.

⁸³ CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence*, 66.

⁸⁴ “Nkomo Seeks Meeting With Government After Angry Demonstrators Stone his Car: Zimbabwe's Opposition Leader,” *The Guardian*, January 14, 1985.

⁸⁵ “Nkomo Tries to Get Poll Postponed: Zimbabwe Opposition Leader Denounces Scheduling of Election,” *The Guardian*, June 7, 1985.

⁸⁶ “Nkomo Poll Plea Denied: Zimbabwean High Court Rejects Opposition Leader's Attempt to Delay Election,” *The Guardian*, June 8, 1985.

⁸⁷ “Zimbabwe Extends Deadline: Nomination for Candidate for First Post Independence General Elections,” *The Guardian*, June 11, 1985.

the official campaigning period.⁸⁸ The government did, however, ban the symbols for both ZAPU and the ZANU-Sithole parties, a particular problem “because of the amount of illiteracy in rural areas.”⁸⁹ Ultimately, Mugabe was “able to claim to have staged a reasonably fair election,”⁹⁰ having backed off from violence and repression long enough to allow the perception of a free and fair election before returning to the goal of coercing any opposition into submission and envelopment within ZANU once the elections were over, even with an expanded majority from the election. In an example of the government’s attempts to temper any outcry over inappropriate elections, the polls were even extended two days to ensure all those eligible were able to vote, trying to show willingness to assure everyone the chance to vote once as part of a larger attempt to demonstrate to the world that the elections were free and fair. Unfortunately, by this point a pattern of intimidation and violence over voters had been established long before the polls were officially opened.⁹¹ In the end, ZANU extended its majority in parliament, winning 64 of the 80 available seats. Despite the violence in Matabeleland, ZAPU took all 15 seats there including Nkomo’s seat, but failed to secure any other victories. The last went to ZANU-Sithole.⁹² Having attempted inclusion in a unity government after the first election, Mugabe this time chose to establish a government solely made up of supporters, establishing the role of both ZAPU and Smith’s RF party as opposition parties to be suppressed into obsolescence. Mugabe’s new cabinet included only one non-ZANU member, a white independent as Minister of Public Service.⁹³

⁸⁸ “Candidate Intimidated: Zimbabwe Opposition Politician Ruth Chinamano Asks for Postponement of General Election,” *The Guardian*, June 21, 1985; *The Times*, July 1, 1985.

⁸⁹ “Harare Ban Denounced: Zimbabwe Opposition Parties Condemn Government,” *The Guardian*, May 18, 1985.

⁹⁰ “Mugabe Suffers Poll Setback as Whites Rally Around Smith: Conservative Alliance Candidates Dominate Voting in Zimbabwe’s White Elections,” *The Guardian*, June 29, 1985.

⁹¹ “Zimbabwe Polls Extended After Chaos on First Day: General Election,” *The Guardian*, July 3, 1985.

⁹² “Zimbabwe: 1985 House of Assembly Results” EISA.org, www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimresults1985.htm (accessed May 7, 2010).

⁹³ “White Out of Mugabe Cabinet: Agriculture Minister Norman Dropped from Zimbabwe Government,” *The Guardian*, July 16, 1985.

After the 1985 election, the hounding of Nkomo recommenced as Mugabe set out to negate ZAPU once and for all, forcing them to accept absorption into ZANU. Nkomo was again accused of involvement in dissident activity. Security forces raided his homes in Harare and Bulawayo, removing legally registered guns from and arresting a “rebel” in the latter.⁹⁴ In August ZAPU offices were raided, and 10 people, including the new Mayor and Alderman of Bulawayo, were detained.⁹⁵ A total 34 supporters of ZAPU were being detained including their chief parliamentary whip.⁹⁶ The government attributed the August murder of 22 ethnic Shonas, most likely by RENAMO,⁹⁷ to ZAPU, arresting 30 top ZAPU officials.⁹⁸ In September, Minister of Home Affairs Enos Nkala said he wanted to “hit the dissidents at their roots and that root is ZAPU,” announcing his intention to “wipe out Mr Nkomo’s ZAPU party.”⁹⁹ In response to this unrelenting pressure, and the 1985 election results, ZAPU restarted merger talks with ZANU that same month, with direct talks between Mugabe and Nkomo in October.¹⁰⁰ Though dissident attacks continued, some apparently in opposition to ZANU-ZAPU merger talks and demanding the release of detained ZAPU leaders Dumiso Dabengwa and Gen Lookout Masuku,¹⁰¹ Nkomo continued to speak in opposition to the attacks, seeking to isolate ZAPU from association with them. In November, the Fifth Brigade was

⁹⁴ “‘Rebel Held’ in Search of Nkomo Homes: Zimbabwean Authorities Raid Two Houses of Opposition Leader,” *The Guardian*, July 25, 1985.

⁹⁵ Kalley, Schoeman, and Andor, *Southern African Political History*, 733.

⁹⁶ “Mugabe Keeps up Pressure on ZAPU: Opposition Party Members Held for Questioning in Zimbabwe,” *The Guardian* August 7, 1985.

⁹⁷ Kalley, Schoeman, and Andor, *Southern African Political History*, 733; “Zimbabwe Dissidents Kill 18: Massacre by Rebel Guerrillas,” *The Guardian*, August 31, 1985; “Outsiders Linked to Killings: Zimbabwe,” *The Guardian*, 3 September, 1985.

⁹⁸ Kalley, Schoeman, and Andor, *Southern African Political History*, 733; “Zimbabwe Dissidents Kill 18: Massacre by Rebel Guerrillas,” *The Guardian*, August 31, 1985.

⁹⁹ “Zimbabwe’s Police Minister Threatens to ‘Wipe Out’ ZAPU: Home Affairs Minister Nkala Says Detentions of Opposition Officials ‘Only a Start,’” *The Guardian*, September 20, 1985.

¹⁰⁰ “Harare Parties’ Merger Talks,” *The Guardian*, September 24, 1985; “Harare Merger Nears Reality: Zimbabwean Premier Mugabe and Opposition Leader Nkomo Meet to Discuss Party Unity,” *The Guardian*, October 4, 1985.

¹⁰¹ “Dissidents Burn Harare Courts: Anti-Government Slogans Painted on Court Walls in Zimbabwe,” *The Guardian*, November 19, 1985.

redeployed to Matabeleland. In December, Mugabe announced that “ZANU and ZAPU had agreed to establish a one-party state with socialist principles.”¹⁰²

By the start of 1986, moves toward ZANU-ZAPU unification were continuing with ZANU offering conciliatory gestures in order to close out a merger. Nkomo’s brother Stephen and three other ZAPU leaders were released from jail in February. The next month, Nkomo and Nkala appeared together at a rally in Matabeleland calling for citizen cooperation with the police to round up dissidents.¹⁰³ That same month, Nkomo announced agreement on the details of merging of ZANU and ZAPU in March.¹⁰⁴ However, merger talks over the final details dragged on through the rest of the year.¹⁰⁵ In October agreement that Mugabe would become leader of the unified party was announced, something that appeared obvious based on electoral success but, based on the history of the two leaders, “one of the talks’ stickiest issues.”¹⁰⁶ In recognition of a new alliance of the parties, about 200, mostly ZAPU supporters were released from detention shortly after the leadership announcement was made.¹⁰⁷ The year ended with merger talks still ongoing, however, in another conciliatory gesture to push through a final merger agreement with the now subdued ZAPU party, more ZAPU political prisoners were released, including Dumiso Dabengwa who had been in prison for four years.¹⁰⁸ By the end of 1986 ZAPU had recognized its fate as a marginalized party representing its specific group, however never able to expand its success outside of this group who faced violence and intimidation each time they supported ZAPU. Although the very final

¹⁰² Kalley, Schoeman, and Andor, *Southern African Political History*, 735.

¹⁰³ Kalley, Schoeman, and Andor, *Southern African Political History*, 735; *The Guardian*, March 24, 1986.

¹⁰⁴ Kalley, Schoeman, and Andor, *Southern African Political History*, 735.

¹⁰⁵ “Mugabe Vows to Abolish Seats for White MP’s: Premier of Zimbabwe Plans One Party State,” *The Guardian*, April 19, 1986.

¹⁰⁶ “Mugabe ‘in Unity Pact’ with Nkomo: Agreement Between Zimbabwe’s Leading Political Parties,” *The Guardian*, October 20, 1986.

¹⁰⁷ “Hopes Raised for Zimbabwe Unity: Government to Release Political Detainees,” *The Guardian*, October 28, 1986.

¹⁰⁸ “Five Political Detainees Set Free in Zimbabwe: ZAPU Leader’s Release Increases Hopes for Merger with ZANU,” *The Guardian*, December 5, 1986.

merger of the two parties did not go through until 1987, by the end of 1986 the opposition movement was effectively over, leaving only the details of a merger to be worked through.

While ZANU's greatest focus was on ZAPU, its most significant (though still minor) political opponent, the government response to the other opposition parties, which had virtually no popular support at all, was equally intolerant. In November 1981, Mugabe threatened to expel whites running farms and industries, claiming they were racists who continued to insult Zimbabwe's black majority.¹⁰⁹ At the end of 1982, Smith was accused of asking western nations to withhold aid disbursements.¹¹⁰ He was questioned by police and his homes raided, with legally registered weapons and paperwork related to his duties as an MP seized.¹¹¹ In November 1983 Bishop Abel Muzorewa, leader of the UANC, was arrested on suspicion "of having subversive links with South Africa."¹¹² He was held for ten months before being released without ever facing actual charges, though successfully muting his opposition, again demonstrating the government's willingness to use whatever means it had at its disposal to destroy opposition, no matter the source or size of the opposition.

While the government faced little opposition from civil society in the 1980s, the government response to them was as disproportionate to the challenge posed as was the case with political opposition. Immediately after independence steel workers and miners went on strike demanding better pay and seeking government support for their efforts¹¹³ and women ZANU supporters demonstrated against police harassment, demanding a new "people's police force" to replace the "general police force" inherited at independence. The women's rally was, ironically, broken the force the women were campaigning

¹⁰⁹ "Mugabe Vows to Expel All 'Racist' Whites," *New York Times*, November 9, 1981.

¹¹⁰ "Arrest of Ian Smith is Urged on Zimbabwe's Radio and TV," *New York Times*, November 26, 1982.

¹¹¹ "Ian Smith Home Raided by Police," *New York Times*, December 6, 1982.

¹¹² "Zimbabwe: Bishop Muzorewa Arrested," *New York Times*, November 1983, 55.

¹¹³ "2,000 Blacks Demand Higher Pay in Strike at Zimbabwe Street Plant," *New York Times*, May 21, 1980, 14.

against.¹¹⁴ In October teachers and nurses went on strike demanding and again the police responded, arresting “about 750 striking nurses and teachers.”¹¹⁵ There were no other reports of strikes or protests during the early or mid-1980s. The aggressive response to first ones likely discouraged further civic mobilization, while further demonstrating the government’s propensity to respond to any protest with unbounded suppression.

The analysis above demonstrates a trend of swift and highly aggressive action by Mugabe against any form of opposition. As ZAPU sought to establish a foothold within the political spectrum of Zimbabwe, Mugabe first attempted to envelope it by forming a coalition government that limited its opposition role. Tepid criticism by ZAPU ministers with the government was met with a strategy to marginalize ZAPU within the cabinet and shift decision making from the government to the ZANU party, while delegitimizing ZAPU in society. Having reduced its position in parliament after the 1985 election, Mugabe then moved to absorb ZAPU into ZANU by agreement, thus eliminating opposition legally. The means to this end were illegal and violent. Government agencies, party organs (the youth movement), and spontaneous groups of ‘supporters’ all contributed to intimidating opposition supporters into joining and voting for ZANU, with over 20,000 killed at the hands of the Fifth Brigade and many more killed, detained, or tortured by the CIO, regular police, and army, all under the auspices of suppressing a minimal ‘dissident’ problem. Peaceful civic protests were similarly violently suppressed. Thus, what emerges from this study is a pattern of disproportionate response to *any* form of opposition, despite the legality of the formal mechanisms by which it was ultimately eliminated.

¹¹⁴, “Zimbabwe Women are Dispersed in a Protest Over Police Violence,” *New York Times*, May 29, 1980, 3.

¹¹⁵ “Zimbabwe Arrests Nurses and Teachers,” *New York Times*, October 21, 1981.

III. GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO OPPOSITION DURING ECONOMIC DECLINE: 1998–2003

Chapter II examined opposition action and government responses during a period of economic prosperity and positive international engagement with Mugabe and Zimbabwe. This chapter examines opposition action and government responses during a period of sharp economic decline (Figure 2) and international criticism, 1998–2003. Did opposition action and/or the nature of government response to opposition change as a result of the deteriorating economic situation? Rather than attempting to separate the effects of the economic decline itself from those of the structural adjustment policies designed to address it, the analysis assumes that any change in opposition and/or government activity is attributable to adverse effects of structural adjustment. Thus, the effects of structural adjustment are almost surely overstated, but this bias works against my hypothesis that there was no effect of structural adjustment on government repression of opposition. In particular, the increased size of opposition, accepted to be as a result of failed structural adjustment, shows a larger amount of reaction required by the government as it attempted to suppress opposition. While recognizing the size of opposition and response were varied, this chapter will identify the similarities in tactics used by Mugabe, his government, and his ZANU party as they waged a combined campaign to eradicate any opposition.

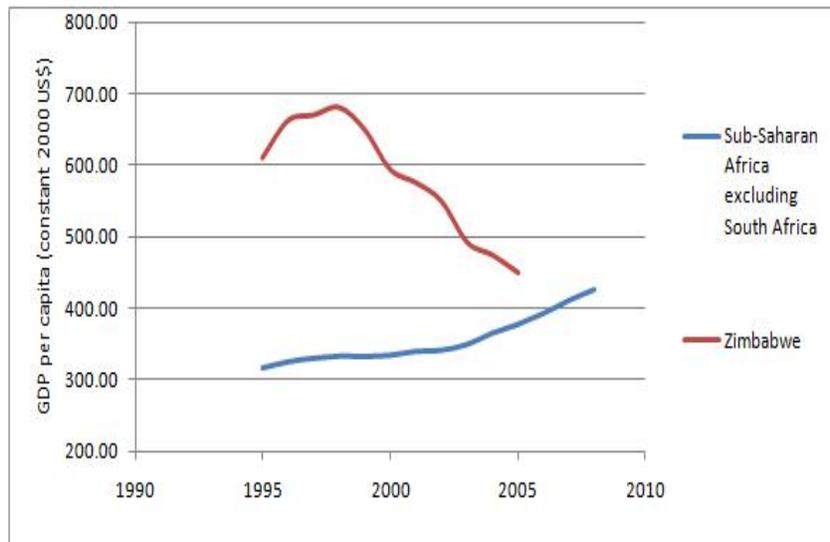


Figure 2. 1980s GDP Per Capita Zimbabwe and Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa)¹¹⁶

After a decade in which opposition to Mugabe and ZANU had been minimal, new sources of dissent arose toward the end of the 1990s, which were met by a political strategy very similar to that of the 1980s. Suppression was advanced through verbal dismissal, torture by government agencies and security forces, arrests, torture and a revived ZANU Youth movement, now joined by a war veterans group, which harassed and intimidated all those opposing Mugabe under tacit approval from the government as it provided logistical support and ignored court orders to control the war veterans. Central to this time period was the creation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Announced in September 1999 and formally launched in January 2000, the MDC grew out of the trade unions, led by Morgan Tsvangirai, former leader of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). The MDC offered the first real challenge to the continued electoral success of ZANU, drawing support not only from urban voters, who are generally in opposition, but also from a growing segment of population in Mugabe's traditional stronghold of rural Zimbabwe.

¹¹⁶ World Bank Databank. <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog> (accessed May 18, 10).

The MDC was a truly multiracial, multiethnic party, drawing support from urban Shona and Ndebele speakers, professionals and workers, the Ndebele and eastern Shona rural areas (but not from Mugabe's central Zimbabwe Shona-speaking heartland), and from whites of all backgrounds, especially farmers.¹¹⁷

As a result of the broader cross section of the population the MDC found support in, the actions by the government against both its leaders and its supporters also proved to be more widely distributed across Zimbabwe, though no more brutal or oppressive than the attacks of the early 1980s against the more concentrated opposition of ZAPU in Matabeleland and the Midlands.

While Mugabe sought to incorporate ZAPU into a unity government at the start of the 1980s,—before ultimately determining that, as an opposition party it was not a tolerable entity—he treated the MDC, from its inception, as opposition that must be undermined or have its relevance to Zimbabweans negated. This was done through many of the same methods used against ZAPU in the 1980s, attempting to weaken its leadership and, at the same time, intimidating its supporters, again using all aspects of the government and ZANU party. Within two days of the MDC being announced, Mugabe's government began its assault, seeking to remove structural support for the opposition movement as fast as it could. The Information Minister, Chen Chimutengwende, threatened to deport a Danish union leader, Georg Lemke, who was in Zimbabwe assisting with the formation of the MDC, accusing him of “implementing the destructive foreign policies of [his] government.”¹¹⁸ Lemke was recalled by the Danish Trade Union Council for International Development (DCTU) the following month to assure future DCTU access to Zimbabwe, rather than fighting over the specifics of whether Lemke should or should not be allowed to stay according to the organization.¹¹⁹ Multiple government agencies participated in the intimidation of the MDC, including the CIO,

¹¹⁷ Rotberg, *Worst of the Worst*, 171.

¹¹⁸ “Mugabe Government to Act on Danish Official Helping New Party,” *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, September 13, 1999.

¹¹⁹ “Lemke Forced to Leave Country,” *The Standard (Harare)*, October 31, 1999.

which detained and tortured MDC members, supporters, and parliamentarians.¹²⁰ In October 1999 Mugabe was clear that “there will never come a day when the MDC will rule this country, never, ever.”¹²¹ By the following spring, as the MDC gained momentum and farmers sued in court to try and overturn land seizures, the government accused the MDC of collaborating with Britain and America, seeking to associate the MDC and its support by farmers as simply ties to the former colonial and apartheid past. The Information Ministry went on to accuse the MDC of “concentrating on violence and the preparation of a full-scale military war,”¹²² accusations very similar to those made against ZAPU in the mid-1980s, after Mugabe had decided it could not be tolerated even as a member of a coalition government. Mugabe used the justice system to tie up opposition leaders in legal battles, just as he had with the ZAPU leadership. Several times Tsvangirai was charged with treason and subsequently acquitted, but not before long periods of time were spent in court or detention rather than campaigning for the MDC.¹²³ The Zimbabwean police and army both also participated in the repression of the MDC, arresting, beating, and even killing members, or, again as in the 1980s, people simply deemed not to be ZANU members.¹²⁴ The police were also complicit in violence by other forces, by failing to act in defense of law and order.¹²⁵ One significant difference in government handling of opposition was the systematic use of torture against members and suspected members of the MDC. Those responsible included “agents of Mugabe’s Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) political party, police officials, agents of the Central Intelligence Organization, and ... members of the

¹²⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Zimbabwe Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 1999* Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (Washington, DC, 2000).

¹²¹ Meredith, *Mugabe*, 210.

¹²² “Hopes Fade as Mugabe Backs Squatters,” *The Guardian*, April 15, 2000.

¹²³ “Judge Blocks Zimbabwe Terror Trial: Court Queries Legality of Act Used to Try Mugabe’s Rival,” *The Guardian*, May 8, 2001; “Court Finds Tsvangirai Not Guilty—as Mugabe Always Hoped it Would: President Used Lengthy Legal Process to Hobble Rival,” *The Guardian*, October 16, 2004.

¹²⁴ “Zimbabwean Opposition Victims of Torture,” *Mail and Guardian (South Africa)*, March 31, 2003; “Zimbabwe Struck by New Reign of Terror,” *The Guardian*, March 28, 2002.

¹²⁵ Meredith, *Mugabe*, 216, 212.

pro-Mugabe youth militia.”¹²⁶ The targeted detention and torture of MDC supporters and journalists provided yet another level of intimidation for those opposing the Mugabe and the government. The ZANU youth movement, one generation younger, was active again, attacking MDC supporters and burning MDC homes, offices, and vehicles¹²⁷ and even attempting assassination of Tsvangirai.¹²⁸ As the 2000 constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections and 2002 presidential election would demonstrate, all of these forces together were insufficient to suppress the MDC or its popular support.

The February 2000 referendum was a yes-no vote on a proposed new constitution, which would have returned the government to a bicameral parliament and established an executive president assisted by a prime minister, and extended indefinitely the period Mugabe could be President. Mugabe added to the draft presented by the constitution committee authorization for the government to seize farmland without compensating the owners, assigning this responsibility to the British government.¹²⁹ Land reform had been an important issue in Zimbabwe since independence. The original Lancaster House agreement funded a willing seller-willing buyer program for transferring land from the tiny white minority to the black majority. Although this funding source was meant to be available through 1996, funds were exhausted by 1988.¹³⁰ The British government did not address this issue until a decade later in 1998, at which time it tied further land reform support to improved governance. Mugabe was unwilling to undertake the required liberalization, especially in response to demands from the former colonial power.¹³¹ Instead, he introduced the constitutional provision to authorize appropriation of white farms, ostensibly to advance long delayed racial equality. The timing of the move

¹²⁶ John Brinkley, *Zimbabwe and the Politics of Torture* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2002), 1–2.

¹²⁷ “Mugabe Launches New Salvo at Britain,” *The Guardian*, January 14, 2002; “EU Sanctions Loom as Mugabe Ignores Deadline for Poll Plans,” *The Guardian*, January 19, 2002.

¹²⁸ Chikuhwa, *Crisis of Governance*, 121.

¹²⁹ Sara Rich Dorman, “NGOs and the Constitutional Debate in Zimbabwe: From Inclusion to Exclusion” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 28, no. 4 (2003), 854.

¹³⁰ Dashwood, “Inequality,” 217.

¹³¹ John L. Moore, *Zimbabwe’s Fight to the Finish: The Catalyst of the Free Market* (London: Kegan Paul, 2003), 261.

suggests that land reform was primarily a political tool to buy support through redistribution of farm land and undermine the MDC, both by undermining its financial base and casting it as a tool of the white farmers.¹³² In its first true test of opposition, the MDC campaigned extensively against the referendum,¹³³ opposing any increase in power for Mugabe. In an example of the government's monopolistic use of its state-owned media, the government broadcast extensive pro-referendum information while refusing to air opposition views, despite a high court order mandating it to do so.¹³⁴ When the result of the referendum was announced, Mugabe encountered his first ever electoral defeat. The referendum was voted down 53 to 46 percent,¹³⁵ with only 26 percent of the electorate even participating. The main reason for the failed referendum was not the land reform provision, but rather "the increased powers and term of office of the president."¹³⁶ Hatchard goes further, suggesting it was a "vote on the presidency of Robert Mugabe."¹³⁷

Mugabe blamed the MDC and the white farmers, whom he saw as its financial backers, accusing them of directing their black workers, a traditional source of support for Mugabe, to vote no.¹³⁸ Expropriating the farmers would dislodge a group he blamed for his failed referendum and remove a major source of funding to the MDC. While accepting the will of the people to not alter the parliament or the powers of the president, Mugabe pursued the proposed constitutional provision authorizing seizure of land without reimbursement by passing it through parliament in April 2000.¹³⁹ Mugabe then

¹³² Chikuhwa, *Crisis of Governance*, 248-9; Meredith, *Mugabe*, 127; Dashwood, *Political Economy of Transformation*, 183-4; Rotberg, "Africa's Mess, Mugabe's Mayhem" 54; Isabel Hilton, "Clinging to Colonialism's Wreckage: Mugabe's Rhetoric is Outdated, and Masks the Real Problems," *The Guardian*, April 19, 2000.

¹³³ Rotberg, *Worst of the Worst*, 171.

¹³⁴ "New Party Threatens Mugabe," *The Guardian*, January 31, 2000.

¹³⁵ EISA.org, *Zimbabwe: Referendum 2000: Results*
<http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimresults2000r.htm> (accessed 7 May 10).

¹³⁶ Masipula Sithole, "Fighting Authoritarianism in Zimbabwe" *Journal of Democracy* 12, no. 1 (2001), 164.

¹³⁷ John Hatchard, "Some Lessons on Constitution-Making from Zimbabwe" *Journal of African Law* 45, no. 2 (2001), 215.

¹³⁸ David Blair, *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the Struggle for Power in Zimbabwe* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 92; Kriger, "ZANU(PF) Strategies," 26.

¹³⁹ "Zimbabwe Tells Britain to Compensate White Farmers," *The Guardian*, April 7, 2000.

used the war veterans to implement land seizures, buying favor with the war veterans who had previously rallied against him. Chipesa farm, owned by Iain Kay, a prominent MDC supporter “was among the first farms to be invaded by an especially militant gang.”¹⁴⁰ As the owners were driven from their farms, the war veterans intimidated the newly unemployed farm workers into supporting ZANU.¹⁴¹ In one case, 600 farm workers were beaten then told to attend a ZANU rally where they were held up as people returning to ZANU.¹⁴² War veterans began invading farms and beating and torturing the farm workers for not supporting ZANU on their own initiative. Mugabe refused to follow a court order to deploy the police to remove the farm invaders, instead threatening farmers with “‘very, very, very serious violence’ if they dared to resist his black supporters who [had] invaded their farms.”¹⁴³

The June 2000 parliamentary elections would differ from those of 1985, with far more widespread opposition to the government, however, the actions exerted by ZANU and the government were the same as in 1985. The election campaign was marred from the beginning by violence endorsed by Mugabe and other ZANU leaders.¹⁴⁴ Throughout the election process violence and intimidation were utilized by ZANU candidates, government agencies, and ZANU party members, including the ZANU Youth as “part of a strategy to diminish support for opposition parties.”¹⁴⁵ Twenty-eight opposition supporters were reported killed between April and early June.¹⁴⁶ Elsewhere, ZANU gangs razed Harare townships and rural villages across Zimbabwe, driving out MDC supporters who lived in them.¹⁴⁷ “By the time the 2000 elections took place there were

¹⁴⁰ David Blair, *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the Struggle for Power in Zimbabwe* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 93.

¹⁴¹ “Crisis in Zimbabwe: Land Aid Tied to Real Reforms says Hain; Britain’s Role: Minister Rebuffs Accusations of Blame and Broken Promises,” *The Guardian*, April 19, 2000.

¹⁴² “ZANU-PF Gangs Strip and Beat School Staff,” *The Guardian*, May 25, 2000.

¹⁴³ “Mugabe Says Critics are ‘Blair’s Gays,’” *The Guardian*, March 29, 2000.

¹⁴⁴ Kriger, “ZANU(PF) Strategies,” 26–27.

¹⁴⁵ Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who Was Responsible? Alleged Perpetrators and Their Crimes During the 2000 Parliamentary Election Period* (Harare, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001), 2.

¹⁴⁶ “Mugabe Accuses UN Monitors,” *The Guardian*, June 12, 2000.

¹⁴⁷ Blair, *Degrees in Violence*, 145–6.

very few parts of Zimbabwe, urban or rural, that had not been subjected to some form of state organized violence.”¹⁴⁸ The ZANU plan succeeded in suppressing the opposition campaigns, with 200,000 acts of political violence in the first six months of 2000. Ultimately, the MDC were forced to stop campaigning in over 20 constituencies “a few weeks before the election,” mainly rural areas that were traditionally supportive of Mugabe and ZANU.¹⁴⁹ While the majority of ZAPU opposition was concentrated in the Matabeleland region of Zimbabwe, the MDC supporters were spread throughout the country, thus requiring the government to expand the distribution of its actions, though these actions themselves, organized violence against election opposition, were unchanged.

The rhetoric with which Mugabe and ZANU sought to undermine the opposition also remained the same. Mugabe blamed election-related violence on the MDC,¹⁵⁰ which he accused of waging ‘war’ on the government. Information Minister Chen Chimutengwende asserted in a broadcast on ZBC, which was published in the *Herald* the following day, the MDC was “both waging a war and preparing for an escalation of that war against the government of Zimbabwe and ZANU-PF.”¹⁵¹ Defense Minister Moven Mahachi warned crowds that those who voted against ZANU would be killed, pointing out: “I am the minister responsible for the defence therefore I am capable of killing.”¹⁵² Like ZAPU, the MDC was unable to respond effectively, since it was banned from the state-owned media, forced to rely on independent newspapers, which reached a much smaller proportion of the population than state owned media, especially radio. Meanwhile, ZANU candidates, reflecting the words of their leaders, accusing the opposition of threatening war, and played up alleged support by white farmers for the MDC.

¹⁴⁸ Amani Trust, *Beating Your Opposition. Torture During the 2002 Presidential Campaign in Zimbabwe. A report and a Dossier of Cases Prepared by the Mashonaland Programme of the Amani Trust*, June 25, (Harare, Zimbabwe: Amani Trust, 2002), 15.

¹⁴⁹ Kriger, “ZANU(PF) Strategies,” 29.

¹⁵⁰ Meredith *Mugabe*, 180.

¹⁵¹ “Hopes Fade as Mugabe Backs Squatters,” *The Guardian*, April 15, 2000.

¹⁵² Kriger, “ZANU(PF) Strategies,” 27.

We are not happy with some white commercial farmers who are supporting the opposition” said Josaya Jungwe, the Masvingo provincial governor. “We do not want another war. If you want peace you should support me and the ruling party.... If you want trouble, then vote for another party.”¹⁵³

The violence and intimidation during the election campaign was supplemented by election rigging. Rotberg describes the election process a “shambles, with doctored voter rolls and Mugabe-designed constituency boundaries finalized a mere three weeks before the election and released to the opposition only by court order.”¹⁵⁴ After the polls, international observer groups quickly declared the elections invalid, typically citing the widespread nature of violence and intimidation prior to the elections. The EU Observer Mission released an interim report as soon as polls closed and before election results were even announced declaring that “the term free and fair is not applicable in these elections.”¹⁵⁵ Following the publication of the results the EU’s final report reiterated that it was “not in the position to declare the election free and fair.”¹⁵⁶ The Commonwealth Observers group also critiqued the violence and intimidation, citing what it referred to as “impediments placed in the way of enabling the electorate to freely choose their representatives. We especially deplore the level and nature of politically-motivated violence which characterized the period leading up to polling days.”¹⁵⁷ Despite all its efforts to affect the outcome, ZANU won a bare majority of 62 of the 120 seats, and the MDC with all but one of the remaining 58.¹⁵⁸ Demonstrating the greater strength of the opposition versus ZAPU, this election still gave Mugabe a majority in government, but it

¹⁵³ Meredith, *Mugabe*, 181.

¹⁵⁴ Rotberg, *Worst of the Worst*, 173.

¹⁵⁵ “ZANU-PF Rebuffs Claim of Unfair Poll,” *The Guardian*, June 27, 2000.

¹⁵⁶ European Parliament, *Account of the Mission to Observe the Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe: 24–25 June 2000*, July 6, 2000, 13.

¹⁵⁷ Commonwealth of Nations, *The Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe 24-25 June 2000: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group* (London: 2000), 37.

¹⁵⁸ “Zimbabwe: 2000 House of Assembly National Election Results” www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimresults2000p.htm (accessed May 7, 10).

failed to provide him the two thirds majority he had possessed after the 1985 election and needed to pass future constitutional change without opposition support, something he was clearly unwilling to seek.¹⁵⁹

Mugabe's government responded strongly and violently to both the level of support the MDC had received at the polls and MDC actions following the elections. Immediately after the election results were announced, the government deployed army and police details throughout the country to counter any post-election violence. While this reason turned out not to be necessary, "there were numerous reports of people being beaten up who were not engaging in acts of violence." The beatings were handed out "punishing people in the towns for having voted for the MDC."¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the surprisingly strong showing by the MDC buoyed its confidence to speak out. It cited violence and intimidation of voters as it challenged the results in 38 of the 62 constituencies ZANU won. Though only 12 were heard by the high court in the five years before the next general election, the MDC won 7, and another 2 on appeal.¹⁶¹ Following the announcement of the elections at the end of July, the MDC rapidly called for a national strike to occur early in August 2000.¹⁶² Mugabe responded in August, increasing the scope of the land seizure program. The army was now authorized to support the effort by "provid[ing] transport and logistics"¹⁶³ and additional farms were added to the seizure list. Originally comprising 841 farms, the list grew to over 3,000 as Mugabe continued to blame his electoral woes on the white farmers.¹⁶⁴

Beyond the immediate post-election period, Mugabe and his government continued to seek ways to undermine the MDC by attacking those who supported it. The Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) took the land seizure program to court claiming it was illegal. In response Mugabe announced that the CFU had "declared war on the people of

¹⁵⁹ Hatchard, "Lessons on Constitution-Making," 215.

¹⁶⁰ Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *A Report on Post Election Violence*, (Harare, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2000), 3.

¹⁶¹ Rotberg, *Worst of the Worst*, 173; Meredith, *Mugabe*, 216.

¹⁶² "Mugabe Mobilizes Army for Huge Farm Invasion," *The Guardian*, August 2, 2000.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Zimbabwe.”¹⁶⁵ Individual supporters of the MDC continued to be attacked. A systematic study of post-election violence in the July to September 2001 period, found “2,928 cases of beatings, 6 cases of rape, 586 cases of forced detention, and 20,853 cases of forced displacement.” It reports that “73.3 percent of the violence was perpetrated by ZANU (PF) supporters, 16 percent by the police, 4.5 percent by the army and air force, 2.3 percent by MDC and less than one per cent by the CIO.”¹⁶⁶ Of the 38.3 percent of victims whose affiliation could be determined, 87 percent were MDC supporters.¹⁶⁷ In addition to the land seizure program and continued violence against MDC supporters, Mugabe employed another tactic from his battle against ZAPU. With a growing number of Zimbabweans being forced to rely on food aid as the land seizure program undermined Zimbabwe’s agricultural output, the government restricted food aid distributions to those with ZANU-PF membership cards,¹⁶⁸ again forcing Zimbabweans to demonstrate support for ZANU in order to survive.

Efforts to affect the outcome of the March 2002 presidential election were the strongest to date. Mugabe sought to limit the MDC presence in the rural areas via violence and intimidation as always, but now also sought to limit its urban supporters’ access to polling stations, while banning voting by the diaspora outright.¹⁶⁹ Media restrictions were increased, unapproved strikes banned, public gatherings limited, and voter education by any non-governmental organization outlawed.¹⁷⁰ International election observers were invited but severely constrained.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ “Farmer Killed as Mugabe Speaks of War: Elderly Father Dies and Son is Shot in Sixth Fatal Attack on White Landowners by Zimbabwe War Veterans,” *The Guardian*, December 14, 2000.

¹⁶⁶ Chikuwa, *Crisis of Governance*, 121.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*.

¹⁶⁸ Physicians for Human Rights, *Zimbabwe—Voting ZANU for Food: Rural District Council and Insiza Elections* (Risskov, Denmark, 2002), 8; *The Guardian*, August 8, 2002; *The Guardian*, October 17, 2002.

¹⁶⁹ Meredith, *Mugabe*, 226.

¹⁷⁰ “UK Threat to Punish Mugabe: Warning of Sanctions and Expulsion from Commonwealth as Zimbabwe Pushes Through Draconian Laws,” *The Guardian*, January 9, 2002.

¹⁷¹ “Zimbabwe Accepts Poll Observers: EU Skeptical as Appeal for End to Violence is Spurned,” *The Guardian*, January 12, 2002.

Youth squads were deployed to hunt down opposition supporters, creating a wave of terror. They raided shops, destroyed houses, and set up roadblocks, dragging people out of buses and cars, demanding party cards. Whole swathes of the country were turned into ‘no-go’ areas, sealed off to prevent the MDC from campaigning there.¹⁷²

Violence was high and the government accused the MDC of “fanning the violence” so that the elections would be declared not “free and fair.”¹⁷³ However, according to Amani Trust, 93 percent of electoral violence was performed by ZANU, the government, or their supporters, and only five percent by MDC supporters. With a larger opposition support base to suppress, ZANU Youth played a larger role in the violence than it had in the 1980s, being responsible for almost 20 percent of attacks.¹⁷⁴

When the election results were announced, Mugabe was declared the winner by 418,809 votes, with 56 percent of the vote to Tsvangirai’s 42 percent.¹⁷⁵ Tsvangirai “cried foul,” claiming that about 400,000 people were denied the right to vote due to insufficient polling stations and “800,000 extra shadow ballots were counted.”¹⁷⁶ Despite winning the election, the government launched reprisal attacks against those who voted for the opposition. As many as 1,400 opposition supporters were arrested in the two days after the election results were announced, including 130 election observers, as the government went after “the MDC, trade union leaders, civic groups, [and] the media.”¹⁷⁷

Election observers again questioned the legitimacy of an election marred by violence, with the Commonwealth observers reporting “the conditions in Zimbabwe did not adequately allow for a free expression of will by the electors” and specifically highlighting their concern at the violence inflicted by ZANU youth members on

¹⁷² Meredith, *Mugabe*, 225-6.

¹⁷³ “Opposition MDC Deliberately Fanning Violence,” *The Herald (Harare)*, February 27, 2002.

¹⁷⁴ Amani Trust, *Beating Your Opposition*, 18.

¹⁷⁵ “Zimbabwe: 2002 Presidential Election Results” www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimresults2002.htm (accessed 8 May 2010).

¹⁷⁶ Rotberg, *Worst of the Worst*, 174.

¹⁷⁷ “Zimbabwe Elections: Aftermath: Mugabe Hauls in his Foes: MDC Official on Treason Charge,” *The Guardian*, March 13, 2002.

opposition supporters.¹⁷⁸ The Norwegian Observer Mission was even more critical, declaring “the Presidential Elections failed to meet key, broadly accepted criteria for elections.” It went on to condemn the violence before the election, the operation of the polling stations during the election, and the violent reprisals observed after the election.¹⁷⁹ Finally, and perhaps most damning to Mugabe, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which has the lowest standards for acceptable elections and an inclination to support Mugabe, declared “the electoral process could not be said to adequately comply with the Norms and Standards for elections in the SADC region.”¹⁸⁰ While these types of reports led to the refusal by some countries such as the USA to recognize the election results,¹⁸¹ Mugabe continued to hold on to power. As in the 1980s, the opposition party would continue to rally against Mugabe and ZANU but fail to dislodge him from his position. While the smaller ZAPU opposition was convinced by the systematic repression of the 1980s to merge with (i.e., be absorbed by) ZANU in 1989, the larger MDC entered into a power-sharing agreement in 2008, much as ZAPU had in 1980. MDC has a larger and stronger role in the new unity government, reflecting its larger support base. Mugabe retained the presidency, with Tsvangirai as Prime Minister and cabinet positions more evenly divided between the two parties. Nevertheless, Mugabe once again effectively contained opposition, with Tsvangirai leading the effort to reestablish the international legitimacy of the Mugabe government and energize new foreign aid flows into the country.

Although the non-MDC opposition was even smaller than the non-ZAPU opposition of the 1980s, it too was subject to repression as the government sought to negate any opposition voice, no matter how small. State-owned media refused coverage to Independent MP Margaret Dongo, formerly a ZANU member, even when she made

¹⁷⁸ Commonwealth of Nations, *Zimbabwe Presidential Election 9 to 11 March 2002: Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group* (London: 2002), 43–44.

¹⁷⁹ Norway, *Norwegian Election Observation Mission: Presidential Elections in Zimbabwe 2002* (Oslo, Norway: 2002), 1–2.

¹⁸⁰ Southern African Development Community, *Zimbabwe Presidential Elections 2002: Observation Mission Report* (Windhoek, Namibia, 2002), xiii.

¹⁸¹ Rotberg, *Worst of the Worst*, 173.

speeches in Parliament.¹⁸² In 1999 a member of the Democratic Party's executive national committee was attacked and "left for dead" by three men "suspected to be members of the CIO."¹⁸³ Similarly, following a stinging attack on Mugabe's use of violence by Bishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo, Ncube was informed by CIO members that he was now on a "hit-list."¹⁸⁴

On the other hand, civic opposition was much higher in this period than in the 1980s as a result of the dire economic situation, but the government response was again similar. All expressions of opposition were declared illegal and protests were broken up using police violence and arrests to intimidate future thoughts of protest. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) organized two nationwide general strikes in the first three months of 1998 protesting food shortages and mismanagement of the economy. The three-day strike in January was countered by 30,000 army troops, who used rifle butts and tear gas to disperse strikers,¹⁸⁵ leaving a total of "eight deaths, uncounted injuries, and thousands of people being arrested and detained."¹⁸⁶ In response, ZCTU leaders called a two day strike in March, but instructed strikers to remain in their homes, successfully avoiding large-scale violence.¹⁸⁷ In November 1998, union organizers urged strikers protesting a 67 percent increase in fuel prices to stay in the safety of their homes. The strikers who chose to leave their homes and protest were met by riot police using tear gas, violence, and the death of one protester.¹⁸⁸ The same month, Mugabe issued a presidential order "banning trade union strikes and threatening stern action

¹⁸² Alex Duval Smith, "A Warrior to Sort Out the Mugabe Inheritance," *The Guardian*, January 24, 1998.

¹⁸³ "Man assaulted—told 'Country Belongs to Mugabe,'" *The Zimbabwe Standard (Harare)*, January 31, 1999.

¹⁸⁴ Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 186.

¹⁸⁵ Alex Duval Smith, "A Warrior to Sort Out the Mugabe Inheritance," *The Guardian*, January 24, 1998.

¹⁸⁶ Zimbabwe Human Right NGO Forum, *Torture by State Agents in Zimbabwe: January 2001 to August 2002* (Harare, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2003), 6.

¹⁸⁷ "Strike Looms in Zimbabwe," *The Guardian*, March 2, 1998.

¹⁸⁸ "Fuel Riots Erupt in Zimbabwe," *The Guardian*, November 5, 1998; "Zimbabwe Strike Turns Violent," *The Guardian*, November 12, 1998.

against union leaders,” effectively ending legal strike activity.¹⁸⁹ A series of politically motivated strikes and protests, protesting the government’s mismanagement of the economy and elections, planned by MDC for December 2000 was cancelled by MDC leaders fearing “considerable bloodshed” after they were advised that the “president intended to meet the popular protests with force, and that violence would be used as an excuse to detain opposition leaders.”¹⁹⁰ During July 2001 strikes over rising fuel and food prices, union leaders again directed strikers to stay at home and avoid protests that could invoke a violent response. In response, the government announced another ban on strikes replacing the previous ban that had only existed for six months under the emergency powers used to initiate it, again threatening arrests.¹⁹¹ In 2003 eight union leaders were arrested the day before scheduled protests over the economy in an effort to disrupt planning. When the protests went ahead anyway, protesters were beaten and arrested across the country, charged with illegal demonstrations.¹⁹²

There were fewer strikes with purely economic demands. These were handled, much as in the 1980s, peacefully as long as strikers did not stage public protests. When they did, the police again stepped in, physically breaking up the protest and arresting those involved. In a seven-week doctors’ strike over pay and the condition of the healthcare system in the fall of 1999 Mugabe actually intervened in negotiations in order to facilitate a resolution. The final agreement announced the doctors had secured from Mugabe pay raises and improved car loans but no concessions on the healthcare

¹⁸⁹ “Zimbabwe Smoulders While Mugabe Shops,” *The Guardian*, November 30, 1998.

¹⁹⁰ “Zimbabwe Opposition Calls Off Street Action,” *The Guardian*, December 16, 2000.

¹⁹¹ “Clashes Feared as Mugabe Rules Strike is Illegal,” *The Daily Telegraph*, July 2, 2001; “National Strike Paralyzes Zimbabwe: Factories, Banks and Shops Close as Unions Begin Their Campaign Against Robert Mugabe’s Re-election,” *The Guardian*, July 4, 2001.

¹⁹² “Mugabe Arrests More than 100 Opponents: Riot Police Go Into Action Against Demonstrators,” *The Guardian*, November 19; “Zimbabwe Unions Call For a Strike,” *The Guardian*, November 20, 2003.

system.¹⁹³ In contrast to the doctors, striking hotel and food workers seeking increased pay held a protest rally, which was broken up by armed riot police firing tear gas at the protesters.¹⁹⁴

Similar to organized protests by unions against the economy or the handling of elections, student protests against inadequate government support were met with police violence and arrest. Nationwide student protests in March 1998 got a mixed reaction. In Gweru the protest was undisturbed, while in Harare students were clubbed by paramilitary police to break up the protest.¹⁹⁵ It is not clear whether this was a result of a more peaceful protest in Gweru, or simply a different police response. Police broke up student protests in February 1999, after marching students threw stones at police who had surrounded their protest.¹⁹⁶ Another protest in October 1999 saw police use tear gas and batons during an apparently peaceful protest outside Parliament demanding increased grants to offset inflation¹⁹⁷ and again in 2001 a student protest, this time over the death of a student killed by a soldier, was broken up by riot police using tear gas.¹⁹⁸

The media was also a target of repression in this period, as in the 1980s. Two journalists from *The Standard* who reported a coup attempt in December 1998 were arrested and tortured by the police and then the army,¹⁹⁹ while the government labeled *the Standard* “an enemy of the state.”²⁰⁰ As the attack on the independent media widened, ZANU youth were mobilized against *The Standard* and its sister paper, *The Independent*, staging marches that, in contrast to the student marches that were surrounded by riot police as they sought higher grants, were neither resisted nor

¹⁹³ Leader Pages, *The Guardian*, November 1, 1999; “Doctors End Strike After Written Promises,” *Panafrican News Agency*, November 4, 1999.

¹⁹⁴ “Strikers Gassed,” *The Zimbabwe Standard (Harare)*, September 12, 1999.

¹⁹⁵ “Harare Students in Clash,” *The Guardian*, March 10, 1998.

¹⁹⁶ “Students Turn Against Mugabe,” *The Guardian*, February 11, 1999.

¹⁹⁷ “Harare Calms After Police Running Battle With Students,” *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, October 27, 1999.

¹⁹⁸ “Mugabe Targets Hacks,” *The Guardian*, December 1, 2001.

¹⁹⁹ “Zimbabwe Editor Arrested by Military Police,” *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, January 12, 1999; Meredith Mugabe, 49; Rotberg, *Ending Autocracy, Enabling Democracy*, 234.

²⁰⁰ “Zimbabwe Editor Arrested by Military Police,” *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, January 12, 1999.

challenged by the police. The abuse suffered by the two journalists was protested by the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, 300 lawyers, and church and student groups.²⁰¹ In one example case, 300 lawyers who “sat in the road in front of parliament” were removed by “riot police us[ing] dogs, batons and tear gas.”²⁰²

Though the civil society strikes and protests in this period were more typically based on the poor state of the economy, higher in frequency, and more widespread because of the broader spectrum of the population they covered, the response from the government followed the model established in the 1980s, swift, usually violent, crackdown on any public protest against the government or its policies. This response led the ZCTU and others to urge their members to remain at home rather than engage in organized protests, suggesting that the repressive policy succeeded in making protest invisible if not in eliminating it.

The 1998 to 2005 period provides a clear picture of a leader still defending his power with violence and intimidation. Because the scope of the opposition had increased, the level of government response was significantly higher than it had been in the 1980s. However, the nature of the response remained consistent. Political opposition was attacked both through violence, rhetoric, and arrests against opposition leaders, as well as intimidation through violence of those believed to be supporting the opposition. As in the 1980s, the opposition party, white minority, and media were all charged with ‘waging a war against the government,’ requiring a war-like response. Though the MDC would, like ZAPU before it, ultimately become co-opted into the ZANU government, the path taken by the government to reach this point was established long before the final point of defeat. While ZAPU, as a smaller and more regional party representing a focused constituency, was merged into the ZANU party, the MDC represented a far larger population base and, therefore, has, at least so far, entered into a power-sharing agreement. Either way, though, Mugabe retained his position. Utilizing rhetoric, violence, and coercion, he has suppressed the opposition rather than accepting the potential for defeat or multi-party democracy.

²⁰¹ “Torture Revelation Triggers Fight for Zimbabwe’s Soul,” *The Guardian*, January 28, 1999.

²⁰² “Police Halt Torture Protest,” *The Guardian*, January 27, 1999.

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IV. CONCLUSION

At the start of the 1990s, Zimbabwe implemented structural adjustment following IMF guidance to liberalize the economy and reduce government spending. There is little argument that the SAPs left the Zimbabwean people worse off, by opening the economy to international competition while removing the government subsidies that had supported its industries and population. But did this lead to an implosion in governance and an explosion in opposition forcing Mugabe into increasingly autocratic policies to maintain his power?

In comparing the two periods of analysis, it becomes clear that Mugabe has never endorsed political opposition. From the independence election through the 1985 general elections he promoted a one-party system that would not only abolish the parliamentary seats held exclusively for white Zimbabweans as part of the Lancaster House agreement, but also lead to the absorption of all political parties into the ZANU fold as they inevitably recognized their opposition as futile. Initially attempting to subdue ZAPU opposition by including them in a unity government, Mugabe recognized ZAPU's unwillingness to be muzzled in their opposition of his policies. He then moved to marginalize ZAPU, even in its own home support base of Matabeleland, and then seized on opportunities to divest his government of ZAPU ministers in his cabinet. Once Mugabe established ZAPU strictly as an opponent to the government, he and other senior members of ZANU framed opposition criticism as attacks that must be handled as a war against the Zimbabwe government. Mugabe utilized speeches, arrests, abduction, property destruction, food embargoes, violence, intimidation, torture, and murder by himself, his government organizations, and the ZANU party in attempting to marginalize ZAPU into insignificance, seeking to persuade Zimbabwe that supporting anyone but ZANU was the wrong option and ultimately reducing the viability of ZAPU to the point that they accepted merging into ZANU. Aside from the 20,000 deaths inflicted by Mugabe's Fifth Brigade on Matabeleland, the police, CIO, government ministries, and ZANU Youth movement all pursued a relentless attack on any person or group opposing Mugabe and ZANU, promoting belief that nothing but supporting ZANU was safe.

Mugabe's opposition at the turn of the century differed from that of ZAPU in the 1980s. The MDC represented a much larger spectrum of the population and was, therefore, significantly larger both in size of organization, diversity of action, and frequency of effect. Accepting that this increase in opposition was fueled by an economy initially crumbling under the failure of SAPs, Mugabe's response demonstrated the same desire to destroy any political opposition, employing the very same tactics against the MDC and its perceived supporters he had used against ZAPU, only more frequently and against the broader range of MDC actions and supporters. He again used the government organizations of the police, army, and CIO, along with his ministries and the ZANU Youth movement, framing the actions in the context of a war fought by the government. This time, however, instead of the Fifth Brigade, Mugabe turned to the war veterans group from the guerilla war to end Rhodesian apartheid rule, unleashing them on the white farmers, and their black farm workers, who Mugabe believed had turned against him in the 2000 constitutional referendum. Although there was a fraction of the 20,000 deaths that had been committed by the Fifth Brigade, murders, torture, beatings, abductions, rape, and intimidation once again were the primary tactics used by the war veterans, supported by CIO information networks and army logistics aid, against anyone believed to be supporting ZANU opposition. The CIO and police again arrested supporters and members of the opposition parties, particularly the MDC, the media, and a rejuvenated civil society, this time they also used torture to intimidate those challenging Mugabe, while charges similar to those pressed on ZAPU leaders were fabricated against MDC leaders to leave them busy fighting court battles rather than challenging Mugabe.

Elections have followed a consistent path through both periods of analysis, though for the first time, Mugabe encountered a defeat at the polls in 2000. With a limited exception in the lead up to the constitutional referendum in 2000, Mugabe has approached each national election, and most local elections, with a strong arm of violent oppression against those opposing ZANU, and their supporters. This same mentality has then flowed through the varying levels of ZANU and the government, resulting in the same threats and actions being performed at each level. Torture, intimidation, death threats, correlations to future war, and arrests of opponents have distracted and inhibited

the opposition parties from their campaigning, while government laws prohibiting public gatherings without prior police approval have often restricted opposition party's abilities to even hold political rallies to present their election platforms. The violence before elections has also been followed in a consistent manner by violence imparted by ZANU supporters and government agencies against those believed to have supported the opposition during the election once the polling results are announced, no matter the election result. From evicting ZAPU supporters out of their homes across Zimbabwe in 1985, to the use of the army to aid war veterans to attack farmers and farm workers believed to have perpetrated the defeat of the constitutional reform referendum in 2000 and attacks by police and army units on those believed to have supported Tsvangirai in the 2002 presidential election, Mugabe and ZANU have consistently punished those not voting in accordance with Mugabe's plan. Following the referendum defeat in 2000, and likely reflecting a larger threat to electoral success for Mugabe, ballot rigging was also introduced into the presidential election in 2002, ensuring that, even if the intimidation and violence failed to persuade voters to support Mugabe, there would be only one possible person in power following the elections.

Though the scope, frequency, and cause of strikes and protests have changed between the two periods, Mugabe's response has remained unchanged. While strikes were limited to the early, post-independence period and typically reflected those demanding the government's aid for a more rapid disbursement of independence gain to the population, the 1998–2003 period saw strikes and protests throughout the period, usually aimed directly at the government either over its handling of the economy or in support of political opposition. The early strikes of the 1980s could typically be described as coming from parts of the population impatient to receive their benefit from independence. Often seeking higher wages the strikes were generally unopposed during their execution. Protests during this time, however, were met with police action to break them up, usually with arrests but also with police violence. In a similar fashion, the strikes of the later period of analysis, particularly those of a strictly economic focus, were usually met with only verbal opposition of the government. Political strikes also faced only limited response, typically involving the government establishing laws banning

future strikes without government permission, while any form of protest associated with the strike was countered with police action. Politically motivated protests against government policies met a similar response to other protests, with police breaking up any protests using dogs, batons, or clubs as necessary to disperse protesters whether they were conducting peaceful or riotous protests. Arrests were again a common reaction to the protests, but it was the extreme violence handed down by the police and army units on protesters that succeeded in forcing those considering planning such events to sometimes choose to cancel protests across Zimbabwe rather than risk massive bloodshed. While the use of tear gas and baton-wielding police when dealing with protesters is hardly the exclusive domain of Zimbabwean security forces, it is the consistent manner in which they meted out this punishment, along with the other violence, that provides the insight into the government's handling of opposition protests.

The media has to be assessed through two different lenses: state-owned media and independent media. The government inherited a state-owned broadcast media at independence. Shortly after independence it moved to secure a similar state-owned capacity within the print media, nationalizing several of the largest domestic newspapers in a deal to buy out the ownership from a South African company. From then on, through both periods of study, Mugabe and the other senior members of the ZANU party used the state-owned media as a domain for the exclusive publication of the ZANU message, while boycotting the messages of opposition groups, even when mandated by court order to broadcast them. This has permitted the government to promote not only its ZANU message, but also its views of the opposition groups—particularly its correlation of opposition as war—to Zimbabweans with limited balance of information. While the broadcast media has remained the sole domain of the government, there were still independently owned newspapers publishing in Zimbabwe throughout the periods of assessment, although they faced progressively stricter and stricter laws into how and where they were able to report and conduct their business within Zimbabwe. The arrests, torture, criminal charges, and expulsions of journalists when the government disliked the story they reported provided an air of intimidation and fear throughout the independent print media.

From the comparative analysis of the 1980–86 period with 1998–2003, it can be concluded that, while the economic conditions were starkly different, there is little difference in how Mugabe tackled opposition during his time in office. Allowing that the change in political opposition and civil unrest was representative of a change in economic climate driven by the failures of SAP in the early 1990s, it is the very existence of opposition that underlines Mugabe’s position. He is unwilling to accept opposition, be it from a single individual member of parliament or a political party representing almost half the population. Mugabe attempted to immerse ZAPU within ZANU, exclude them, and then marginalize what was never more than a regional party representing approximately 20 percent of the population. Even though ZAPU never represented an electoral threat to Mugabe, the mere presence of an opposing group was unfathomable to Mugabe. By the time the MDC was formed, they represented a true threat to Mugabe, both in the eyes of the international community and the ballot box. To Mugabe, though, opposition was opposition and therefore dealt with as such.

With a consistent repression of opposition parties or individuals, Mugabe has continued to secure his position in charge of Zimbabwe over more than quarter of a century using whatever methods he finds necessary to break that opposition. It is not, as some suggest, that a certain event has tipped Mugabe’s approach to a more autocratic rule of law, or undermined him in a manner that has forced an increase in violence and repression, but rather what may best be reflected by the Ndebele author of an open letter in the April 21, 2000 edition of *the Guardian* newspaper, whose own father had been attacked and killed by Mugabe’s troops in the 1980s:

Mugabe does not like opposition of any kind, whether it is from black people or white people.... The west is only discovering now that Robert Mugabe is a delusional megalomaniac, yet people from the Matabeleland region of Zimbabwe have known this for the past 18 years or so.

What is evident is that the international community must be more cognizant of post-war leaders, realizing that the leader of an armed conflict to overthrow an undesirable government is not always the right choice for a peacetime leader of a post-conflict nation. During the 1980s, the West was focused on the Cold War and willing to

tolerate “strongmen”²⁰³ as long as they were not communist men. Next to apartheid South Africa, who progressively received a more and more negative focus from international attention as the 1980s unfolded, Zimbabwe was an asset not a liability. By 1998, however, both the Cold War and apartheid South Africa were history and the international community, instead, focused on its intolerance of poor governance. Mugabe provided a perfect example of a leader unwilling to bend to the new western standard, instead pushing back at the ‘colonial’ inputs of the west. While Zimbabwe certainly does not represent a unique case of a revolutionary leader failing to live up to his promises in a post-revolutionary environment, Mugabe serves as a perfect example of the traits and trends such a leader can display that must be recognized early to avoid such a secure entrenchment of a failed leader that he cannot be successfully challenged by opposition groups to rectify the situation. Mugabe’s early rhetoric against the agreed to constitution, combined with his consistent willingness to use violence, murder, and intimidation to secure his power were all early indicators of a leader not ready to forego his title or his personal agenda for the good of his nation.

²⁰³ Rotberg, *Worst of the Worst*, 187.

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