

# Lettres de Byblos

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## Letters from Byblos

No. 15

HELGA DICKOW, ELDRED MASUNUNGURE, BEATRICE SCHLEE

### Zimbabwe

#### A Case of Resilient Authoritarianism

Citizens' attitudes, leaders' opinions, and conjectures on a  
democratic transition



Centre International des Sciences de l'Homme  
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المركز الدولي لعلوم الإنسان

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For decades, Professor Theodor Hanf, Director of the International Centre for Human Sciences (CISH) in Byblos and former Director of the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute in Freiburg, has researched conflicts in divided societies. Under his guidance, the CISH research programme "Culture, Conflict and Democracy" has supervised studies in ethnic, religious and political conflict in fifteen countries. Zimbabwe is one of them. This one-time "Jewel of Africa" is a particularly tragic case, a former bread basket in an unparalleled downward spiral. Common wisdom pinpoints the president's personality as the prime cause of Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis. Is this indeed the case? What factors help him maintain his hold on power? Which other actors play a role? What are the views of the political and intellectual elites? What are the attitudes of ordinary Zimbabweans? This study attempts to provide answers to these questions.

In her article, Beatrice Schlee investigates the mechanisms of power and domination employed by the regime, the role of civil society and the interrelationships between economic decline and people's social and political attitudes.

At the invitation of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Helga Dickow interviewed representatives of the Zimbabwean elite on the political situation, the role played by ethnicity and the chances of political change. She would like to take this opportunity to thank her interlocutors for their openness and trust in agreeing to answer the questions of an outside observer in a political dangerous situation.

The empirical chapter by Petra Bauerle and Helga Dickow gives a snapshot of Zimbabweans' attitudes and opinions about society, politics and religion. The questionnaire employed in this section was constructed by Theodor Hanf and used for the first time in neighbouring South Africa in 1975, at a time when there was no sign of an end to the ethnic conflicts commonly known as apartheid. Since then, this questionnaire has been applied in some fifteen countries in Africa, Asia and Europe.

Eldred Masunungure's contribution analyses the country's political and structural parameters and develops scenarios of change. The authors hope that his prediction, "The roadmap seems to provide a conflict-free route to a more democratic Zimbabwe", will prove right.

In particular, the authors wish to thank Theodor Hanf for his unflagging interest and support. Funding for this study came from the International Centre for Human Sciences in Byblos, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Harare and the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute in Freiburg. The staff of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Harare provided instruction in Zimbabwean politics and logistical assistance; fieldworkers of the Mass Public Opinion Institute in Harare carried out the survey; Petra Bauerle evaluated the empirical data; and Angela Herrmann was responsible for the layout. We thank all of them for their commitment and dedication. John Richardson translated the texts of the German authors.

Freiburg and Harare, May 2007

# Zimbabwe: The Great Survivor

BEATRICE SCHLEE

People have been talking of resolving the crisis in Zimbabwe for a long time now. At the beginning of 2007, the chances seemed to be better than at in time in recent years. This analysis looks at why political change was impossible in the past and why, without an upheaval in the ruling party, a solution may yet be a long time coming. This study will look at the ruling party's policy of divide and rule, the strengths and weaknesses of the pro-democracy forces and the complex relationship between economic decline and the social and political behaviour of ordinary Zimbabweans. Together, these factors may help to explain how the liberal authoritarian regime keeps its hold on power.<sup>1</sup> Contrary to appearances, Zimbabwe is neither a "fragile state" nor a state with a strong government. The current government retains its hold on power thanks to the weakness of its opponents and its own skilful tactics.

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<sup>1</sup> In Linz's view, liberal authoritarianism is the appropriate term for a system with relatively critical weekly newspapers despite restrictive media laws and scope for civil society activities despite restrictions on the freedom of assembly. These government policies appear to be carefully calculated elements of its survival strategy.

## A marvel of stability despite internal party-political sabre-rattling

The inflation rate in Zimbabwe exceeds 2000% - some observers suspect that it has already passed the 3000% mark.<sup>2</sup> The economy is in an unparalleled downward spiral: maize production in Africa's one-time bread basket fell by approximately 75% between 1999 and 2005 and total economic output by 50% - more than in any other country not at war.<sup>3</sup> Yet, politically the country is stable. The Zanu-PF (Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front) has been in power for 27 years, and Robert Mugabe, its 83-year-old leader, has no intention of vacating the presidential chair. This text-book case of "bad performance" has failed to generate powerful opposition, although there is no lack of democratic attitudes and opinions.<sup>4</sup> Take the case of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), an opposition party that came from nowhere to almost defeat the ruling party in the 2000 elections, or the residual elements of the rule of law, which at one time served as a beacon for the rest of Africa.<sup>5</sup> On their own both civil society and the political opposition are too weak and too deeply at odds with each other to bring about political change. By contrast, the government has little difficulty keeping its hold on power despite the desperate economic situation. After winning a comfortable (fraudulent) two-thirds majority in the parliamentary elections in March 2005, Mugabe announced that he intended to live and rule for another millennium. People smiled at the time, but the likelihood that he will become president for life no longer seems so absurd. In March 2007 the Zanu-PF central committee nominated Mugabe as its presidential candidate for the 2008 election. This step took even party members by surprise, as Mugabe himself had fomented a struggle for succession by frequently declaring his intention to resign and making statements about desirable successors. Resistance within the party (opposition at the party congress and in the politburo) indicates that his influence is diminishing, both within the party and among voters at large. Over and above this, observers suspect that Mugabe would not win another presidential election on his own, which is why he has brought forward parliamentary and local elections to the same date. Further pre-emptive measures include increases in the number of seats in both houses of parliament - further evidence of the critical situation within the party. The president's remarks in his speech on the 27th anniversary of independence in April 2007 reflect the government's efforts to sustain its system of patronage: the announcement that local businesses and companies

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<sup>2</sup> The government stopped publishing figures some time ago - with good reason, it is said.

<sup>3</sup> The Daily Catalyst: Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, 2 May 2006.

<sup>4</sup> See contribution of Helga Dickow and Afrobarometer Mass Public Opinion Institute 2005: "Support for Democracy and democratic institutions", March 2005.

<sup>5</sup> On the gradual erosion of the rule of law, see Mtetwa, Beatrice: "Zimbabwe", in: The KAF Democracy Report 2006: "The rule of law and Democracy", Bouvier: 2006. The following account is based primarily on personal observations and numerous discussions.

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would be indigenised must be seen against the background of the widespread policy of patronage (the expropriation of white farms to give them to ministers can also be seen in this light). The 2008 elections will show whether these clientalistic policies still work. In the absence of a dramatic improvement in cooperation between the opposition and civil society or of external pressure from African countries, a government victory is very possible. Opposition politicians who think that after losing three elections they can win the "2008 mega-election" are probably in for a disappointment. Decisive for the result is not the absolute number of votes, but electoral fraud.<sup>6</sup> This may well be easier in 2008 than in earlier years, as the food situation has deteriorated dramatically after the poor harvest in 2007. As a result, dependence on food handouts is greater than ever, and in the past food distributions were contingent on voting behaviour. Nonetheless, the question remains of how a government can hold onto power when the economy is in such poor shape.

The facts speak for themselves. According to the World Bank, the world's highest inflation rate could rise to 4000% by the end of 2007; other forecasts are closer to 6000%.<sup>7</sup> With 80% unemployment, nine in ten people are said to be living below the poverty line. Model systems of education and healthcare are breaking down. Live expectancy at birth is 36 years for Zimbabwean women; in 1990 it was 60 years.

The lack of resistance in Zimbabwe to this spectacularly bad governance is frustrating not only for the international community, but also for sympathetic civil societies elsewhere, in particular South Africa, where there are growing calls for Zimbabweans to fight for their rights as South Africans did against apartheid. Why don't they?

One factor is fear. On the one hand fear is fuelled by memories of the civil war that ended only in 1979,<sup>8</sup> and on the other hand by various instances of violence perpetrated by the Mugabe government, including the massacre of the Ndebele ethnic minority in the 1980s, the brutal repression of supporters of opposition parties and civil society activists in the early 2000s and the humanitarian consequences of "Operation Clean-up" in 2005.<sup>9</sup> Memories of violence were most recently "refreshed" by the cold-

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<sup>6</sup> On the 2005 elections see Schlee, Beatrice: "Wundersames Traumergebnis in Zeiten der Krise: Die Regierungspartei erringt die Zweidrittelmehrheit bei den Parlamentswahlen", in: KAS/Auslandsinformationen, 5/05: 93-127.

<sup>7</sup> Robertson, John: *Forex Comp (Pessimistic) to December 2007* (unpublished), June 2006.

<sup>8</sup> See Schlee, Beatrice: Zimbabwe: "Eine Lektion in Sachen Machterhalt", in: *Kulturen und Konflikte im Vergleich. Comparing cultures and conflicts. Festschrift for Theodor Hanf, Molt, Peter/Dickow, Helga* (eds), Baden-Baden: Nomos 2007, pp. 562-576.

<sup>9</sup> See Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, Mrs Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, 18 July 2005, <http://www.un-habitat.org/documents/ZimbabweReport.pdf>; "Primum non Nocere": The traumatic consequences of 'Operation Murambatsvina'. An In-depth Study on the Impact of Operation Murambatsvina/

blooded actions of the security forces against opposition and civil society activists in March 2007, which triggered international outrage.<sup>10</sup> For a brief moment, under the international spotlight, political change in Zimbabwe appeared to be not quite as impossible as shortly before. Such hopes are regularly dashed, partly because of a misinterpretation of events and partly because of a false assessment of the democratic forces. It should not be forgotten that the events at the beginning of 2007 - strikes by doctors, hospital staff and teachers - were spontaneous actions of selective professional groups, which the trade unions did not translate into a call for mass action. The government revealed its nervousness by suspending the freedom of assembly in Harare, which gave a joint prayer rally of the opposition and civil society a political dimension that it would not have had without the ban. By brutally suppressing the meeting and torturing detainees, the government attracted international attention, which in turn exacerbated the events. Suddenly the sense of caution gave way to a new openness and talk of transition and change. Meetings between opposition politicians and potential successors to Mugabe in the ranks of the governing party were rumoured to have taking place. This makes it even more surprising that this moment passed so quickly. The explanation probably lies in the spontaneity of the development. The events took even civil society activists unawares. Perhaps by preparing for similar occasions in the future through careful planning and new structures it may be possible to maintain momentum.

## The tactics of the ruling party

### Divide and rule

Mugabe is described as a master of divide and rule. This is most obvious in his own party: for years he has skilfully pitted various potential presidential candidates against one another. The image has taken hold in the public mind of a party divided into three factions: one led by Vice-president Joyce Mujuru, one by Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa and the Mugabe faction led by Gideon Gono, governor of the central bank. Against this backdrop the president has cultivated the image of himself as saviour, as the only person able to hold the party together. Even critics of the

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Restore Order in Zimbabwe". ActionAid International in collaboration with the Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Combined Harare Residents' Association (CHRA) and the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), November 2005 (cited below as Action Aid 2005).

<sup>10</sup> A survey puts the number of persons severely traumatised by Operation Murambatsvina at a little less than 70% (Action Aid 2005: 3). Owing to a series of traumatic events over several decades, in Zimbabwe three times as many people suffer from clinical symptoms of psychological stress as in other countries in southern Africa (see the 2006 study of the Counselling Service Unit).

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government began to wonder whether things might be worse without Mugabe, as few people have any confidence in ruling-party factions interested primarily in their internal power struggle or in the opposition.

Another example is the opposition party. Although the split between the two factions was largely an internal dispute, it appears that the security forces did what they could to further it. As the recent events of March 2007 demonstrate, the government has astutely exploited the split to its advantage.<sup>11</sup>

Recently the government has shifted its focus to the churches.<sup>12</sup> This move was not triggered by the clergy, who have benefited from the government's patronage in recent years, but by the founding of the Christian Alliance. This organisation regards itself as an ecumenical association. It is acutely aware of the suffering of ordinary people and seeks to channel the anger caused by deteriorating living conditions. The Christian Alliance's significance is not limited to church circles; it has also assumed the role of bridge-builder between the political opposition and civil society, organising joint events of the two groupings. As a result, the ruling elite are concerned that the Christian Alliance may threaten its power. It has responded with arrests and death-threats against its leaders in an effort to intimidate the ecumenical initiative before it poses a danger to the government.

For a while, the hierarchy of the three most important religious institutions - the Catholic Bishops Conference, the Evangelical Fellowship for Zimbabwe (EFZ) and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) - appeared to have alienated themselves from the plight of ordinary Zimbabweans. This impression ended abruptly in April 2007: a pastoral letter read in all churches at Easter took the government to task on account of its policies. It still has to be seen whether this surprising turn of events represents a real change in the attitude of the established churches. Until recently, the positions of the more radical Christian Alliance appeared to be incompatible with those of the various hierarchies. Each side views the other with suspicion, and the government will certainly try everything to aggravate existing differences.

It will be interesting to see what methods the government will think up to render critical voices - be they of the political opposition, civil society, the churches, its own party or the security forces - ineffective in the run-up to the mega-elections of 2008.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Although supporters of both factions have been detained, it is noticeable that in particular the president of the smaller faction has not been beaten, unlike his counterpart Morgan Tsvangirai. Government propagandists concentrate their attacks on the Tsvangirai faction, which is understandable as it is numerically the larger group; however, in a country in which rumour mills run non-stop and mistrust flourishes this behaviour is also interpreted differently.

<sup>12</sup> On attempts to divide civil society, see Schlee 2007, Footnote 8.

<sup>13</sup> Members of the national police accused of helping opposition activists arrested in the March crack-down get hold of food (provided by sympathisers and family members), are subject to

## Obstacles to successful resistance

### The opposition

Since the lost - or, as they see it, stolen - elections of 2000 and 2002, the meteoric rise of the MDC, the main opposition party, has give way to free fall. In a nutshell, the history of the MDC is one of missed opportunities: neither the fraudulent election results of 2000, 2002 and 2005, nor brutal government actions such as "Operation Clean-up" in 2005, nor the totally ineffective currency reform of August 2006, nor the first large strikes in early 2007 has triggered any concerted action on the part of the opposition. Differences in the party, which originated as a movement, came to a head in summer 2005. Disagreements over the party's direction, manifesto and actionism - abetted by outside interference, culminated in a split between a liberal free market wing and a more union-oriented wing under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai.<sup>14</sup> The majority of the ordinary party members and much of civil society remained loyal to Tsvangirai's faction. They expect strong leadership from their president, a hope they have never lost, despite Tsvangirai's powerlessness and lack of direction between the 2005 elections and the end of 2006. In the light of the general dissatisfaction with the regime, which is overwhelming according to the most recent survey results, the country should be a breeding ground for protest. The MDC's roadmap is still not clear. Sometimes it talks about non-violent action and at other times about negotiations with the government. The rumour mill will have knowledge of an unholy alliance with Vice-president Joyce Mujuru. Notwithstanding this, neither faction has managed to come up with the necessary programme, organisation, strategy and visions for the future.

Like the majority of Zimbabweans, the party appears to have gone through a phase of impotence notable more for internal disputes than effective action. Although all democratic forces welcomed the promises of a "winter of discontent" in 2006, there was serious doubt about whether the opposition party, which appeared for long stretches to have disappeared from the scene, was really up to this. And indeed, it disappointed its supporters once again, who found growing parallels between it and the ruling party. Whereas Zanu-PF has been promising an "economic turnaround" for years, the MDC is unable to keep its promises of political change. Since the beginning of 2007, though, people's hopes have been raised by the "Save Zimbabwe Campaign"

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prosecution and disciplinary transfer to remote parts of the country. See Financial Gazette, 27 April-3 May 2007.

<sup>14</sup> This simplified account should be read with caution, as the factions are still defining their positions and in particular the group around Welshman Ncube/Arthur Mutambara lacks a clear profile.

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a joint action organised by the political opposition and civil society which has not only promoted greater coherence among the democratic forces, but also triggered a sharp reaction from the government in March. For a brief period this resulted in greater unity not only between party and civil society, but also between the two factions in the opposition party. This, of course, raises the question of whether this time the opposition will be in a position to exploit the March 2007 events - the brutal government actions against the party's president and a number of members, which elicited international condemnation - to its advantage or not. Cynics point out that the opposition has to thank the government that it got into the headlines at all. The impending election campaign has the potential for opportunity as well as danger. Will the party really stick to its claim that it will not participate in elections unless the Zimbabwean constitution is reformed? Moreover, immediate interests often guide the decisions of Zimbabwean voters - especially when for many families economic survival may depend on the party affiliation of the local member of parliament.

## Civil society

The situation in civil society has not been much better. A major reason in this respect was the restrictive NGO bill of 2004, which only needed the president's signature to become law. The paralysis was partly due to signs of fatigue and burn-out. The latter is particularly common among activists who have been working selflessly and unsuccessfully for greater democracy since the late 1990s. Another fundamental factor is the brain drain to neighbouring states or the UK. It is estimated that up to one third of the population - most of them with sought-after skills - has left the country. This trend is noticeable in civil society in the shortage of leaders. Another cause is disillusionment, not only because of the string of lost elections, but also because of the disappointment with the MDC and the at times violent split between its factions. As a result of the power struggle within the opposition, civil society activists found themselves taking sides, which in turn took up energy that could have been put to better use.

The only positive consequence of these developments is that they caused some groups to reflect on their own agenda - regardless of uncertain players such as the opposition. This led to efforts among kindred spirits to strengthen cooperation. And people took the trouble to enhance contact with group members and the grassroots: events were no longer organised mainly in the centre of Harare, but also in the townships and provinces. Moreover, there are - incipient - signs in old and new civil society groups of generational change. This is linked with the search for new forms of action, above all on the part of the youth, new church groups and in cultural fields.

Only time will tell whether this will really lead to a renewal of civil society. A crucial determinant for the success of civil society is the collaboration with the opposition in

the Save Zimbabwe Campaign. Over and above this, it is still unclear whether the various groups in civil society can agree on a common roadmap and put it into effect.

A common failing of all democratic forces in Zimbabwe is the lack of skills in the fields of leadership, organisation, cooperation and coordination. In view of the restrictive media law, the latter presents a real challenge for the democratic forces. Nor should the effectiveness of the CIO (Central Intelligence Organisation) be underestimated; its close-meshed network of spies documents activists' every step. Another important explanation for the relative lack of actionism despite the existing state of the economy may well be a lack of unawareness of the misery of ordinary Zimbabweans. The economic discrepancy between the circumstances of the activists, many of whom have been supported by foreign donors for several years, and the people in the street is widening inexorably. This trend is exacerbated by activists' access to foreign currency (in particular US dollars). Recourse to the black market enables this activist minority to at least keep track to some degree with galloping inflation.

### A nation of frustrated citizens<sup>15</sup>

Zimbabwe is in a state of suspense. The devastating economic situation has triggered neither revolution nor serious resistance. To understand this one must try to picture the economic misery and call to mind its implications. As the survey results presented by Helga Dickow in this volume amply demonstrate, the entire society - regardless of ethnic affiliation and province - is deeply pessimistic: 85 percent of the respondents believe that their particular ethnic group is economically worse off than other groups.

The Afrobarometer confirms that the fundamental attribute of Zimbabwe as reflected in the state of its society is frustration: a frustrated nation characterised by hopelessness, which for many has already turned to apathy. "What can I do ...?" is the most common sentence in Zimbabwe. Declining self-confidence of once proud citizens, hopelessness and fatalism are spreading. The mood of the country is dominated by the economic crisis. Many can think of nothing beyond their own survival and that of their family. In such circumstances it is inevitable that people - including activists - withdraw into their private lives. What is the relationship between economic decline, its consequences for the individual and the chances of mobilisation?

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<sup>15</sup> The title is taken from a talk by Theodor Hanf at the "Ethnicity and Development" conference in Bulawayo on 1 July 2006, in which he referred to a "federation of frustrated ethnic identities". The conference was organised by Bulawayo Agenda, an NGO, in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Harare.

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### First: The shock

For a long time the West was intent on seeing Zimbabwe as a model country - a glittering star on the horizon of African states reeling under corruption and mismanagement. The West turned a blind eye to the massacres of the Ndebele minority in the early 1980s, the series of mysterious deaths in government circles and the gradually hollowing out of the rule of law. Zimbabwe's decline came abruptly, although there were obvious signs by the end of the 1990s. Since the economic collapse, many people in the lower and upper strata have still not found their voice again. Whereas they were once proud to be Zimbabweans and looked down on soft-currency neighbours such as Zambia, now they are pariahs, unpopular in South Africa and Botswana, where they are entering the labour market in droves, since when crime is supposed to have risen dramatically. Staring at the disarray around them, many Zimbabweans are simply not prepared to accept what has happened. As everyone knows, shock and suppression of a situation one cannot face up to are not the best starting point for mass mobilisation. This is aggravated by the fact that most Zimbabweans grew up in a country that experienced few of the negative excesses prevalent in neighbouring countries: corruption, lawlessness and ruthless abuse of power. Instead, one could, with some reservations, count on the socialistically oriented state to provide schooling, healthcare, public transport and the basics of life at relatively affordable prices. Although this encouraged a certain sense of entitlement, it is a big step from the complaint that this is no longer the case to believing that one can demand these "rights" from the state. In traditional society the traditional chiefs were not deposed as soon as people were dissatisfied with them.

### Second: From controllable to the complete loss of control

Whereas government and economic development were more or less predictable until into the 1990s, now there is no guarantee that things that once seems so certain will continue: school fees can go up a thousand times from one month to the next. Despite the currency reform, shops are adding noughts to prices - hence the long queues at cash desks and banks.

The loss of economic control was preceded by the loss of political control: the government won three elections in a row at a time of widespread dissatisfaction. Hardly anybody believes that the election results were not manipulated and deliberately stacked in the government's favour. One consequence is that turnout continues to fall. Not even 20 percent of the registered voters bothered to vote in the senate elections in November 2005. According to Eldred Masunungure (see contribution in this volume), this loss of control can lead to an equally uncontrollable explosion of violence - a breeding ground for demagogues able to exploit pent-up rage. This has not happened so far. But it will take considerable powers of persuasion on the part of political leaders to make citizens believe in a future that they themselves can create.

### Third: New forms of behaviour for new situations

The flexibility with which Zimbabweans adapt to their constantly changing environment is astonishing. Sometimes there is no public transport, at other times no petrol, then there is petrol, but the power is out, then the power is back on, but there is no water, then both water and power are out, but you can get petrol. Food is in a class of its own - sugar in shops, for instance, is a fading memory. Everyone is a survivor, juggling the available possibilities, adjusting to shortages, initially with grumbles and then indifference. Miraculously, shelves are never empty of mealie meal (ground maize) and cooking oil long enough for dissatisfaction to turn into public anger and communal action as happened in early 2000. A degree of burn out is evident not only in civil society, but also among most ordinary Zimbabweans. The pace of change is rapid; to survive you have to keep up. In such times memories are short; who still knows what the black market rate for the US dollar was one or two, let alone six months ago? Most people have even got used to rampant corruption. It is almost impossible to order a licence without a kickback; it is normal to bribe civil servants, judges and policemen. Most people have "learnt quickly" and have submitted to the new "economic laws" as they have to repressive political laws. For - has protesting ever had any effect? People who waste their time complaining about water shortages are squandering energy needed to get hold of sugar or cheaper corn meal for the family. "I'm surviving" is now the normal response to greetings. Hence, everybody in Zimbabwe is a chameleon - adapt or:

### Fourth: Apathy takes energy

The only people who can afford to be passive are those with enough to survive on. One of Zimbabwe's advantages is its formerly solid economy, the capital on which the country still lives. This is increasingly being run down and according to all forecasts should have been used up long ago. And yet life goes on (even though certain economic collapse has been forecast once again, this time for the end of 2007). Economically, the political elite are a bunch of failures (even the term economic policy appears misplaced), but as crisis managers they are tops when it comes to holding on to power. Who knows whether they are really interested in solving the crisis? The government survives by printing money and milking international organisations, which have to exchange the foreign currency they bring into the country at the low official rate (in mid-2006 at 25% of the black market rate). Rumours have it that influential personalities are involved in gold and diamond smuggling, and there is talk of black-marketeering in sugar and petrol. Not to forget the financial support of giants like Paul Bredenkamp and Billy Rauschenbach.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, ordinary Zimbabweans survive

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<sup>16</sup> Billy Rautenbach, a Zimbabwean who made his name with "Wheels of Africa", broke the embargo against the Ian Smith regime, subsequently became friendly with Mugabe and is said to have given Emerson Mnangagwa, a potential presidential candidate, financial support (Financial Gazette: 25 November 2004). On his machination in the looting of the Congo, see

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on "cross-border trading" and remittances from family members abroad. Society is already in the process of "businessising": there is hardly anybody who does not import cheap goods from South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique or Zambia either directly or through contacts to sell at a profit in Zimbabwe. While this trade is the only way most people can survive, for a lucky few it is a lucrative side business. Some of these can now afford a standard of living that they could never have attained in the past. This profiteering also ties down people, who are "too busy" to even think of the political struggle.

Half of all households in Harare and Bulawayo, the largest cities, depend on goods and money remitted by family members who have emigrated.<sup>17</sup> It is only because of the regular remittances that many are able to attend school and university or afford medical treatment. This is reminiscent of dictatorships in Europe, which survived for decades in no small measure due to the remittances of emigrants. This form of "economic appeasement" reduces the potential for local unrest and allows dictators to die peacefully in bed.

## Outlook: From bread basket to basket case?

Will Zimbabwe again become the victim of a miscalculation? In the 1980s, Mugabe the model student was widely overrated and his human rights violations overlooked. Today, people overrate to the ability of ordinary Zimbabweans to fight to defend democratic values. The premise is that Mugabe created a democratic state of self-confident citizens. It is overlooked that for many years Zimbabwe was primarily a socialist, de facto one-party state based on strong authoritarian traditions that demanded a strong and sacrosanct leader. In a country of such striking differences between urban and rural areas, between skyscrapers of glass and steel on the one hand and mud huts on the other, few are aware of their rights as citizens entitled to accountability and good governance.

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Braeckman, Colette: "Congo: A war without victors, in: *Le Monde diplomatique*, April 2001, [www.mondediplo.com/2001/04/07congo](http://www.mondediplo.com/2001/04/07congo). John Bredenkamp is accused of involvement in the arms trade in the Congo. See [www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/congo/2001/0228diam.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/congo/2001/0228diam.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Global Poverty Research Group: "Remittances, poverty reduction and the informalisation of household well-being in Zimbabwe", Bracking, Sarah/Sachikonye, Lloyd, June 2006, 8. <http://gprg.org>. Contrary to forecasts, consignments of goods make up the largest item, accounting for three quarters of all remittances; the most popular items are clothing, shoes and food. Seventy percent of the respondents state that they depend on the food parcels for their survival. This also holds for 50% of those who receive remittances in kind.

Almost two thirds of the respondents agreed with the statement:<sup>18</sup> *If our present system cannot produce results soon, we should try another form of government.* The lack of confidence in the president is even clearer. Almost 80% of the urban populace have no or little confidence in the president. The same holds for more than half of the rural population, the former stronghold of the Zanu-PF.<sup>19</sup> Mistrust is particularly strong among the under-30 generation: three quarters of them do not trust the president at all (ibid.: 6). Future surveys will almost certainly show an increase in dissatisfaction with the government, the president and the ruling party's economic policies.

Many Zimbabweans seem to have lost all patience. The reasons why this does not automatically trigger mobilisation have been discussed above: the government's policy of divide and rule, the weakness of the political opposition and civil society and the crucial effect of the economic crisis on individuals' living environment. The latter factor is not without consequences for the planning and organisational abilities and the creativity of civil society. People must be warned against pinning excessive hopes on the democratic forces in Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, it cannot be excluded that, as happened in March 2007, sustained, massive repression against the democratic forces is a prerequisite for uniting them in common actions. Presumably living conditions need to deteriorate further before other sections of the population can be mobilised, as the strikes in early 2007 demonstrated. One alternative to "slowly bleeding" the country and its people is a fundamental change in the attitude of external African actors. Only time will tell if this can be achieved by appointing President Mbeki of South Africa as broker of the SADC. It is becoming increasingly clear that Zimbabwe is not a litmus test for the EU, but for African states and their ability to speak out on behalf of good governance in neighbouring countries.

The longer all actors, internal and external, wait, the more difficult it will be to rebuild the country's economy and preserve or revitalise a political culture in which the rule of law and a clear rejection of corruption are more than clichés. Unfortunately, it seems that's too many accept the drift into ways that the West habitually calls "African". However, it does not pay to look away - defusing violent conflict is far more difficult than timely conflict management. Without it, ordinary Zimbabweans will have little choice but to adopt what most already see as the most likely course: to wait for a "natural" solution to the crisis.

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<sup>18</sup> Afrobarometer 2005: Support for Democracy: 13. <http://www.mpoi.org/pages/reports.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> Afrobarometer 2005 Trust: 4. Zimbabweans do not have much confidence in political institutions such as parliament. Only two in ten citizens (22%) in the cities still put their trust in institutions, even less than trust the police (29%, ibid.: 3).

## Apologists and Opponents

### Political assessments by the Zimbabwean elite

HELGA DICKOW

In July 2006, the author conducted qualitative one-on-one interviews with politicians of both the ruling ZANU-PF party and the opposition MDC, with representatives of civil society, church leaders, student representatives, trade unionists, representatives of human rights organisations and academics in Harare and Bulawayo.

The interviewees were asked about their assessment of the current political situation in Zimbabwe, the importance of ethnicity and the possibilities of political change.

Fearing for their safety, some interviewees were only prepared to be interviewed if they remained anonymous. This wish has been respected.

#### Assessment of the political system in Zimbabwe

##### Economic collapse: From breadbasket to basket case

Against the backdrop of hyperinflation and unemployment of 80%, it is not surprising that for most interlocutors the economic situation was the burning political question.

One political scientist, director of a market research institute and a co-author of this volume, analysed the economic situation and its social and political consequences as follows:

*Zimbabwe is a highly politicised country along many frontlines. The most important is the economy: there are the very rich and a majority that is marginalized and suffering, a big underclass. The middle class is disappearing downwards, it has joined the ranks of the underclass, the lumpenproletariat. This is the phenomenon of the working poor. It has never been a feature in Zimbabwean society. If you were working your income was sufficient. But today a family of five needs ZIM\$ 68,000,000 which is about 300 \$ on the informal market. How many Zimbabweans earn that much? Half of the employees at the university don't take home 68,000,000. Eighty percent of the government employees get less than 68,000,000 and take home only 30,000,000. This means 80% of government employees are below the poverty line. The middle class is eroded, eaten up. That's why the situation is very dangerous. You know the pressure cooker. You manage to keep the pressure inside while the lid is on. The government has been successful. State instruments like the military and security are big boulders, stones on the pressure cooker. It has served them, but it will not be sustainable. The situation now is extremely explosive. The government is preventing pressure breaking out. But it cannot do it for long.*

*The biggest weakness of government is the economy; it's the Achilles heel, which can be very painful. The present state of the economy is Mugabe's soft belly. It's getting worse. The pressure will rise. They will not be able to keep the lid on. It's really a question of when. Analysts differ on the time frame, but it will lead to an explosion. What it only needs now is a trigger. The structural ingredients are there. Inflation, etc. accelerate the process which will worsen. A political trigger is not even necessary. It can even happen at a soccer game, some people who are not satisfied might start throwing stones and this might give relief to the public anger that was inside them.*

*That trigger is the missing link at the present moment. A cash crisis like in 2003 could also be it. In 2003 they introduced the bearer cheques<sup>1</sup> because the country was short of cash. You went to the bank and did not get the money you asked for. People who had cash were even selling their money. There was a scramble to get as much money as possible from the bank. That trigger was about to explode. It lasted 6 to 9 months. The Reserve Bank had to react, it started printing these checks. They should expire within 6 months, but we have still got them. Zimbabwe doesn't have a national currency at present.<sup>2</sup>*

Another interviewee provides a shorter description:

<sup>1</sup> The country's currency is the Zimbabwean dollar, generally known as the Zim \$. The current bank notes are called bearer cheques. They look like Monopoly money and are being printed in ever larger denominations.

<sup>2</sup> Eldred Masunungure, director of the Mass Public Opinion Institute and lecturer in political science; interviewed in Harare, 11 July 2006.

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*It's another failed state, the fastest declining economy in the world.*<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, a member of the ruling ZANU-PF and recently appointed editor of the "Daily Mirror" and the "Sunday Mirror", two state-controlled newspapers, took a more hopeful and positive view of the economic situation:

*I would say in the rhetoric there are still references to socialism, but they run the economy in a capitalistic way, but a sort of controlled economy. Prices are controlled, but in reality the economy is purely capitalistic.*

*There is a huge amount of cash which leads to very high inflation, it's beyond 1000% since this year. Last week we got media reports that inflation is coming down, but only a little, about 9%. government hopes that we have seen the decline, seen the successful agricultural season 2005/6 and is hoping for another successful one in 2006/7. Then inflation will come down. In mining, production is going up. On the monetary side they are printing money. That is the biggest contribution to inflation, in order to pay back the IMF, and to pay civil servants. The government also means to adhere to budget rather than to overspend.*

*Most money is spent on education, health and wages. Education and health are top priorities of government. (...) Government subsidies are for fuel and food, especially for maize. They're also providing agricultural inputs (fertilizer, etc.), and they are also providing support in many other sectors.*

*The prices are going up, but wages as well. Public anger is inevitable, but not to the same extent as reported in the media. The lives of ordinary people are not comfortable, but people can live on their incomes, which reduces their anger.*<sup>4</sup>

Admittedly, he regards the occupation of the former "white" farms,<sup>5</sup> which precipitated the country's economic collapse, as politically justified:

*Given the history, government was left with no choice. Let me give you a brief outline:*

*Since colonisation in 1890 until independence various legislation resulted in dispossession of blacks for white ownership. (Land Acts of 1930, 1951 and 1969; Land Tenure Act) The driving force for independence was land. The living areas were overcrowded and land reform was too slow. In 2000 the government still seemed to be a long way from redistribution; that's why people took matters into their own hands. Government couldn't react, it was taken by surprise. So it couldn't do anything but allow people to move into white areas. It was not so much a matter*

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<sup>3</sup> Depros Muchena, staff member of USAID Zimbabwe; interviewed in Harare on 12 July 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Joseph Kurebwa, Political Scientist at University, Group Editor for Daily Mirror and Sunday Mirror, member of the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) (ordinary member since 1980); interviewed in Harare, 17 July 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Today, only about 400 out of 4,500 white farmers are left in the country.

*of policies as a matter of circumstances. Government had to respond and to pass legislation. The Land Occupation Act sorted to protect occupying people from eviction. The arrangement was that people who had moved to the land had to be resettled. Most of them have been resettled. Resettled doesn't mean driven away, but they have now been legally given land holdings. They've ownership and government leases up to 99 years.*

*White farmers are compensated only for improvements, the farmhouse, a dam or a borehole, etc. They aren't compensated for the soil. Land occupation made a contribution to inflation through the disruption of agricultural activity, but there was also the element of drought between 2002 and 2005 which made things more critical. But also the negative publicity. There was a massive decline in foreign support and in the inflow of foreign currency in general. Only trade with the East (China, Malaysia, India and Iran) brings in a small amount of foreign money.<sup>6</sup>*

A political party colleague, who wishes to remain anonymous, is far harsher in his judgment of the consequences of the land occupation for the country's economy in general and for the farm workers in particular:

*But just after the Referendum they started the invasion of the land, the displacement of the white farmers. And they were a major employer of labour. One must not forget that. The 4000 farmers, each had about 120 labourers. This is quite a sizable number. They looked after them, it was like a feudal system.<sup>7</sup>*

## Corruption, disregard of the separation of powers, fear and intimidation

How does a dictator manage to control a country on which so many economic hopes were once pinned and whose inhabitants were among the best educated in Africa in such a way that citizens and the political opposition do not rebel? The means do not differ much from those used by other African despots: disregard of the separation of powers, electoral fraud, playing off political opponents against one another, and violence.

One Zimbabwean employer of an American aid organization describes the disregard of the separation of powers as follows:

*In parliament the inherent doctrine, the separation of powers, has collapsed. Government wants to control both. On the High Court benches there are many government members. Judgements from these courts don't help much. We are in a*

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Joseph Kurebwa.

<sup>7</sup> Anonymous ZANU-PF government member; interviewed 18 July 2006.

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*situation where the judges cannot make fair and balanced rulings, but the need to please the government.*

*(...)*

*Elections have continuously been rigged; all means of democratic changes have been closed.*

*The regime is worn down every day. Daily they wake up and wish the civil society away, the opposition away. But the economy does not disappear. It will mobilise people to act.<sup>8</sup>*

A war veteran and former ZANU-PF member described the extent of corruption within the ruling party, for which he was expelled from the party.

*I complained about corruption in the top echelon of the party: Because of the drought grain had to be imported, it went to the grain marketing board. A party member took it from there, drove out of the door with it and then back in and sold it back to the grain marketing board. Food is allocated province by province. Far away provinces will suffer, because the food will already be sold on the outskirts of town and never reach the far away provinces. And then the NGOs get blamed.*

*I was complaining about the abuse; I was even quoted by the press.*

*The party congress is the supreme body, but the presidium amended the constitution in between party congresses. The result is that they give us the same leaders all the time who are corrupt down to the bone. The abuse is carried from party to government, from party level to national level. It violates the reasons why I joined the armed struggle and fought against Smith. Blacks had no rights. Now we're governed by a few black elites that have acquired that wealth by corrupt means like before 1980. The only difference, before it was a few Whites, now it's a few Blacks.*

*(...)*

*Here politicians are abusing power and using the party to do wrong.*

*We have a revolution that has been betrayed, we've got a nation which is divided not only on ethnic lines but also because of corruption. All this spells down.<sup>9</sup>*

However, open criticism of the system is fairly rare. On the one hand, most Zimbabweans appear to have great patience and a great capacity for suffering. However, the government also has a great capacity for repression. It generates enormous fear among the populace, which prefers not to rebel. This is especially true of the rural regions.

*Fear is certainly a great part of control in the rural areas. (...) The people fear to get involved after the long years of war. They learnt to keep their heads down to*

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<sup>8</sup> Depros Muchena.

<sup>9</sup> Jabulani Sibanda, ex ZANU-PF, war veteran; interviewed in Bulawayo, 14 July 2006.

*survive. They were friendly to the militias and they were friendly to the security forces. Everybody had to survive. That went on for 10 years before you had the new government.*<sup>10</sup>

In the cities, and particularly in the capital Harare, the opposition is better organised and resistance stronger. In these areas Mugabe is not content to practise only intimidation. In May 2005 he bulldozed entire districts and drove the population out into the countryside. This clearing-out operation, the so-called "Operation Murambatsvina", literally "cleaning out the rubbish", left 700,000 people homeless. It also deprived many of all source of income as well.

According to Archbishop Pius Ncube's analysis, Operation Murambatsvina was a means of punishing voters:

*What also divided was Operation Murambatsvina, the cleaning last year. Mugabe tries to convince them that he was trying to play down the informal sector. But what he really wanted to do was to peasantify people, send them to the country, and make them peasants. This was to punish them after the elections when he realised they didn't vote for him in the urban areas. That was dividing people. And we hoped people would stand up, but their anger was not used. I would have been too happy to walk with them.*<sup>11</sup>

A sociologist sums up the action as follows:

*The cleaning last year worked with fear and attacked the opposition in the urban areas. One ZANU leader spoke out against it and everything he owned was taken from him.*<sup>12</sup>

Another clergyman describes the fear of the people, which appears to be so great that they are afraid to take part in demonstrations, something that at the same time also seems to make him angry:

*The atmosphere of fear, people seem not be able to take that risk [demonstrations]. At the moment they are resigned, wait and see. This is not the right attitude. They can do something, they should decide their destiny. Look at elections! How people are taken for a ride. People are not critical enough. One needs to educate them. They are cheated by their leaders and they still vote for them. So*

<sup>10</sup> Professor Michael Bourdillon, a professor of social anthropology in the department of sociology at the University of Zimbabwe, interviewed in Harare, 11 July 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Archbishop Pius Ncube, Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo; interviewed in Bulawayo, 13 July 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Professor Michael Bourdillon.

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*civil education is still a must. Government tries to suppress this now and there. But it's a must.*<sup>13</sup>

The publisher of the state newspapers, in turn, underlines the people's wide acceptance of the government and does not think the populace is powerless:

*But also the fact that government has respected elections to bring in new leaders and to throw out old ones, that people are looking at government's rejuvenation of leaders ensures that people are not as angry. People would rather wait for the next elections to change leadership. In terms of the politics of this country people don't feel powerless but strong of their input into the political process. Elections have been held regularly since 1980. They know government sticks to the timetable without failing.*<sup>14</sup>

A member of parliament for the ruling ZANU-PF gave a graphic description of how electoral fraud took place and which levels of authority were implicated:

*So after the invasion of white farms ZANU-PF moved in to educate the people whom to vote for. There is nobody with you in the ballot, but if you are told that even behind a tree I can see for whom you are voting ... It takes time and courage to resist. Elections are rough, especially in Africa! We started meetings, started singing liberation songs, you appeal to their consciousness. There is also a lot of violence. Those who don't want to listen are persuaded otherwise. It was a reaction of the ruling party to the fear of losing. Then there was the connection that the opposition party was funded by British money. So it was as if we were giving our freedom back to the British. You must be surrogates. That's how we differentiated: We were the ones fighting for the liberty of the Blacks, the opposition is just a foreign tool so that Zimbabwe can become again a British colony. There were even posters saying never again a British colony. But for becoming a colony you have to be invaded by a foreign country. There was a lot of suspicion between the parties, but with time relations improved.*

*In 2002 we had the presidential elections. The opposition thought they would get the 2002 elections, and we were sure they would get it. So we reacted. Where we knew the opposition was stronger we just reduced the number of polling stations. We moved them far away, and even when people arrived, the machines would break down. These were tactics. Especially in urban areas we reduced the number of polling stations from 20 to five. And you know what that means? You stand in a long queue, you left a kid at home, after six hours you still haven't voted. So you leave. The number of people voting dropped.*

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<sup>13</sup> Archbishop Robert Ndlovu, Catholic Archbishop of Harare; interviewed in Harare, 19 July 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Joseph Kurebwa.

*In the rural areas where we knew we had support we increased the number of voting stations. There it was easy. We won the elections. The opposition naturally contested that. This is legal, but you just make the road long. When they won, we appealed and then the appeal disappeared under the files. So we were contested and ruling as a MP at the same time. After five years the appeals expire.<sup>15</sup>*

A former ZANU-PF member analysed Mugabe's political survival as follows:

*There are several issues:*

*First, political manipulation of the rural vote by intimidation and by threats to go back to the war if ZANU-PF loses. Rural people went through the war, they want peace.*

*Second, food is a weapon. Because of the continuous droughts the majority of the people in rural areas fear that they might not be given food if they vote against Mugabe.*

*Thirdly, the land issue. People fear that land is taken away when the others win.*

*Then through brutal intimidation: he uses the armed forces, the security forces. In the rural areas there are soldiers dressed in civilian clothes. They are there, where they were born, they're called "boys on leave", but they are used by the CIO (Central Intelligence Operation, H.D.). Every time a politician from the opposition goes to the rural areas, they afterwards speak to the influential people and threaten them.*

*Political patronage. Colleagues are scared; they only want to leave ZANU-PF just before elections. If they leave the party today the millions of dollars they were given, ZANU-PF will take away from them.<sup>16</sup>*

## From liberation struggle to an iron hold on power

Many attempts to interpret the country's current plight focus on the Mugabe's person and personality and the role of the liberation struggle. Mugabe has ruled the country for 27 years and wants to be re-elected president in 2008. Whereas at the beginning of his rule he was celebrated as the hero that liberated the country from the white minority government, now he is feared. Any means is justified to defend his power against several political adversaries and against internal ZANU-PF opposition. He regards Zimbabwe as his property.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Anonymous.

<sup>16</sup> Pearson Mbalekwa, ex- ZANU-PF member and founder of the United People's Movement (UPM); interviewed in Harare, 20 July 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Arne Perras, Die Angst vor der Unsterblichkeit. In Simbabwe hoffen die Menschen auf das Ende von Mugabe, doch der hält sich eisern an der Macht, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 21 February 2007.

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*Mugabe tries to convince his critics that what he did was for the good of the people and so some people are buying that. Zimbabweans have a love-hate relationship with him. He was the founder of Zimbabwe that's why we need to like him. This idea that you are only a citizen when you are in ZANU-PF, Mugabe used it a lot.*

*This politics has divided people. (...)*

*Even in the MDC there is division. Tsvangirai is not a real leader. He is also involved in corruption. He's a real African leader, he sticks to his power.*

*(...)*

*There is heavy infiltration. So many people are spies of Mugabe: in church, youth and workers' groups. They intimidate people, they cause fear and silence people.*

*For instance, people stood up in this country, went to war with Ian Smith. Now they are suppressed by those who are worse than Ian Smith.*

*Mugabe divides and conquers. He's an old fox, he knows all the tricks of African politicians. Those who are against him he calls imperialists. But he worked with some of them. And he's a good friend with some of the greatest dictators. When he feels his power is being threatened, he kicks the people out or replaces them. ZANU-PF is so divided, the party is just Mugabe himself.<sup>18</sup>*

*It's the sad story about a protracted lengthy liberation struggle in the name of democracy. You would have never imagined that they would do the same.*

*There is violence everywhere: it takes violence to sustain political power. The liberators were becoming crocodile liberators. In Zimbabwe, the rule by law has replaced the rule of law. Too many oppressive laws have been brought in. (...) We are in a situation where law is used as an instrument of oppression. In an environment like this the economy ceases to function. In a country like this you cannot invest.<sup>19</sup>*

*He has divided the people on ethnic grounds and taken away unity. There is still a lot of fear. Zimbabweans don't want to be beaten or anything else.*

*After the discussions at Lancaster House, Mugabe started to bring in tribalism. Even when these guys went to war, they went in a united front. He's ruling by dividing and pressure and fear. We need Zimbabweans to be united, whether they are white or black.<sup>20</sup>*

One party member explains Mugabe's system as follows:

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<sup>18</sup> Archbishop Pius Ncube.

<sup>19</sup> Depros Muchena.

<sup>20</sup> Getrude Mthombeni, trade unionist, member of the MDC faction that continues to support Tsvangirai, the party's founder interviewed in Bulawayo, 14 July 2006.

*It's about liberation credentials. Those who are in the ruling group were fighting together in Mozambique and Zambia. They have very close bonds. They're mostly Shona. It's a group of elderly men.*

*Mugabe's a very strong willed guy. He doesn't want to leave power, because he's the party.<sup>21</sup>*

*Mugabe resign! I'll believe it only when it happens. (...) Mugabe doesn't like somebody who can overshadow him. He likes to dwarf whoever there is. It's quite possible that he thinks Emmerson Mnangagwa has got presidential qualities. He's a very good guy, very organised, he wouldn't do anything without asking the president. But he dropped him.*

*It's not the people of Zimbabwe who will choose his successor, it's him. He's the party, he's the only shareholder. Everybody else is his manager. If he really steps down he will manipulate his successor. But I don't think he'll step down, there is no indication of it.*

*The ZANU-PF is not homogeneous. But he's able to control that, he manages the differences. If he thinks you're too big for your boots, he dresses you down in front of the others.*

*He's got sources, communication inflow. Even the guys who look after a minister will be talking to someone in the president's office. You've got this Big Brother syndrome. If I was a minister I couldn't have come here. They would have been right at the next table interrogating me afterwards.<sup>22</sup>*

A former ZANU-PF member adds:

*He's much too proud a man to surrender. He's mentally preparing his people for his succession; he's trying to tell them, my time is gone. But he doesn't want to be seen defeated.<sup>23</sup>*

## Importance of ethnicity

As shown, different ethnic groups live in Zimbabwe, seemingly without serious conflict. Yet, the massacre of the Ndebele in the 1980s - Gukurahundi - was long shrouded in silence. The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference had to smuggle out reports about the massacre. In this respect, too, Zimbabwe sought to present itself as an exemplary African country, not one threatened by violent ethnic conflict. Recently,

<sup>21</sup> The party membership card has a portrait of Mugabe in the upper section, the ZANU-PF emblem in the lower section and a picture of the Greater Zimbabwe ruins.

<sup>22</sup> Anonymous.

<sup>23</sup> Pearson Mbalekwa.

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observers have reported ethnic tensions. But this appears to be restricted to in-fighting in the upper echelons of power rather than among ordinary Zimbabweans. How do the interviewees feel about this?

A ZANU-PF member does not see any ethnic conflicts, but at least accepts that the Ndebele may be bitter about the massacre and the absence of any apology so far:

*One thing that really baffles visitors in this country is that ethnic differences do not lead people into fighting. We're not so divided. Shona are living comfortably with Ndebele. We never fight over those things. The national bond is a lot stronger than the ethnic feelings.*

*The events in the 80s were very sad. A lot of lives were wasted over a political dispute. The estimations are that 7,000 to 20,000 people were killed. This is a lot, especially for a small population. Talking to Ndebele, people they are very bitter, though they understand that it was political leaders who quarrelled. Some people took up arms to defend their leaders. This is almost 20 years ago, but some lost their whole family and often it was brutal killings. Unfortunately not much was done about compensation. The Ndebele feel they deserve a national apology. In my view, the president is not prepared to do that. But that would remove a lot of anger and also compensate families for their losses. The closest the president has come is to say that these things happened in a time of madness.<sup>24</sup>*

The general secretary of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference thinks that Zimbabweans are too sensible to let ethnic feelings take hold. But he is also aware that a growing number of top positions in the ruling party are filled by Zezuru, the ethnic group from which Mugabe comes.

*You've got extremists in all societies. But here there is little doubt where the benefits are going. Fortunately because of our common sense there are no big tribal feelings. There is a lot of intermarriage. People are refusing to be driven by tribal differences.*

*Some say top officials are Zezuru. It's the president's area. It cannot be accidental. I think it could be security, self-preservation. Who can best support and defend me?<sup>25</sup>*

A former ZANU-PF member takes the opposite view:

*In ZANU-PF politics there is a lot of ethnicity. It has disturbed many that leadership is in the hands of one ethnic group. It was foolish of Mugabe to do that, he showed*

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<sup>24</sup> Dr. Joseph Kurebwa.

<sup>25</sup> Father Fredrick Chiromba, general secretary of Zimbabwean Catholic Bishops Conference, interviewed in Harare, 19 July 2006.

*he is a tribalist. The commander of the air force is a Zezuru, the commander of the army is a Zezuru, and the commander of the police is a Zezuru.*<sup>26</sup>

A political scientist talks about the peaceful 1980s and ethnic entrepreneurs:

*Race is there, but it's used different at different times. And I'm not sure to what extent this country is racist. In the late 80s, in the midst of the war here, I went first to South Africa, to Grahamstown, and then here. It was a relief to be here - and we were supposed to be in a war. You could walk in Salisbury, as it was then called, and not feel in the least out of place. There were many people who don't like the racist theme. It is a basis for cleavage, something politicians can certainly use for emotional purposes. It's potentially being used.*

*Here there might be a possibility for ethnic cleansing in this country if it goes on like this and resources are becoming scarce.*

*There is a potential for ethnic clashes between Ndebele and Shona. It's there in peoples' consciousness. There have been intermarriages on both sides, but there are also people who don't like it.*<sup>27</sup>

Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai sees a connection between ethnicity and racism and at the same time demands a form of truth commission to come to terms with the massacre of the Ndebele. He calls for a multicultural society.

*First one has to recognise that the society is divided along racial, ethnic and gender lines. Some of these issues have to be bridged. For instance, the Ndebele minority feels an ethnic campaign against them because of the post liberation genocide. Whites feel being turned against after accepting reconciliation. This is a racial divide. Some don't feel like part of the country, there is an anti-white campaign. They're aliens in their country.*

*There is the need for some national commission dealing with the grievances of the Ndebele. The new society must accept that diversity is healthy for the country. That should be the basis for moving on. A multicultural society is much stronger than a society with just a single language group. We have a secretary working on how to enhance integration in order to build a new society that is more cohesive.*<sup>28</sup>

The president of the ZAPU-FP, a regionally based party in Matabeleland, also indirectly calls for a reappraisal of the massacre:

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<sup>26</sup> Pearson Mbalekwa.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Bourdillon.

<sup>28</sup> Morgan Tsvangirai, founder and president of the Movement for Democratic Change; interviewed in Harare, 17 July 2006.

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*Our party is very different from other parties in what it offers to the electorate and is driven by the desire to create a stable, durable and mutual beneficially political, economical and social stability in the country. We believe from the experience of other African countries north of the Zambezi and from our own experience, especially in 1988, that there are always pronounced tribal differences and a lot of intolerance that culminated in genocide where about 50,000 or more people identifiable by geographic location, language and political belief were mainly targeted for killing. So ZAPU-FP believes that all political leaders in Zimbabwe and elsewhere should first acknowledge and accommodate in themselves the diversity of the ethnic groups found in the country and inculcate a sense of tolerance and accommodation and accept realities that people have different views so to avoid past experiences.<sup>29</sup>*

A representative of the National Constitutional Assembly fears that there will be further violence if the country does not face up to the past.

*We don't seem to be driven by ethnic differences, but we need to know what happened in the massacres.*

*The unity we have was made up by coercion. We're afraid that one day people will wake up and turn to violence. Genuine peace can only come when the truth is known and people can bury their dead. Some people might become angry. But we say let people know what happened and let's try to stop it happening again.*

*Constitution will work to unify the nation.<sup>30</sup>*

The Archbishop of Harare, who himself lost relatives, takes a different view. He does not want to be reminded of past wounds:

*Gukurahundi? The issue is opening wounds. Opening the wounds would mean opening them to the flies. It becomes more painful. I lost a number of relatives, but I don't want to go through that again.*

*You can divide people and make healing difficult. It would not be my obsession to know what had happened in the 80s, but to be part of the international community and enjoy freedom, help people to discover their dignity and live without fear.*

*The opposition has been a disappointment. They let down people, their life is worse because of the conflicts. At the moment it's nothing but power, power, power.*

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Siwela, President ZAPU-Federal Party (Zimbabwe African People's Union-PF); interviewed in Bulawayo, 14 July 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Earnest Mudzengi, Officer in the Chairperson's office NCA (National Constitutional Assembly); interviewed in Harare, 19 July 2006.

*Ethnicity is not a big issue. In the early 80s the ethnic issue could easily have been exploited by politicians. If you play that card you don't get very far in the country. Now people are very concerned about bread and butter. And Tsvangirai is Shona, and 90% of Matabeleland supports the opposition. Some say the split was because of ethnicity, but for me it was a lack of leadership and personal issues and not ethnicity.<sup>31</sup>*

Ethnicity influences politics in the country up to the party level and is used selectively:

*The ethnic question is real, it influences politics. Every national political party has tried to come up with an ethnic balance. The president is Shona, the vice-president is Ndebele. Ethnic balance is understood and accepted. If you really want to build Zimbabwe as an independent state you have to incorporate national identity at the highest level.<sup>32</sup>*

*Mugabe does a lot of buying of people. He uses the ethnic card. Some Shona people are convinced that the only person who defends Shona rights is Mugabe. Shona are by far the majority. They say Morgan Tsvangirai would not represent Shona interests, he would represent Ndebele interests.<sup>33</sup>*

*Ethnicity has always been part of our politics. We witness it more if it's to somebody's advantage. But if it doesn't matter or it is to the disadvantage of a leader, we don't see much of it. Like the economy, peoples' thinking is sophisticated. For example, I'm Karanga. If I was saying I wanted something for the Karanga, people would turn angry. A leader should be for all, not only for one ethnic group. Over the years, politicians have used ethnicity to support themselves. But ethnicity wouldn't work anymore if someone is trying to use it for their own advantage.*

*Ndebele as president? That is very possible. 15 to 18 percent of the population are Ndebele. Nothing in the constitution or legislation would trouble an Ndebele president.<sup>34</sup>*

According to the statements of an analyst and of a representative of the Ndebele royal house, the Ndebele have forgotten neither their history nor the massacre and dream of a separate state.

*Ethnic consciousness is real. The Gukurahundi in the early 80s - the Ndebele are still extremely bitter about it. It's still in their memories. It's a sense of grievance.*

<sup>31</sup> Archbishop Robert Ndlovu.

<sup>32</sup> Eldred Masunungure.

<sup>33</sup> Archbishop Pius Ncube.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Kurebwa.

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*The ethnic discrimination is very real, even so explosive that some talk of a separate Ndebele state. They call it M'Twakazi in the memory of the founder of the Ndebele kingdom. No, it could not stand on its own feet. Some speak about this M'Twakazi entity as a political state, others envisaged it as a province of South Africa as they came from there. It's an inherited movement.<sup>35</sup>*

*Ndebele?! It's a nation. The expression Ndebele doesn't describe an ethnic group but a nation which is composed of 10 different ethnic groups. (...) The Ndebele were warriors migrating. All the way through they survived by fighting their way through. The Ndebele always appeared to be much stronger, mightier than the Shona. Today between the Shona and Ndebele there is not fear but lack of trust. I'd rather move to lack of trust. But I've got many Shona friends. Here are many Shonas, but they agreed to be in Matabeleland. (...)*

*But we're overwhelmed with Shona language. The people are educated at colleges in Mashonaland, however, do not get jobs there, but in Matabeleland. But here, too, few Ndebele get a position at universities and colleges.*

*The Shona are not planning to overwhelm us but there are civil servants who don't want to make us to their constituency. There is no value in Zimbabwe that ties me to a Shona. Government failed to build up common values. That's a potential hive of ethnic misunderstanding.*

*The other hive: unless Shona and Ndebele come together, ethnic problems will remain forever. The heritage that we'll leave to our children is one of hatred. It's not the local Shona, it's the migrant Shona from the North looking for opportunities who create the problems.*

*Shona and Ndebele must come together to address the problems and to develop common values. The government must also move away from party government and overlook ethnic questions, not just make laws and then more laws.<sup>36</sup>*

However, although younger generation appears to be aware of the ethnic differences, they do not experience them as a source of separation. The leader of the National Student Union even dreams of an Ndebele as president:

*We see a generation emerging which is very conciliatory. The tribal tensions seem to go away with the elder generation. I'm Ndebele, but I'm the president of ZINASU. This shows that we're transforming. One day one can even imagine an Ndebele state president.<sup>37</sup>*

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<sup>35</sup> Eldred Masunungure.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Khumalo, member of the Ndebele royal family; interviewed in Bulawayo, 14 July 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Promise Mkwanzani, president of Zimbabwean National Student Union; interviewed in Harare, 18 July 2006.

## Political change

President Robert Mugabe began his political career as a liberation hero and was celebrated as such. In the meantime, not only the opposition and civil society realise that Mugabe has ruined a once thriving country and enriched himself and a small clique. Even within the ruling party opposition is growing, although is still does not dare to move openly. As a rule, Mugabe's political opponents do not have a long life expectancy. In the light of these circumstances, how do the interviewees assess the possibilities of political change?

In February 2007, Robert Mugabe celebrated his 83rd birthday. Archbishop Pius Ncube quotes the following account by a government minister of the waiting game within the government and the future race for the presidency:

*A minister told a church leader: 'We in government do nothing at the moment. All of us are now looking at Mugabe's seat.' They will just fill their pockets.<sup>38</sup>*

Surprisingly, civil society and opposition agree on one thing: political change must include elections. There is not quite the same consensus on the timing: before or after a new constitution has been drawn up. It is clear, as the empirical section shows that decades of despotism have not managed to erode democratic attitudes.

*The first thing is a home-grown constitution, and after the constitution free and fair elections. We'll have negotiations, there should be a transitional government. And the negotiations are about the exit of Mugabe. We want to avoid a situation like in Kenya. Mugabe will not bow down, that's why he needs pressure. He's a very arrogant man. We're thinking about actions to bring him to the table.<sup>39</sup>*

*The only route for change is elections.<sup>40</sup>*

Other possibilities include a "round table", a transitional government and, following the example of other African countries since the early 1990s, a new constitution:

*Options are open. We don't talk about a transitional government until we have mass pressure on Mugabe.<sup>41</sup>*

<sup>38</sup> Archbishop Pius Ncube.

<sup>39</sup> Getrude Mthombeni.

<sup>40</sup> Moses Mzila, MCD, is a member of the faction that supports Mutambara.

<sup>41</sup> Moses Mzila, MCD.

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*It's a personal opinion: it's coming in a non-violent democratic way. The avenue is a negotiated settlement, the object is a new democratic constitution which reintroduces an independent judiciary and an new electoral commission.*

*I see a free and fair election, and the elected government will take over power. I'm very optimistic about this vision.<sup>42</sup>*

*The first preferred option which appears to be very remote is a change of government. It should come through elections. It's a process which allows Mugabe to hand over power to the new leader. But that's difficult to achieve.*

*There are other possibilities, the preferred one:*

*There has to be a recognition that there is no political unity in the country and therefore there is a dire need for all political parties to be brought to a round table to negotiate a new constitution that amongst other things should be able to protect the minority groups in the country, allows the provinces or states limited autonomy, creates proportional representation and has a Bill of Rights, and includes individual property rights and the promotion of political tolerance and pluralism and a free press.*

*With this environment a transitional authority should be put in place that should allow political tensions to side down before democratic elections are held after four to five years. If we don't do that we'll have a situation like in the DRC. The international community has to play a part so this can happen.*

*The worst case scenario is that the country may degenerate into some kind of Somalia where warlords emerge.<sup>43</sup>*

*Elections have proved not to be an avenue which can lead to change especially with this constitution. That's why we say the constitution must change and we need free and fair elections. Through a democratic constitution we will have free and fair elections, freedom of association, and freedom of expression. Elections here have been fought in an atmosphere which wasn't governed by freedom. You know we got the POSA [Public Order and Security Act, H.D.]. We're in a situation where there is no flow of free information, no free media. This means no election is conducted in secret. We need an overall constitution that also includes the accountability of the government. We need a new constitutional framework.<sup>44</sup>*

*Personally I think change is inevitable. The roadmap is the following: Mugabe must step down, transitional leadership, new constitution, then free and fair elections. Whoever wins the election will be accepted as the democratic leader of the country. If this fails, then there will be a violent uprising as everything gets worse.*

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<sup>42</sup> Itai Zimunya, Advocacy Coalition at Crisis; interviewed in Harare, 18 July 2006.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Siwela.

<sup>44</sup> Earnest Mudzengi.

*An uprising of the people is possible. We just need the numbers to tell Mugabe you're not legitimised by the people. A mass [of people, H.D.] is more powerful than a weapon. Surrender will not come on a silver plate, they will shoot, but only a few and then they will fraternize with the people against the dictator.<sup>45</sup>*

For Morgan Tsvangirai, founder and president of the opposition MDC, a change of power has priority. The following lists the means - campaigns - for achieving this:

*Elections are not the exclusive option to confront the dictatorship, others are accepting elections as free and fair. For us it would be a serious compromise and condition for change.*

*The objective: Are you getting rid of Mugabe by elections or other means? How are you getting rid of the dictatorship? Do you just confront him?*

*At the moment the country is in a big crisis, but Mugabe and his party deny this. Our message as we cannot afford political niceties is that Mugabe has to go. As the MDC we've got clear plans on how to embark on this and how to save the country. We've got different campaigns:*

*1. Save our country campaign (this includes: running elections, democratic resistance, building party structures, building civil society).*

*2. A new Zimbabwean campaign; this is a campaign of government. This includes development of a democracy Charta, convention of a Road Map to legitimacy, will be launched on the 29.7., coordinating with MDC party leaders to develop programmes. We are talking about transformation - economy, land, social infrastructure, rule of law. These policies are being reviewed.*

*3. An international campaign to engage the international community on how the crisis can be resolved (this includes: negotiations, constitutional reform and free and fair elections).*

*We will force Mugabe through actions to the negotiation table. And the international community should isolate the regime and put international pressure on it.*

*4. Information and education campaign to remove Zimbabweans fear of propaganda and closure of all democratic space.*

*Those campaigns are sufficient. You have two options: To stay on with Mugabe or to fight. Weapons are a secondary issue. It's not an armed struggle.<sup>46</sup>*

But he also makes it quite clear why what is happening has attracted so little foreign interest: not enough blood has flowed in Zimbabwe.

*The crisis in Zimbabwe has dragged on for so long, and it's not bloody enough. So there is not a lot of attention from the outside world. We have to deal with it among Zimbabweans.<sup>47</sup>*

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<sup>45</sup> Promise Mkwanaenzi.

<sup>46</sup> Morgan Tsvangirai.

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However, a ZANU-PF member does not believe that the opposition has much influence:

*The greatest weakness in the country is that we've got no opposition. As long as the opposition is behaving like it is now it is in danger of total collapse.*<sup>48</sup>

If negotiations do not succeed, the street may exert pressure:

*It's an issue of modalities. ZANU-PF is not paying attention to negotiations in the board room. After 2000 there were attempts by South Africa, but ZANU-PF's aim is to remain in absolute power. For them a settlement is only okay if they stay on the top. They wanted to swallow the MDC like they swallowed the ZAPU. So they could only agree to a working document.*

*That being the case, ZANU-PF will only understand the language of the masses. ZANU-PF should be pushed into respecting other political players, civil society, the MDC and other players.*

*How can that be done? Peaceful mass pressure is the only way out. That means demonstrations. If we can have a critical mass on the street to embrace Mugabe in a political reform.*

*The MDC should join hands with civil society, coordinating and ensuring that the critical mass is participating in these actions.*<sup>49</sup>

## Opposition

How do observers judge the role of the opposition? Since the most important opposition party split in 2005, there have been two MDC factions.

A leading member of the faction that split away presents a historical review and paints a gloomy picture of the how a party with democratic goals can come increasingly to resemble the party that it is fighting.

*The MDC is interesting. It's not a party, it's a process since the 20th century when the indigenous people met colonialism. They were not opposed to civilisation, progress, Christianity or education. They were opposing the system of government that was imposed on them. There was always a struggle. So we had a high level of expectancy after 100 years of colonial rule that we could say we have peace in the country. ZANU-PF encouraged the people to believe in it. But in 1980 it began to break their promises and then people started asking questions. When they were*

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<sup>47</sup> Morgan Tsvangirai.

<sup>48</sup> Jabulani Sibanda.

<sup>49</sup> Earnest Mudzengi.

*asking favours from individual farmers who were white. So corruption and other things started and people started asking questions. The MDC started as an opposition the minute government started breaking the promises, human rights abuses, the way elections were conducted, tribalism. You'd see the ZAPO in the opposition and the ZANU pressing for a one-party state. They just used Marxism as an excuse. The unitary peace agreement between ZANU and ZAPO is a one-party agreement. But once that was established we saw people starting to resist. Different opposition parties tried to resist the establishment of a one-party system. A lot of members of ZAPO were not content, but opposition parties were destabilised by the government. The mismanagement of the economy brought together the opposition regardless of their differences. The idea was to have a stronger opposition.*

*....*  
*We started out in a high outreach across all the cleavages (race, sex). We were well received. It was hoped that the MDC would deliver, Mugabe must go. The party would restore the vibrancy of the economy, rule of law and legitimacy. Many people thought the MDC would take over, expected it to be sharp. But we overlooked too many realities: the power of the government to destabilize a new party and the possibility of losing elections, like in 2000. Disappointment grew as we might stay in the opposition for a long time. Tensions began, people began to scrutinise what you stand for. People said we should make our message much clearer. With all this the unity of the leadership was put to the test. We had to start to have a debate in the party. That exposed in many of us the incompetence to talk about what the MDC stood for. So people became anxious that you were discussing to throw them out because of their incompetence. Issues like leadership style and performance were discussed. For me that was the question why don't we remove ZANU-PF from power. At some point people became paranoid that their positions were threatened. The issue of tolerance came in, we could not listen to ourselves. People wanted to suppress others' views. That caused a simmering in the party. A party that had risen above ethnicity, class, etc. but people started to fall back into their own groups and to resort to violence in the MDC. I was appointed in 2001 to lead an investigation on violence by the top leadership. Because of the 2002 elections the report was not published.<sup>50</sup>*

One observer thinks the MDC has already peaked:

*The opposition's peak was 2002 - 2002. The government lost the referendum. And then the government turned the attention from the local political crisis to the international conspiracy theory about Zimbabwe being attacked by Britain.*

<sup>50</sup> Moses Mzila.

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*The opposition has to ask four days in advance for a public meeting. And then there are restrictions. You cannot say anything against the government. And the police can deny a public meeting.*

*There is an act which restricts funding from outside. TV is owned by government.*

*The vehicles of outlet are now limited. It's left to a creative and innovative opposition to be with the masses. From 2006 the opposition is run down. The opposition has to use the internet, offshore radio stations (three radio stations, each broadcasting one hour a day). But the government is jamming the radio station, China has helped them. Radio 7 was used by everybody as a discussion platform.*

*Because of all this pressure and because they couldn't get anywhere, the opposition has split. It focused on themselves. Tsvangirai is leading the bigger faction, he won a by-election against ZANU-PF and the other MDC candidate.*

*Morgan says we need to embark on mass action, into an Ukrainian style revolution. Let's use other means. The government is on the look-out, they are putting stumbling blocks in the country. The opposition has been weakened because of the split. But the government is even afraid of a weaker opposition.*

*Civil society is contributing to civic education, human rights, exposing Operation Murambatsvina. This has made civil society an enemy of the state. There's an effort to curtail the pressure of civil society.<sup>51</sup>*

A leading Catholic cleric shares this view:

*At the moment the political situation is a bit delicate. It's worsened by the fact that the opposition became very weak because of the split. My personal opinion is that it lacks leadership. There is no strong leader to put opposition together. It gives the ruling party space and comfort. They realised the opposition has very little to offer. Now there is no open conflict. Violence seems to have subsided, only incidents now and then. The overall violence is no longer there. In a way that is better. I sometimes get the impression that the people of Zimbabwe are resigned to the situation. Let's wait and see what happens after the president. They're looking beyond the present president. Let's not do anything at the moment. I'm not sure if the post-Mugabe area will make the situation any better. I've got the feeling there is a political vacuum. There is no obvious strong leader to take over. My fear is that in the post-Mugabe area ZANU-PF will not remain united. There might be a split. You sense the different loyalties. The strength of Mugabe is to keep these loyalties together.*

*If that cracks, it could be violent or for the better ... Maybe a new leader will emerge.*

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<sup>51</sup> Depros Muchena.

*The opposition split has been due to a lack of vision about the future of the country. There is this enchantment to remove Mugabe. But for what? Mugabe might not be good at delivery but he is a charismatic leader.<sup>52</sup>*

Archbishop Pius Ncube paints a negative picture and expects political change only after Mugabe dies:

*I find it hard to say unless Mugabe dies. Mugabe has just put off everybody. Church leaders tried hard, they sent delegations, but he won't talk. Three outstanding bishops from different churches (one was from Church of the Holy Spirit, one Catholic, and one from another Church) were engaged in 45 talks with ZANU-PF and 40 with the MDC. Some state leaders were coming, Mbeki, the presidents of Malawi, Tanzania, and Madagascar talked to Mugabe for solutions, but nothing could be seen. I don't see a change coming. People are too afraid to make an uprising. The MDC is divided, the leadership is weak. I don't see any change unless he dies.<sup>53</sup>*

A ZANU-PF member takes much the same view:

*But what has the opposition to offer? If they could bring bilateral aid. But what transition are we in? We're not at war. They will keep on singing from the sideline.<sup>54</sup>*

But other protest movements are also developing into serious opposition for the government, e.g. the student movement.

*The students' movement started during the last 5 months, they are protesting against high costs of education and the economic decline. Some have been so successful that some universities closed down.*

*Students, workers, women groups, churches, the Christian alliance, Human Rights groups, youth are all working together these days. They need to develop alternative cultures of resistance. The government is watching their connection to the opposition. The relationship of the state and civil society is dichotomy, it's a conflict.<sup>55</sup>*

In the meantime, opposition is also growing within the ruling ZANU-PF. A former member describes the process:

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<sup>52</sup> Anonymous; interviewed in Harare, July 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Archbishop Pius Ncube.

<sup>54</sup> Anonymous.

<sup>55</sup> Depros Muchena.

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*It seems that we were not concerned about people, but clinging to power. We also had no democracy within our own party. It was dead. There were no democratic principles. Also the nomination of Mujuru as vice-president was non-democratic and anti-constitutional. How can a party which doesn't respect his own constitution respect the constitution of the country?*

*(...)*

*At that time there were different ideas inside ZANU-PF, there was a dissent in what do we do next, do we break away. Some said it's a good idea, but let's wait until closer to an election. We were not agreed upon on what to do next but what was going on. I thought I had enough support in ZANU-PF (provincial level, national level, MPs, Central Committee), they agreed with me to form a new movement. There was a need for that, but it needed people to take the lead. It seems that the organisational idea we had was not put into action. After I had left there was a lot of pressure in ZANU-PF, a fear that something happens. So Mugabe moved away from Mujuru, as there was a risk this would destroy the party. And Mugabe has also talked to some people to convince them to stay.*

*Moyo and me, we're just small fishes, the others are still in ZANU-PF. If our colleagues have been promised pies, I wish them well.*

*The UPM is there, it's a movement which involves ZANU-PF people craving for democracy and change and don't like what happens in ZANU-PF. It has not been launched like other parties, as some members are still in ZANU-PF. That would expose them. I'm the interim chairman. But our leader is in ZANU-PF, we're just warming up the seats for them. If it doesn't work from within the ZANU-PF we'll be careful with whom we work. We had talks with both sides of the MDC, but we should work as separate entities for democratic change.*

*Having been in the ZANU-PF I know their mindset. The strength of ZANU-PF lies in the rural areas. And most of the people were brainwashed and find it impossible to vote for the MDC. No matter how much they hate the ZANU-PF they can't vote for the MDC. They spread propaganda that the MDC is founded by the Whites, so they rather stay with ZANU-PF than with Ian Smith or so. It would be political suicide to join any of these organisations now. The people in the rural areas know I was ZANU-PF, I would never betray the party. They just think we quarrelled. We get a good chunk of rural votes.*

*We think we've got a role to play. We got the sympathy of the Security Forces. They cannot harass me, I was part and parcel of them. I'm equally associated with the liberation struggle. They find it difficult to criticise me.*

*Our support inside ZANU-PF? We've got 6 provinces on our course, Manicaland is divided, not Mashonaland Central and East, and Harare is MDC area.*

*They are caught between cliffs and deep sea, as the UPM is a party from inside. At first he was very local, don't follow Mbalekwa. Now they completely ignore us, they've gone quiet in order not to give us any more public attention.*

*The majority of our sympathisers are in ZANU-PF, but they are only able to see Jonathan Moyo and Mbalekwa. The other people all suspect each other.*

*Because of the UPM, Mugabe's strategy within ZANU-PF has drastically changed. I don't know what for, but I am confident that Joyce cannot take over from him. There is pressure from the Mujuru side on Mugabe to go.*

*Yes, the intention is to be like the Trojan horse.*

*Now, Mugabe is going around, promising people leadership. It's possible that some of our colleagues say why look for power elsewhere when I can get it here?*

*In terms of our leadership we keep secret. In terms of our aims we're not ZANU-PF. We're opposed to the current principles of ZANU-PF, we hope they'll change to the democratic change everybody has been craving for. All parties were formed because they didn't like what was going on in ZANU-PF. We're a political force which is more pointed to ZANU-PF. It would cause more damage to ZANU-PF to split, us that's the rural votes.*

*Election only comes after the identification of the leader. You find him, and then you put him forward in elections to test him. Yes, our leader is in ZANU-PF. But nobody knows who he is. We're trying to change the ZANU-PF from inside. It should be a democratic change, and definitely we're going to change the constitution. The constitution is the core of our problems. It has been changed 17 times to suite the ZANU-PF stakeholders. ZANU-PF changed to a socialist party and then to a one-party state. We definitely have to change the constitution. We should not go to any election unless it's under a new constitution.<sup>56</sup>*

## Role of the churches

As in neighbouring South Africa, high-profile church leaders and church institutions, in particular the Zimbabwean Catholic Bishops Conference, were and are trenchant critics of Mugabe's rule. They highlight discrimination and crimes and sends information out of the country - e.g. the Catholic Bishops Conference informed the world about the massacre of the Ndebele. In 2005, in reaction to "Operation Murambatsvina", a number of church leaders from mainly non-established churches formed the Christian Alliance. How do church leaders of different denominations view the role of the churches in the current tense, and for the populace trying, situation?

Archbishop Pius Ncube is the most outspoken of these, and also the best known abroad. However, in Zimbabwean society as well as in church circles he is almost isolated on account of his relentless demands for Mugabe's resignation.

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<sup>56</sup> Pearson Mbalekwa.

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*We've got quite a number of NGOs but everybody tries to keep safe. Here people say we trust in God. It's so naïve. And then government bought a lot of leaders. And then he divided the churches. Half are in his camp.<sup>57</sup>*

Archbishop Pius Ncube seeks dialogue within and between the churches and with the government and opposition, but makes the limits clear - not only because of the lack of goodwill on Mugabe's part, but also because of the pressure and violence that the government is able to exercise.

*I'm trying to see what initiatives work. There's only one stumbling block and that is Mugabe. I was thinking the church should come together to work and dialogue with government and opposition. When it comes to peace we're united, but when Mugabe feels threatened he will just refuse to agree.*

*My hope, I was working together with some South Africans to get people together. But we have to watch the army. I'm not in the capacity to convince people. I'm not Mahatma Gandhi to convince people to die. I'm also a bit scared. Two weeks ago when I was not in they came and told my secretary they would be arresting me at half past eight the following morning. So I prepared myself, but they never came.<sup>58</sup>*

The general secretary of the Zimbabwean Catholic Bishops Conference sees the church's function primarily as an intermediary between the different parties:

*It's difficult here. What the church can do is to facilitate between different political players. They can only help them that they develop. Our situation is that everybody has a politicized conscience. The church can only facilitate in this situation without taking the role itself.<sup>59</sup>*

... and in providing a visions of the future for the government:

*Talking on the side of the churches, our approach was the same as in the pre-independence period: we're prophetic, we warn government about certain issues. We realised that that was not helpful. We need a positive engagement, the churches offering a vision: what kind of nation do we want? Once we have this vision, how do we achieve this nation? We're developing this document and will show it to government. The Catholics, together with Pentecostals and ZCC, are writing this document. It's a draft, then we will adopt it, and then it will be published. It should have about 50 pages. Should the government see things in the same*

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<sup>57</sup> Archbishop Pius Ncube.

<sup>58</sup> Archbishop Pius Ncube.

<sup>59</sup> Father Fredrick Chiromba.

*light, things should go on. We're not talking about changing the government, we're talking about transformation. Even government needs a new focus.*<sup>60</sup>

The Catholic Archbishop of Harare is more cautious about the role of the church and emphasises the churches' conciliatory role:

*Churches have to be careful when they mediate. They must not show their political inclinations and not speak the language of the politicians.*

(...)

*The prayer meeting: As the church who is arranging it we should not allow it to be politicized. If the head of state takes over, then it seems to be state-organised and becomes a flop in my opinion. In some way we were not prudent enough in giving prominence to politics in the prayer meeting.*

*At the moment in Zimbabwe we have to accept that society is polarised. It's the role of the churches to bring Christians together. The churches should play more a reconciling role. The church is challenged, is really challenged, to highlight the sufferings of the people, to challenge those in authorities who're responsible for this situation.*

*The average person is poor. We should challenge the consciousness of the social and economic leadership of the country. There are lot of promises but things get worse. For example, children have to leave school because parents can't afford school fees. The high unemployment. The church has to highlight that. We could do more than we do at the moment.*

*The weakness, the churches do not speak with one voice, they do not articulate the needs of the people. That is ineffective and the politicians try to avoid that.*

He does not see the churches as taking on the role of the opposition, as in South Africa:

*I would not go for that position. Once you take political sides you're bound to a party. With apartheid it was different. But the church has a challenge to form the consciousness of the people and point the way forward. And then someone would take it up from there, some political figure might come up then. We should mobilise by forming consciousness.*

Nor would he lead demonstrations, something done by South African church leaders, but would rather try to influence people who find themselves in a desperate situation:

*In this moment marches are not effective, maybe to get some international attention. Personally, I wouldn't go for that.*

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<sup>60</sup> Father Fredrick Chiromba.

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*We got a lot of people who really listen to us. What do we do with these people? They are desperate. If we could use this platform we could gain a match.<sup>61</sup>*

The general secretary of the Zimbabwean Catholic Bishops Conference describes a prayer meeting that the Catholic Church organised with President Mugabe:

*On the 25 June we had a prayer meeting with the president. It was well organised and attended. Some critics say we invited the president. But we don't sent invitations. It was quite good that the president was there. I think their prayers must have affected him more than if we had talked to him.*

*We had arranged that different people would pray about different situations and aspects. We had prayers for Africa, for the whole world, for the economy here, for government leaders. The president was leading a prayer dedicating the nation to God. Then he used the opportunity for a speech about church and state relations and that he wished that the Prayer Day would appear on the annual calendar. We had asked him not to give a speech. But I think it was a reaction to all the prayers he had listened to. Then he read a prayer which was written for him by the churches.<sup>62</sup>*

Archbishop Robert Ndlovu feels that pastoral care of political leaders is an important function of the church.

*Despite of the differences with the government, dialogue remains an important factor. Most politicians are Christians. Don't we have a pastoral responsibility for them and develop a pastoral care? How to reconcile their policies with Christian values? Maybe that's the best way to approach them. That's a real challenge. So many ministers who belong to our church. Maybe we have not helped them very much?<sup>63</sup>*

Jonah Gokova, coordinator of the Christian Alliance, explains that the Christian Alliance was born as a result of pressure from Christians who had become disillusioned by the church's silence on issues of human rights abuses by the government, the security forces and militias and felt they needed a prophetic voice.<sup>64</sup>

*The official churches always have been very quiet where people are loosing their livelihood or are on the decline. In this situation the church is supposed to raise its moral voice. But it didn't.*

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<sup>61</sup> Archbishop Robert Ndlovu.

<sup>62</sup> Father Fredrick Chiromba.

<sup>63</sup> Archbishop Robert Ndlovu.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. [http://religion.info/english/articles/article\\_235.shtml](http://religion.info/english/articles/article_235.shtml), 22 February 2007.

*This has seen local initiatives which try to play the prophetic role. It's a Christian role outside church structures, they are leaving the churches. It is the church in Manicaland, church in Bulawayo, national pastors conference, Eucumenical Support Services (which is my employer), church in Victoria Falls. This have been projecting prophetic voice, but at a local level.*

*Christian Alliance was launched at the beginning of this year. It's the national face of all these churches. It's organised like a network with the explicit objective that the churches are visible in the absence of the voice of the official church body. (ZCC, EFZ, ZCBC). Leaders of these churches visited the state house. For a church that has been quiet for a length of time we were wondering what they would say. Afterwards there was a prayer meeting with the president. I feared clear signs of the churches being co-opted by the state. The state has lost its credibility, both internationally and nationally. And now it's trying to gain credibility by co-opting the churches. It's an on-going debate about church and state relations. But visiting the state president and praying with him but not saying anything about the suffering! Is it dangerous for him?*

*The national convenor of CA is in hiding at the moment. They don't like us because of our criticism of the recent cooptation.<sup>65</sup>*

Cooperation with the established churches is not very easy to organise:

*We're seen as a threat but we shouldn't. We're only trying to overcome the limitations of these churches. They try to put spanners into our works. We don't want to spend our time on why they went to State House. Let's just concentrate on the work we do.*

*In Ecumenical Support Services we do a lot of social justice work and development of theology. The church has not done enough to look at the areas where we can look as Christians. We must bear our responsibilities especially in a society like this. Christians must speak out about the conditions of lives and their responsibilities. This is the new way of thinking. We're starting a new KAIROS process where we talk about what it means to be oppressed and so on.<sup>66</sup>*

Archbishop Pius Ncube takes a more positive view of this development and also of the Christian Alliance:

*It's a great organisation, I must give them a chance but it's a lot of big talk. It's mainly made up of Pentecostals, Born Again, Holy Spirit churches. These pastors they want no Catholics in the leadership.*

*In the "Christians together of Justice and Peace" there were many white pastors. And then the black pastors wanted to move in. So CA might be an alternative but it*

<sup>65</sup> Jonah Gokova, coordinator of the Christian Alliance; interviewed in Harare, 12 July 2006.

<sup>66</sup> Jonah Gokova.

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*seems to be money chasing. The SACBC offered a course to them, and they started demanding money for the journey to Botswana. They're feathering their own nest. But let's them give a chance. I'm glad they boycotted the prayer meeting.*<sup>67</sup>

Another leading Catholic cleric sees them in a different light:

*We're trying to establish who they are. They are not a Christian organisation, not aligned to any church, they call themselves Concerned Christians. We've no connection with them.*<sup>68</sup>

## Future political order

They may be sceptical about the speed of political change, but the interviewees have clear ideas about a new political order.

The general secretary and founder of PUMA (Patriotic Union of Matabeleland), a regional party in Matabeleland founded only in March 2006 that calls for a federal system and a quota system to redress the injustices of the past.

*PUMA is only a regional party in this country, because prior to colonialism Zimbabwe was two countries. There was a Ndebele nation which was led by a king, and a Mashona nation which was more a federal state. After colonisation we were one state. But we were never consulted. The winner writes history, we were never fully recognised. In all decision-making processes we were left out.*

*We are fighting for a quota system and devolution of power. We need a Swiss or German kind of arrangement with regional governments with power to enact their own laws and their own budgets: health, education, we need to have our own local police service, road infrastructure. Issues like foreign affairs, security, defence can be left with central government.*

*The quota system: we've got to start somewhere. Armed forces, police, diplomatic corps we're not there. We're not respected at all. If we had an electoral system which allows proportional representation then we would see partners in coalition.*

*What we finally want is devolution of power. We have so many resources in our land, our gold mines, coal. If we are properly governed our people can be employed. We can even get the better jobs. It's a deliberate decision of government to get us out.*

*I watched South Africa being born again. I wish my country could do the same.*

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<sup>67</sup> Archbishop Pius Ncube.

<sup>68</sup> Father Fredrick Chiromba.

*People are bitter, once the minorities get into power, they want revenge. But we don't want that. The Shona are afraid of revenge.*<sup>69</sup>

Paul Siwela, president of ZAPU-FP, also calls for a federal system so as to divide resources fairly:

*So our party therefore advocates a federal dispensation in this country so as to allow all ethnic groups to have amongst other things, first a sense of belonging, a sense of ownership of the country, contributing to policies and making decisions that affect them particularly at local level and influence service delivery at local level. Second, promote equitable distribution of wealth among various ethnic groups in the country. Third, share the burden of developing the country and the abilities that result therefore. Promote and celebrate diversity of ethnicity. Fourth, that will also promote political pluralism that enhances democracy.*<sup>70</sup>

A leading member of the Ndebele royal family calls for cultural diversity in one state. This could also include a constitutional monarchy.

*It's now more than hundred years ago that King Lobengula disappeared and that we don't have a king. People have expressed their desire to have a king back. There is nothing in the constitution. It would have to be entered.*

*We've already done something. It's not so much to divide the country in two but to regain our cultural heritage and our cultural values. So we celebrate King Mzilikazi every year on 15 September and King Lobengula on Bulawayo Day in March. I started this year. So people can come together and remember their culture.*

*The Shona people are asking themselves: What are the Ndebele doing? Starting the revolt? But we will allow cultural revival for all groups in Matabeleland.*

*I'm more for the devolution of power that benefits local people. We should have a central government and allow people to do their own culture. We need to be inclusive.*

*We've got a few challenges as a nation. We're fewer here in Matabeleland than in other countries. We're an offshoot of the Zulus, that makes us part of the Nguni nation. It's the biggest nation in the SADC region. For our survival from an ethnic point of view it's not dividing but building up relations with other Ngunis in the SADC region. In the long term that can save us. And for the cultural survival we need to build up relations, too.*<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Sikhumbuzo Ndiweni, Bulawayo, general secretary and founder of the Patriotic Union of Matabeleland (PUMA); interviewed in Bulawayo, 14 July 2006.

<sup>70</sup> Paul Siwela.

<sup>71</sup> Peter Khumalo.

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The opposition representative is more general:

*The MDC brings change, democracy, freedom, a turnaround in the economy, education system, health and delivery system.*<sup>72</sup>

Morgan Tsvangirai, party founder and president, describes the future and goals of his party in greater detail, making a point of including women's rights:

*The MDC was created on the basis of a new Zimbabwe because of the apparent betrayal of the ideals of the liberation struggle. That future society has to include a real democratic transfer of political culture, opportunities for everyone, an integrated society, because at the moment we're divided along ethnic and generational lines.*

*The first line is a generational divide. It's not just a transition of those who fought for liberation. They prioritize the struggle and don't transfer it to the next generation. They are divided about what Zimbabwe should mean. The MDC is a rejection of that paradigm that Zimbabwe started and ended with liberation. The sad part is that the MDC is a post-liberation party created out of the frustration of the liberation struggle.*

*(...)*

*We need a hybrid system, a proportional representation system. This would achieve the most representation, especially among women. There is a selection process in parties and a certain number of women have to be selected to run for parliament, if they like it or not.*<sup>73</sup>

Some observers agree that nation-building has not taken place in Zimbabwe. The empirical data confirm this. The overwhelming majority of respondents identify themselves in terms of personal characteristics rather than their country. How do they explain this?

*My thesis is that Mugabe and the ruling party have been too preoccupied with state-building, but did not realize the need to build a nation. Nation-building is a work in progress. Instruments of cohesion, violence, those are fairly strong organs. Without them, the state would have collapsed already. But the pride of being Zimbabwean is still missing. Everybody who wants to govern the country would have to give top priority to national integration. It's the biggest challenge. (...) The national question is also very critical. The government and the ruling party complain how the opposition can speak so badly about Zimbabwe. There is a very shallow sense of patriotism. Zimbabweans outside in South Africa or the US would rather*

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<sup>72</sup> Getrude Mthombeni.

<sup>73</sup> Morgan Tsvangirai.

*be associated with other states. It's a big problem to forge a united Zimbabwe and national unity that appreciates unity in diversity.*

*You are a pro- or anti-state trade union, pro- or anti-state student, pro- or anti-state church. I cannot think of any area where the society is not divided.*

*I have spoken to MCD leaders about national unity, but the fact that the major opposition party has no idea about national unity shows something.*

*The national question is taken for granted, but it has to be treated very sensitively. Otherwise the country will end in a civil war which nobody wants.<sup>74</sup>*

Or more succinctly:

*This is not a nation. We're just looking at ourselves. We never had a national feeling. A nation is not in the culture, not in the history. So they don't feel like cheating the country as they don't see it as a nation.<sup>75</sup>*

## The country's future

How do they see the country in five years' time?

The representative of the state-controlled newspapers paints the rosiest view of the future:

*I think given the stability and peace we're having as a nation now, and the challenges of the past five years, economic recovery will characterise the next five years. In 2010/11 Zimbabwe will show real signs of prosperity. We couldn't be worse than now; we will be on our way to recovery.<sup>76</sup>*

Morgan Tsvangirai hopes for political change and sees himself as a presidential candidate.

*Our assessment, the crisis will be soft lined, we'll have a solution to crisis. Yes, I would stand as a candidate for presidential elections. Everybody is looking at a healthy transition for the country. The recovery reconciles the political majority.*

*The difference between the ZANU-PF leaders and the MDC is not that big. We know there will be a political transition, ZANU-PF is talking in terms of 2008 to 2010, the MDC expects it now.*

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<sup>74</sup> Eldred Masunungure.

<sup>75</sup> John Robertson, economist; interviewed in Harare, 12 July 2006.

<sup>76</sup> Joseph Kurebwa.

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*Power is like shifting sand. There are some who believe ZANU-PF will remain in power for ever. But if we had any other solution but peaceful in this country it would be a tragedy. You cannot build democracy out of violence.*<sup>77</sup>

Student leader Promise Mkwanzani calls for a process of healing and places his hopes in tourism and foreign investment:

*It depends on the spirit how we get the mandate.*

*1. A process of national healing is needed.*

*2. We have to retain a total respect of the rule of law, ensure every Zimbabwean that he's a right to live here. We need to guarantee your safety and confidence to regain investors and tourists and the confidence of the IFM and the World Bank.*

*After five years if this process is undertaken, Zimbabwe's economy will not collapse entirely.*<sup>78</sup>

A representative of the National Constitutional Assembly, an NGO, assumes that by then the process of transformation will be underway and calls for an equitable land reform that will also involve white farmers.

*If we manage to put our act together, in five years Zimbabwe will be at the threshold in form of a transition.*

*A land reform in this country is necessary. We still need a land reform in this country. ZANU-PF hijacked an important issue. The so-called land reform resulted in the collapse of the economy. It must happen in transparency and meet the needs of the people. You just don't give land to anybody. We'll look for an audit of what happened, support those who rightly got the land in order to become successful farmers. Others acquired too many farms. That land should be properly redistributed. In the Lancaster House constitution the agreement was a buyer-seller agreement. Now, the whole issue of land is a technical issue. The White farmers are Zimbabweans, Whites can be embraced in compensation. Farmers who are genuine farmers and who want to develop Zimbabwe and who are not just selfish should be supported.*

And he warns:

*Burying the past means forgiveness and not suing Mugabe.*<sup>79</sup>

The general secretary of Zimbabwean Catholic Bishops Conference is less confident:

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<sup>77</sup> Morgan Tsvangirai.

<sup>78</sup> Promise Mkwanzani.

<sup>79</sup> Earnest Mudzengi.

*Difficult to say, it depends on which way we're going. If we keep going like this it will be disastrous. If government embraces it, there might be hope. There are the issues of the constitution and of governance. It's as if we're still falling. In five years we might rise. But it takes many years to get back to where we were in the 80s.<sup>80</sup>*

The representative of the ZANU-PF also paints a gloomy picture:

*Inflation will still go up. Poor people will continue getting poorer. But when you come back next time you'll still be able to get your coffee, to buy a new pair of glasses. You just have to carry more money, you just have to pay more. There might be more power cuts, water problems. But look, we've still got enough to water the grass.*

*There will be guys who will be living quite well here, they keep the system going. We will keep on building houses, etc. Just the poor will die.<sup>81</sup>*

## Conclusion

The quoted interviewees represent a broad cross-section of the Zimbabwean political and intellectual elite. They draw a stark picture of a once thriving country: fear and dread of intimidation and violence, economic collapse that has turned life into a daily fight for survival, an ethnic massacre that the country has still not come to terms with, a divided opposition and a president who even in his old age is still a past master at the power game. Hence, at present they see little scope for action. Even the churches are divided. It appears as though all - although only one of the respondents dared to voice it - are waiting for the dictator to die. Only after that do they see any opportunity for a new democratic order, for a new constitution to be drawn up by all political parties together, and for elections without fraud and intimidation. Only the future will tell whether the democratic forces are strong enough to prevail, or whether future rivals for power both in the government and in the opposition are already preparing to fight for political power in Zimbabwe and waiting for an opportunity to take power and rule - perhaps not all that differently from the way Mugabe rules today.

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<sup>80</sup> Father Fredrick Chiromba.

<sup>81</sup> Anonymous.

# **Before a Change?**

## **Attitudes and opinions on society, religion and politics in Zimbabwe**

HELGA DICKOW  
in collaboration with Petra Bauerle

### **Zimbabwean society as reflected in the sample**

In December 2005, the Conrad Adenauer Foundation and the Centre de Sciences de l'Homme in Byblos, Lebanon, carried out a survey of attitudes on politics, society and religion in six of ten provinces in Zimbabwe in conjunction with the Mass Public Opinion Institute.<sup>1</sup> The sample comprised 1012 persons.

A good quarter of the interviewees (26%) live in Harare, i.e. in the capital and its suburbs, one tenth in Bulawayo, the other major urban area, 16% in Mashonaland West, 21% in Manicaland, 18% in Masvingo and 9% in Matabeleland North.

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<sup>1</sup> Administratively, Zimbabwe is divided into eight provinces and the two cities of Harare and Bulawayo. The survey was conducted in the provinces of Mashonaland West, Manicaland, Masvingo and Matabeleland North as well as in Harare, the capital, and Bulawayo. The provinces not included in the survey were Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Matabeleland South and Midlands.

Owing to the size of samples in Harare and Bulawayo, the country's second city, the urban areas in the sample are slightly overweighted: 19% of the interviewees live in the capital, 27% in a city, just two percent on the essentially rural outskirts of a city and just under 53% in a village.

Of the respondents, 49% are men and 51% are women. By age group, the sample breaks down as follows: 28% of the respondents are younger than 25, a good third is between 25 and 34, 23% between 35 and 49 and 15% older than 50 years. Owing to a high rate of HIV infection, the life expectancy in Zimbabwe has declined dramatically in recent years: although the World Factbook still records 38 and 40 years, respectively,<sup>2</sup> it has in fact fallen to 33 years for women and 34 years for men.

Respondents in the lowest age group are somewhat overrepresented in Bulawayo and the 25-34 year old in Harare; the two cities have the lowest proportion of the 50+ age group: seven percent (country  $\bar{x}$ : 15%). Old people are overrepresented in Masvingo (24%) and Matabeleland North (20%). Of the oldest age group, four fifths live in rural areas, a figure that corresponds to the image of a traditional African society.

The break-down by education is as follows:

No formal education	6
Primary school	21
Junior secondary school not completed	11
Junior secondary school completed, senior secondary school not completed	26
Senior secondary school completed	23
Vocational school, college, pre-university	8
University	5

All figures in this and following tables and lists are in percent, rounded to the nearest whole number.

\* Denotes figures below 0.5%.

Respondents' level of education is higher in urban than in rural areas. In the cities an above-average number of respondents are college or university graduates and - as one might expect - the number of students is higher than in rural areas. Finally, the country's leading universities are located in Harare and Bulawayo. On the other hand, with the exception of Mashonaland West, interviewees without any formal education or only a primary-school education are overrepresented in the provinces. Women, not surprisingly, have a considerably lower level of education than men: 8% and 26%, respectively, of the female respondents have no formal or only primary school education (the figures for men: 5% and 16%). Seven percent of male and three percent of female interviewees have completed university. The level of education correlates inversely with age: almost three quarters of the 50+ age group has no formal

<sup>2</sup> Cf. The World Factbook - Zimbabwe, <http://www.jar2.com/2/Intel/Factbook/geos/zi.html>, 28 July 2006.

or only primary-school education. Respondents under the age of 35 are heavily overrepresented among those who have completed junior or senior secondary school. A disproportionately high percentage of under-50s were or are at university. This phenomenon is repeated in other African as well as western societies.

According to official figures, at the time of the survey unemployment in Zimbabwe stood at about 80%. This is also reflected in the survey: one quarter of all respondents stated that they were working, whereas three quarters were not. Some 62% of all respondents gave as their occupation housewife (a catch-all occupation that often enough includes unemployment) or unemployed (some looking for work, others not). The proportion of employed persons was substantially higher in the cities; more men than women had jobs, but only 11% of the respondents in the 50+ age group.

The break down of interviewees' monthly family income (in Zimbabwean dollars: Z\$) in December 2005 was as follows:

Less than one million	22
1 - 2 million	23
2.2 - 4.5 million	17
5 - 9 million	19
10 - 500 million	19

In December 2005, the official basket of goods for a family of six cost Z\$ 30 million. In other words, more than four fifths of the respondents lived below the poverty line, i.e. cannot acquire the means a family needs to survive at the subsistence level for a month!

The break-down by occupation is as follows:

Skilled manual workers, traders	6
Professionals, teachers	4
Civil servants and office workers	4
Unskilled manual workers	3
Self-employed	2
Semi-skilled manual workers	2
Street vendors	2
Farmers	2
Other	2
Housewives	26
Unemployed looking for work	24
Unemployed looking for work	13
Students	6
Retired	6

A disproportionately high number of professionals and teachers, civil servants, office workers, skilled manual workers and traders live in the urban centres of Harare and Bulawayo. Also overrepresented in Harare are self-employed and students, though the latter are even more numerous in Bulawayo. Obviously, as elsewhere in the world, all occupations are represented in the capital. Bulawayo has the fewest unemployed respondents, or those outside of the labour force. Farmers predominate in the rural provinces, in particular in Mashonaland West. Housewives are overrepresented here and in three other provinces, whereas retired persons are most common in Mashonaland West, Masvingo and Matabeleland North.<sup>3</sup>

Women are, of course, overrepresented among housewives, but also among street vendors. But apart from these occupations, men are dominant in the labour force. Even among civil servants and office workers, recognized spheres of equal opportunity employment in most countries, there are only half as many women as men.

Unemployment is particularly high in rural areas (87%), where 92% of the lowest and some 70% of the second lowest income groups live. The higher the level of education, the greater is the likelihood that the respondent works.<sup>4</sup> This is also reflected in the correlation between education and monthly personal income.

Monthly income	No formal education	Primary school	Junior sec. not compl.	Junior sec. compl., senior sec. not compl.	Senior sec. compl.	Vocat. school, college, pre-university	University	Ø
2,000 - 950,000	19	44	43	28	21	7	3	27
1 - 2 million	38	23	17	26	30	33	17	26
2.3 - 4.5 million	19	18	17	22	23	28	21	21
5 - 280 million	24	15	24	24	25	32	59	26

Figures strikingly above average are shown in bold type.

An above-average number of respondents in the lowest income groups are primary-school graduates or have attended junior high. As one would expect, three fifths of university graduates are in the highest income group. Even in Zimbabwe, a university degree or a similar qualification is still a guarantee for a good income.

<sup>3</sup> Compare data on the age structure in urban and rural areas.

<sup>4</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 3 - 11 - 19 - 24 - 32 - 59 - 62.

By province, the distribution of monthly family income is as follows: the lower two income groups are overrepresented in the provinces and the upper three in Harare. Forty percent of the inhabitants of Bulawayo are in the upper income groups.

Zimbabwe is a Christian country: 86% of the respondents are members of a Christian church, seven percent follow traditional beliefs and four percent other religions. Only three percent of respondents state that they do not belong to any church.

Religious affiliation	
African Independent Churches	21
Pentecostal	21
Catholic	20
Protestant (mainstream)	19
Traditional beliefs	7
Seventh Day Adventist	6
Other	4
None	3

By province, the break-down is as follows:

Religious affiliation	Harare	Mashona-land West	Manica-land	Masvingo	Bulawayo	Matabele-land North	Ø
African Independent Churches	14	18	31	35	9	9	21
Pentecostal	25	20	24	15	18	20	21
Catholic	23	23	5	25	23	26	20
Protestant (mainstream)	20	21	20	15	14	17	19
Traditional beliefs	3	5	11	2	9	23	7
Seventh Day Adventist	6	4	5	4	14	2	6
Other	3	4	1	3	10	3	4
None	4	6	3	1	2	0	3

The highest proportion of adherents of the African Independent Churches are found in the rural provinces of Manicaland and Masvingo. Pentecostals, Catholics and mainstream Protestants are overrepresented in the capital and in Mashonaland West and Manicaland, and adherents of traditional beliefs in Matabeleland North and Manicaland. Seventh Day Adventists have a large following in the two major cities, in particular Bulawayo; support for other religions is also above average in these centres. The largest proportion of respondents without any declared religion are found in Harare and Mashonaland West. Whereas interviewees in Harare and Bulawayo who state that they have no religion are probably "real" atheists, those in rural regions could very well adhere to traditional beliefs.<sup>5</sup>

To summarize, the urban-rural divide is as follows:

	Harare	Other towns	Rural areas	Ø
Religious affiliation				
African Independent Churches	15	16	26	21
Pentecostal	26	24	18	21
Catholic	24	19	18	20
Protestant (mainstream)	20	19	18	19
Traditional beliefs	3	7	9	7
Seventh Day Adventist	5	8	5	6
Other	4	6	3	4
None	4	2	3	3

Adherents of African Independent Churches and traditional beliefs are overrepresented in rural areas, whereas Seventh Day Adventists and others are overrepresented in the cities. Harare has a particularly large presence of Pentecostals and Catholics. Women are slightly overrepresented in African Independent Churches and among the Pentecostals.

Church affiliation by level of education attained is as follows:

<sup>5</sup> On missions in Zimbabwe, cf. Bengt Sundkler, Christopher Stead, *A History of the Church in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 445-459; on the history of the Catholic Church, cf. Ian Linden, *The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*, London: Longman Group Limited, 1980.

Highest level of education attained	No formal education	Primary school	Junior sec. not compl.	Junior sec. compl, senior sec. not compl.	Senior sec. compl.	Vocat. school, college, pre-university	University	$\sigma$
Religious affiliation								
African Independent Churches	30	28	29	19	21	6	0	21
Pentecostal	14	20	26	21	24	17	23	21
Catholic	18	15	12	20	19	33	38	20
Protestant (mainstream)	18	19	8	22	17	21	28	19
Traditional beliefs	14	11	8	6	6	7	0	7
Seventh Day Adventist	2	3	8	4	7	9	11	6
Other	3	2	7	4	3	7	0	4
None	2	2	3	5	4	0	0	3

An above-average proportion of respondents with no or little formal education are members of African Independent Churches or hold traditional beliefs. The proportion of Catholic university graduates is almost twice as high as the average. This reflects a deeply rooted educational tradition that goes back to the early Catholic mission stations. Mainstream Protestants, Seventh Day Adventists and Pentecostals are also overrepresented among university graduates.

Zimbabwe has an ethnically mixed population made up of two main groups, the Shona and Ndebele, each of which comprises several sub-groups. The major Shona sub-groups include, among others, the Ndau, Karanga and Zezeru. The Ndebele include, among others, the Tonga, Kalanga and Nguni.<sup>6</sup> The Shona make up 82% of the population and the Ndebele 14%. Whites make up less than one percent of the total population.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The break-down in the sample distinguishes only between Shona, Ndau, Ndebele and Tonga.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. The World Factbook - Zimbabwe, <http://www.jar2.com/2/Intel/Factbook/geos/zi.html>, 28 July 2006.

In the sample, the population break-down is as follows:

Ethnic group	
Shona	71
Ndau	9
Ndebele	8
Tonga	6
Other	6

Of the respondents, 71% are Shona, 9% Ndau, 8% Ndebele and 6% Tonga. Accordingly, the sample reflects almost exactly the country's ethnic break-down: 80% are Shona and 14% Ndebele.

Ethnic affiliation	Harare	Mashona-land West	Manica-land	Masvingo	Bulawayo	Matabele-land North	Ø
Shona	89	91	62	95	33	5	71
Ndau	2	1	34	3	0	0	9
Ndebele	3	2	1	1	59	9	8
Tonga	1	1	0	0	1	60	6
Other	5	6	3	1	7	26	6

The Shona ethnic group is overrepresented in Harare, Mashonaland West and Masvingo, and its Ndau sub-group in rural areas, primarily in Manicaland. To put it another way, 85% of all Ndau interviewed live in Manicaland and 70% of all Ndebele respondents live in Bulawayo; on the other hand, the Tonga sub-group is disproportionately rural: 93% of them live in Matabeleland North.

The following table shows ethnic affiliation in urban and rural areas:

Ethnic affiliation	Harare	Other towns	Rural areas	Ø
Shona	89	59	68	71
Ndau	3	1	14	9
Ndebele	3	31	2	8
Tonga	1	1	10	6
Other	5	8	6	6

Is there a connection between ethnic affiliation and level of education?

Ethnic affiliation	No formal education	Primary school	Junior sec. not compl.	Junior sec. compl., senior sec. not compl.	Senior sec. compl.	Vocat. school, college, pre-university	University	Ø
Shona	53	61	66	80	80	67	66	71
Ndau	17	16	8	7	6	1	2	9
Ndebele	5	7	10	5	7	17	26	8
Tonga	12	11	8	4	2	7	0	6
Other	14	6	8	5	4	8	6	6

Ndebele<sup>8</sup> are heavily overrepresented among university and college graduates, whereas the proportion of Shona among secondary school graduates is above average. The Ndau<sup>9</sup> and the Tonga, and others, are more likely to have no formal or only primary school education. The relationship between ethnic group and income reveal the same trends: the Ndau and Tonga are overrepresented in the lowest income group and the Shona and Ndebele in the highest.

<sup>8</sup> Many Ndebele from the areas on the Zimbabwean side of the border work in South Africa and Botswana. It would be interesting to study whether the potential possibility of working abroad is an incentive for higher education and vice versa, i.e. whether large distances from lucrative jobs - as in the case of the Ndau, most of whom live on the border to Mozambique - could discourage education.

<sup>9</sup> The Ndau have a reputation as an ethnic group that until the 1980s viewed education with suspicion.

## Religion and ethnic affiliation

	Shona	Ndau	Ndebele	Tonga	Other	Ø
Religious affiliation						
African Independent Churches	22	37	12	13	8	21
Pentecostal	21	26	18	18	23	21
Protestant (mainstream)	20	13	16	12	16	19
Catholic	22	0	18	15	24	20
Traditional beliefs	4	18	6	38	8	7
Seventh Day Adventist	5	1	17	2	3	6
Other	3	0	9	2	16	4
None	3	5	4	0	2	3

A disproportionately large number of Ndau belong to African Independent Churches and the Pentecostals. Catholics are slightly overrepresented among the Shona, adherents of traditional beliefs among the Tonga and Seventh Day Adventists among the Ndebele.

These figures encapsulate Zimbabwe's missionary history: Catholic missionaries built missions on their way north from South Africa into regions inhabited primarily by Shona and Ndebele (Harare, Mashonaland West, Masvingo, Bulawayo and Matabeleland North). Few missionaries ventured into the Tonga areas, and consequently an above-average proportion of the inhabitants retained their traditional beliefs. Most of the founders of the African Independent Churches are from Manicaland, which explains the above-average following of these churches among the Ndau.

To summarise: most respondents live in the capital Harare or its suburbs; many of them are college, pre-university or university graduates or students. After Bulawayo, Harare has the second highest proportion of respondents with a job. All occupations besides farmers are represented in this group. The majority of them are adherents of mainstream churches and the Pentecostals. Most of the respondents in Harare are Shona.

Bulawayo has the most college, pre-university and university graduates. Almost half of the respondents here have a job. By religion, the majority are either Catholics Pentecostals or Seventh Day Adventists.

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Mashonaland West is very rural, with only one small group of town-dwellers. Unemployment is well above average. It is also the province with the higher percentage of farmers. By religion, most inhabitants are Catholics, mainstream Protestants, Pentecostals and members of African Independent Churches. Almost all the respondents are Ndebele.

Manicaland is also very rural with a small urban group. Compared to the overall sample, there are more older and fewer young people; the level of education is lower than elsewhere (the second highest proportion of interviewees without any formal education or only primary school) and unemployment is well above average. This province also has the highest proportion of housewives and members of African Independent Churches. Almost all the respondents are Ndau.

Masvingo is rural and one of the poor regions. Older age groups are overrepresented and younger underrepresented. The level of education is generally low (third highest proportion of respondents without any formal education or only primary school) and unemployment is well above average. Most respondents are members of African Independent Churches or Catholics, and the majority are Shona.

Matabeleland North is also rural; there is not one university graduate and unemployment is well above average; most respondents are Catholic or adherents of traditional beliefs and for the most part Tonga.

To summarise by ethnicity: the average Zimbabwean is Shona. The Ndebele are for the most part urban, wealthier and better educated; the Ndau rural, poor and Pentecostals or members of African Independent Churches; and the Tonga are rural, with little formal education or command of English and most still practice their traditional beliefs.

The deepest cleavages appear to be between the two cities on the one hand and the four rural areas on the other, i.e. between rich and poor and between educated and uneducated.

## **Fear of the future, trust, caution and powerlessness: psychosocial attitudes**

People's perceptions of their environment, society and politics depend on more than gender, age, occupation, ethnic group, language, income and religion. Subjective factors also play a role. These include trust in one's social environment, fear or confidence, openness to or fear of change, confidence in one's own potential to change things or sense of powerlessness.

This section will examine a selection of psychosocial factors that have revealed a high degree of stability in other sociocultural studies.<sup>10</sup>

*"When I think of the future, I feel uncertain and afraid."*

75

Three quarters of the respondents answered in the affirmative.

A comparison with surveys in other, similarly crisis-ridden countries shows that the figure for Zimbabwe is exceptionally high.<sup>11</sup> This uncertainty is particularly marked in Matabeleland North (84%) and Masvingo (83%), and somewhat lower in Bulawayo (68%) and Harare (70%). A comparison of town and country confirms this trend: although fear of the future is also relatively strong among the urban population, it is less pronounced than among the rural population. A high level of education appears conducive to a more optimistic view of the future. The higher the level of education completed, the lower respondents' fear of the future is: whereas 54% of university graduates agreed with the statement, the figure rose to 77% among the groups that had either no formal education or had completed only primary school.

There are no significant differences by gender, age, income, religious affiliation and ethnic affiliation, or by employment status. By occupation, however, the results present a differentiated picture. Fear of the future is greatest among street vendors (94%), unskilled manual labourers (81%) and housewives (80%), most of whom have a low level of education and little prospect of economic or social advancement. In the light of the brutal destruction of the informal sector in Harare in May 2005, it is hardly surprising that street vendors and unskilled labourers express such extraordinarily high levels of fear: they live with the ever-present likelihood that their livelihoods will be destroyed again. People who have a secure economic foundation or are relatively independent are less worried: self-employed (53%), students (57%), professionals and teachers (64%) and civil servants and office workers (66%).

*"One must be very cautious with people; you cannot trust the people you live and work with."*

89

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in War-Time Lebanon. Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, London: Tauris, 1993, pp. 459.

<sup>11</sup> In Chad, for instance, a country whose population has lived through 30 years of civil war and now has to bear with a repressive military regime, the comparable figure is only 60%. Cf. Helga Dickow, *Democrats without Democracy? Attitudes and opinions on society, religion and politics in Chad*, Byblos: International Centre for Human Sciences 2005, p. 59.

Eighty-nine percent of the respondents agreed with this statement. Mistrust of one's social and working environment is also unusually high.<sup>12</sup> This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in Matabeleland North (98%) and Bulawayo (96%), and also slightly above average in Harare (91%). Mistrust is somewhat lower in villages (86%) than in the cities (93%). The anonymity of the cities (or the brutal experiences of the past) appears to discourage social trust. Members of the African Independent Churches have the greatest trust in their environment (80%); the values for other religious communities are about average or somewhat above (Pentecostals 94%, traditional believers 95%). By ethnic group, the Tonga and Ndebele have least trust in their environment.

Mistrust of spies and alleged spies or agents was strong during the war of independence; this is still the case, particularly in Matabeleland. It does not take much for people to be suspected of spying and punished. This is one possible explanation for the high level of mistrust among the Tonga and Ndebele. Apparently another is the economic dominance of the Shona in the tourist areas in Matabeleland North, i.e., in the region around the Victoria Falls and Hwange, which is traditionally a Tonga area. Few members of the latter ethnic group benefit from the local tourist trade.

If mistrust is so high in this society, whom do respondents trust most?

*"People feel closer to some people than to others. For each of the following groups, please tell us whether or not you feel close to or trust them."*

The results in descending order of frequency are as follows:

	Trust or closeness
Family	90
People of my religion	76
People of my own ethnic group	62
Friends	61
People with the same living and working conditions	56
People from my village/town/home district	55
Neighbours	54
People from my province	38
All citizens of Zimbabwe	36

<sup>12</sup> In Chad, 74% agreed with this statement; cf. Dickow, op. cit., p. 59.

As in most societies, family members are the people respondents are most likely to trust. Nine in ten interviewees shared this opinion. Three quarters of the respondents also trusted members of their religious community and six in ten members of their own ethnic group and their friends. More than half of the sample also trusted people in a similar environment, whether this took the form of the same living and working conditions, of living in the vicinity, or being neighbours. People have least trust in people from their province (38%) and Zimbabweans in general.

Trust in family members is strongest in Matabeleland North (97%); trust in co-religionists finds its greatest expression in Bulawayo (84%), and is weakest in Harare (69%). Trust in co-religionists correlates directly with age<sup>13</sup> and inversely almost linearly with education.<sup>14</sup> Trust in members of the same religious groups is also slightly above average among the self-employed (88%), retired persons (87%) and housewives (85%), and among the Ndebele (88%). Apart from the low level of trust between people who state that they have no religion (33%), trust in co-religionists is somewhat below average among the Catholics (69%) and those with traditional beliefs (70%). Members of other churches exhibit average or greater-than-average trust in fellow church members.

Trust in members of one's ethnic group is above-average among respondents in Matabeleland North (75%) and marginally above average in Masvingo. In the capital, ethnic affiliation does not appear to be sufficient ground to trust people: only half the respondents in Harare trust members of their own ethnic group. There is a direct correlation between age and trust in people from the same ethnic group. On the other hand, trust in one's ethnic group correlates inversely with level of education.<sup>15</sup> This finding is supported by the results for trust and occupation: teachers and professionals and students exhibit least trust (48% and 46%, respectively), and self-employed persons and retirees the most (76% and 74%, respectively). With respect to trust, ethnicity appears to carry weight only with the Tonga sub-group of the Ndebele (80%).

Social relationships, such as friendship, people with the same social conditions, or living in the same town, village or vicinity or province, appear to play a role in rural areas, in particular in Matabeleland North, and there above all among the Tongas.

Trust in all Zimbabweans, which is already low (only a good third of respondents), is least likely to be found in cities and most common in rural areas, as the following comparison shows: on the one hand Harare (27%) and Bulawayo (31%) and on the other Matabeleland North and Manicaland (44% each). Trust correlates directly with

<sup>13</sup> Agreement from the youngest to the oldest age group: 69 - 77 - 78 - 86.

<sup>14</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 86 - 82 - 81 - 72 - 75 - 68 - 74. Against the trend, there is a slight up-tick in trust in co-religionists among university graduates.

<sup>15</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 77 - 75 - 61 - 56 - 61 - 49 - 54.

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age and inversely with the level of education.<sup>16</sup> Interviewees with a job are less likely to trust their fellow Zimbabweans than unemployed respondents (28% and 39%, respectively).

Older people and those with no or little formal education are more trusting of their fellow citizens than other respondents are. Unsurprisingly, and in contrast to the cities, people in the country - where the population tends on average to be older and less educated - generally feel closer to others.

The correlation between the responses on "trust" is high enough to construct a statistical scale of "trust".<sup>17</sup> The break-down of the responses is as follows:

No trust (0, 1 items)	13
Little trust (2, 3 items)	17
Average trust (4, 5 items)	21
High trust (6, 7 items)	20
Complete trust (8, 9 items)	29

Hence, nearly 30% of the respondents trust others completely and 13% do not trust others at all. Each of the other three categories contains about one fifth of the respondents.

Broken down by variables, those with no or little trust include inhabitants of Harare and Bulawayo, graduates of the two highest education groups, teachers and professionals, students and Shona. Complete trust, on the other hand, is found among respondents in Manicaland, Masvingo and Matabeleland North, women, the oldest age group, people with no formal or only primary school education, farmers, housewives and retired people, and Ndau, Ndebele and Tonga.

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<sup>16</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 52 - 48 - 36 - 33 - 34 - 21 - 22.

<sup>17</sup> Alpha = 0.855.

The break-down by ethnic group is as follows:

	No trust	Little trust	Average trust	High trust	Complete trust
Ethnic affiliation					
Shona	15	17	23	20	25
Ndau	10	14	8	26	41
Ndebele	9	18	21	12	31
Tonga	5	18	17	12	48
Ø	13	17	22	20	29

Shona respondents are overrepresented among those with no trust in their environment, Ndebele and Tonga among those with little trust, and Tonga among those with complete trust. The Ndau stand out for above-average levels of both high and complete trust.

Agreement with or rejection of the following statement is a measure of social conservatism:

*"One should be sure that something really works before taking a chance on it."*

89

Almost nine in ten respondents agreed with the statement. There are no significant differences between men and women in their willingness to take risks, or by education, employment status, income or religion. Interviewees in Matabeleland North are the most conservative in the sample (99%). Willingness to take risks is lowest among the oldest and youngest age groups. Whereas farmers, a group that in other countries is generally conservative, are relatively risk-tolerant in Zimbabwe (68%), students are modestly more cautious than average. By ethnic group, Ndebele (94%), and in particular the Tonga subgroup (98%), are the most conservative, whereas Shona and Ndau are slightly less conservative than average (87% each).

*"If you start to change things, you usually make them worse."*

59

This statement measures conservative resistance and aversion to change. Fifty-eight percent responded in the affirmative. In other words, well over half the respondents fear change. Resistance to change is strongest in Matabeleland North (85%) and Masvingo (70%) and weakest in Harare (47%) - again a reflection of the rural-urban

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divide. Fear of change declines with a rising level of education.<sup>18</sup> Teachers and professionals as a group are generally open to change without reservation (only 29%), while on this question farmers revert to form as custodians of traditional values (73%). Respondents with low incomes tend to be conservative, while those in the highest income group tend to welcome change. By religion and by ethnic group, respectively, disapproval of change is strongest among adherents of the African Independent Churches (69%) and among the Tonga (85%) and Ndaou (67%).

The next statement measures self-perceptions of people's social effectiveness. Do people feel powerless or do they believe that they can influence the fate of their fellow human beings?

*"There is little a person like me can do to improve people's lives."*

73

The response to this statement is astounding: almost three quarters of all respondents have a sense of powerlessness:<sup>19</sup> this feeling is slightly more prevalent among women than men (77% vs. 69%). Here, too, there is a divide between town and country. Respondents in Bulawayo (54%) and Harare (69%) do not feel themselves nearly as powerless as those in the provinces of Masvingo (85%), Manicaland (79%) and Matabeleland North (77%). The lack of social confidence is disproportionately strong among respondents with little or no formal education, while those who have graduated from Senior High School or a higher institution of education are less likely to share this feeling. Only 49% of university graduates feel this way. People with jobs are less likely to feel socially ineffective than the unemployed (63% vs. 77%). This feeling is particularly strong among housewives (80%), retired people (79%), street vendors (78%) and unemployed persons not looking for a job (77%). Teachers and professionals, civil servants and office workers (43% each) and students (58%) do not feel as powerless. The sense of powerlessness correlates inversely with the level of family income, though this trend is far less pronounced in the case of individual income. A sense of social ineffectiveness is strongest among members of the African Independent Churches and adherents of traditional beliefs (80% and 78%, respectively) and weakest among non-believers (47%). By ethnic group, the Tonga and Ndaou have least confidence in their ability to change anything (81% and 84%, respectively), whereas the Ndebele seem to be the most capable of acting: only 61% of them agree with the statement.

*"Even ordinary people can make progress if they help one another."*

94

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<sup>18</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 75 - 69 - 63 - 52 - 62 - 41 - 41.

<sup>19</sup> By comparison, in Chad 45% of the respondents agreed with this statement; cf. Dickow, op. cit., p. 63.

The high level of agreement with this statement - 94% - demonstrates that the sense of solidarity is alive among ordinary people: they are convinced that by working together they can change their situation.

For this statement, there are no significant distinctions by social characteristics.

To summarise: Zimbabwean respondents reveal extremely pessimistic psycho-social sensitivities. Three quarters are afraid of the future, almost 90% are extremely cautious and almost two thirds fear change. Trust in others is limited to a close circle of kin and co-religionists. Almost half of the respondents feel powerless and do not believe that they can do much to bring about change. A low level of education and a sense of powerlessness go hand in hand. The feeling of powerlessness is significantly stronger in rural areas than in the cities.

One positive sign is the sense of solidarity among ordinary people. This contrasts with the weak bonds between Zimbabweans in general, in particular among the young generation, which is indicative of the absence of any nation-building. Whereas on the one hand the Ndebele have the lowest level of trust in their environment, on the other they appear to feel less powerless than other groups.

## Social and economic perceptions

As shown above, Zimbabwe is in the throes of an unprecedented economic collapse. Once the breadbasket of Africa and an example of successful development, it is now a basket case. Starvation, hyperinflation and mass unemployment, and for many people sheer survival, are now part of everyday life. How do the citizens of this country rate their chances of economic success and social advancement?

*"In your opinion, which of the following factors is the most important one for achieving success in life?"*

The responses in descending order of frequency are as follows:

Working hard for yourself	55
Education	19
Working with others and standing together as a group	12
Religious beliefs	5
Connections	3
Experience	3
Good luck, fortune, tricks, inheritance	2
What your parents taught you	1

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The perception of success factors breaks down as follows: more than half of all respondents think hard work is the crucial factor for success in life, and just short of one fifth choose education. Together with team work (12%), experience (3%) and what people learnt from their parents (1%), nine out of ten respondents regard their own efforts, experience and learning as decisive for success in life. Luck, fortune, tricks, inheritance, religious beliefs and connections find little support. At first glance it may seem surprising that only three percent of the respondents regard experience as a factor for success in life. But this should be seen against the background of extremely high unemployment; what does all the experience in the world help if it is impossible to find work? This is another expression of the overpowering sense of powerlessness discussed in the previous chapter.

People who regard hard work as the "key to success" are slightly overrepresented in Manicaland and Harare, among primary-school graduates, the self-employed and farmers, and among non-believers and members of the African Independent Churches. They are underrepresented among the Ndebele (35%). Trust in hard work appears to be a phenomenon of "small and poor people". By contrast, the Ndebele do not think that hard work will help them advance; is this view coloured by negative experiences? After all, the Ndebele are the ethnic group with the highest level of education. Yet, they are overrepresented among those that believe that connections are necessary for success. Does this refer to connections that are closed to them, or to connections that they have used?

As one would expect, the view that education is the main factor for success in life is most widespread in the capital, but also in Matabeleland North, among graduates of tertiary educational institutions, i.e., among teachers, professionals and students. Self-employed persons and farmers, non-believers and the Ndau - all respondents that lack higher education - place little hope in education.

Teamwork is mentioned most frequently in Bulawayo and Matabeleland North, among respondents without any formal schooling, among civil servants, office workers and the self-employed, among adherents of traditional beliefs and among the Ndebele. This factor finds little support among interviewees in the capital and Protestants; support is also slightly below average among the Shona.

Religious beliefs are favoured by respondents without any formal education, unskilled manual workers, housewives, and Seventh Day Adventists.

Support for connections is above-average in Bulawayo and slightly above average in Matabeleland North and among university graduates, and therefore teachers, professionals and students, but also among semi-skilled manual workers and, as mentioned above, among the Ndebele. The group that has had the greatest opportunity to gather experience in life, the retirees, is also overrepresented among those that favour this factor. Those that choose luck are found most frequently among the adherents of the traditional beliefs and among the Tonga.

The following question measures preferences for investment and consumption:

*"Imagine that you are lucky enough to win a lot of money in the lottery. What are you most likely to do with it?"*

<i>Start a business</i>	60
<i>Improve my house and my furniture</i>	21
<i>Put it in a bank to earn a good income</i>	11
<i>Enjoy spending the money on myself or on my family</i>	8

Six of ten respondents would invest their lottery winnings in a business start-up, two in ten would improve their house and living conditions, one in ten would put the money in a bank as an investment and only eight percent would spend it on immediate pleasure. Despite the disastrous economic situation, the majority of interviewees would still give precedence to their own business. It is not surprising that trust in banks is relatively low, given the current hyperinflation.

The preference for a business investment is well above average in Matabeleland North, and also strong among respondents in the lower two age groups (i.e. up to 34 years of age), those who have completed senior secondary school, university graduates, the employed, farmers and the Tonga.

Those most likely to improve their housing and living conditions include the 50<sup>+</sup> group, respondents without any formal education, street vendors and retired persons, and the Ndau. Basically, these are poorer groups whose houses are in need of urgent repair - even though income and other social variables are insignificant on this point.

People most likely to trust banks are overrepresented among those with no formal education and unskilled manual workers. By contrast, respondents in Matabeleland North, farmers and the Tonga have little trust in banks. No small traders, i.e., the self-employed and street vendors, would consider a bank investment. This is explained by the fact that some, on account of their negligible income, will have little or no experience of banking, while others, e.g. farmers, will have had their credit applications rejected or difficulties with repaying loans.

People who favour consumption, i.e., would spend their money on their family or themselves, tend to be 50<sup>+</sup>, street vendors and farmers, and also, to a limited extent, students.

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*"What kind of work would you prefer:*

*A job with an organisation or firm with an average,  
but regular salary?*

26

*or:*

*Your own business where you can make a lot,  
but also lose a lot?"*

74

One quarter of the respondents opted for a secure job with a regular income and the other three quarters for the risk associated with running their own business. This confirms the results of other surveys: a wide margin in favour of the second option is usually symptomatic of economic crisis.<sup>20</sup> If the odds of losing are already very high, people often put all their eggs in one basket in the hope that if they win, they will make a killing.

A secure job and income is the preference of an above-average proportion of unskilled manual labourers, unemployed persons looking for work, students and farmers, i.e., people who do not share this status.

Risk-tolerance is above average in Bulawayo, among the 50+ group,<sup>21</sup> which is unusual, graduates of the highest and lowest levels of education, the highest personal-income group and among the Ndebele

How satisfied are respondents with their jobs and working situation? The answers to the following questions provide information on this:

Agreement

*"It doesn't matter what workers and/or employees do, they can  
never win again the bosses."*

73

*"If I could, I would change to another kind of work."*

68

*"Of course people always like to earn more, but I consider my  
income to be reasonable"*

36

The feeling of powerlessness highlighted in the previous chapter is once again apparent in the responses to these questions: almost three quarters of the interviewees do not think that they can do anything about bosses; almost as many, a good

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in War-Time Lebanon. Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, London: Tauris, 1993, pp. 466. In Chad, 49 percent chose the first option, and only 51 percent the second. Cf. Dickow, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>21</sup> Risk-tolerance correlates directly with age: 64 - 76 - 79 - 81; only the youngest age group is below average.

two thirds, would like to change their job, and one a good third is satisfied with their income.

The proportion of those who feel they are powerless in dealing with employers is above average in Matabeleland North and Bulawayo and among the Tonga; people in Harare are less likely to share this view.

Respondents in Harare, men, the two lower age groups, people with a job, unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers, street vendors and people looking for a job are overrepresented among those who want some other kind of work.

Income satisfaction is above average in Manicaland and Masvingo, among senior-secondary school graduates, the self-employed, street vendors and farmers, i.e., among those working for themselves. Least satisfied are respondents in Bulawayo and Matabeleland North - with the exception of senior-secondary graduates - all university graduates, unskilled manual labourer and civil servants and office workers as well as the Ndebele and their Tonga sub-group.

*"No matter how much I try, I will not get the education and jobs I am entitled to."*

68

Almost seven in ten respondents fear that they will never get the education or job they deserve. Worries about personal prospects and general dissatisfaction is most pronounced among respondents in Matabeleland North, the 25-34 age group, those who have not completed junior secondary school, skilled labourers and traders, and the Tonga. University graduates, teachers and professionals, students and the self-employed appear to be least dissatisfied; obviously they do not feel themselves disadvantaged.

Agreement

*"I am afraid that our children might not enjoy as high a standard of living as we have."*

81

*"Young men and women of a family like mine have a reasonably good chance of reaching their goals in life."*

59

Eight in ten respondents fear that their children will have a lower standard of living. At the same time, almost six in ten believe that young people from families similar to the respondent's will achieve their goals in life.

Concern about their children's future is particularly strong in Matabeleland North, Masvingo and Bulawayo, among the 50+ group and among the Tonga.

But they appear not to have abandoned hope completely: the hope that young people from a similar social environment as the respondent's will achieve their goals is most pronounced among interviewees in Matabeleland North, among the 50<sup>+</sup> group, those without any formal schooling and primary-school graduates and the Tonga. Respondents in Harare are more pessimistic on this score.

The next question measures social envy.

*"When I see what rich have, I feel that I should have the same."*

72

Seventy-two percent of the respondents agree with this statement;<sup>22</sup> agreement is above average in Manicaland and Masvingo, among the unemployed looking for a job, unskilled manual labourers and street vendors, the lowest income group, the economically disadvantaged and the Ndau. Social envy is well below average among respondents in the two cities and in Mashonaland West, those with a job, teachers and professionals, civil servants and office workers, the upper income groups and the Ndebele. All in all, the replies appear to reflect poorer respondents' envy of the better-off.

*"When you think about your progress in life, in your work and home, with whom do you compare yourself most often?"*

<i>Nobody</i>	36
<i>My neighbours</i>	22
<i>People of other ethnic groups in my country</i>	13
<i>My school mates</i>	11
<i>Whites (Blacks) in Zimbabwe</i>	7
<i>Rich businessmen</i>	4
<i>People in South Africa</i>	4
<i>Westerners</i>	3
<i>People like myself ten years ago</i>	2

More than one third of the respondents did not compare themselves with anybody else<sup>23</sup> and a good fifth with their neighbours and a good tenth with other ethnic groups in Zimbabwe or with school mates. Seven percent compared themselves with whites or blacks in Zimbabwe, four percent each with rich businessmen or South African,

<sup>22</sup> As a comparison: in Chad 56 percent agreed; cf. Dickow, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>23</sup> Respondents that do not compare themselves with anybody are overrepresented in Bulawayo and Harare, in Matabeleland North, among women and the Tonga and Ndebele. In some cases the explanation is probably self-confidence, in others ignorance.

three percent with westerners and two percent with people like themselves ten years ago.

People who compare themselves with their neighbours are overrepresented in Mashonaland West and Manicaland, among primary-school graduates, farmers, self-employed persons and semi-skilled manual labourers, and the Ndau, and under-represented among respondents in Bulawayo, the better educated, students, skilled manual workers and traders, teachers and professionals, Ndebele and Tonga. In contrast to the latter, the former are generally people who are still rooted in their social milieu and are or choose to be less socially mobile.

Comparisons with other ethnic groups is disproportionately popular in Matabeleland North and among respondents without any formal education, somewhat below average among students, Tonga and Ndebele, and least common in Harare, among vocational school, college and pre-university graduates, teachers and professionals, other white-collar workers as well as street vendors. The Shona are also underrepresented in this segment. Such comparisons correlate inversely with education and income. A notable number of Ndebele compare themselves with other ethnic groups.

Men are disproportionately likely to compare themselves with school mates, as are vocational school, college, pre-university and university graduates and students as well as unskilled labourers. This practice is less common among the Ndebele and finds no support at all among the Tonga and, hence, in Matabeleland North.

The only significant point in the residual categories is that university graduates and teachers and professionals compare themselves disproportionately often with westerners.

Labour migration is plays a considerable economic role in Zimbabwe. How do the respondents feel about this?

*"It would be good if I or a member of my family could get a job in*

*Another other country      44*

*South Africa                32*

*It would not be good"      25*

A good three quarters of the respondents approve of labour migration, and one third explicitly favour South Africa as a destination. Only one quarter disapprove of it.

Those in favour of migration are overrepresented among respondents in Bulawayo. An above-average proportion of the 50+ group disapproves. Unskilled and semi-skilled manual labourers and street vendors are also heavily in favour of migration to South Africa, as are almost half of the Ndebele. These groups frequently find work there as

street vendors or domestics. Unemployed people not looking for job are resigned to their situation and generally disapprove of migration, as do the Ndau.

How do people perceive the development of their personal economic situation?

*"As regards your life conditions, are you better or worse off today than ten years ago?"*

*and*

*"Comparing your present situation to your life conditions one year ago? Are you ...*

	Ten years ago	One year ago
Worse	83	83
Better	10	5
About the same	6	12

In each case, 83 percent of the respondents stated that they were worse off than ten years ago and one year ago. Those in worse living conditions are overrepresented among the less educated, older people, street vendors, unskilled manual labourers and the Ndau. Ten percent of the respondents are better off than they were ten years ago, but only five percent better off than one year ago. This group is overrepresented among respondents in Bulawayo, semi-skilled manual labourers and students. Six percent and 12 percent, respectively, feel that their situation is more or less unchanged. This group is found most often in graduates of the two highest educational levels, farmers, members of the highest income group and the Ndebele.

To summarise: older and poorer people see no improvement in their standard of living, while students in particular feel they are better off. Is the latter an instance of youthful optimism, or do they really recall the situation in their childhood?

How do respondents perceive social changes that have taken place in the past ten years?

*"In the last 10 years, has the gap between poor and rich in this country*

<i>increased</i>	86
<i>decreased</i>	9
<i>remained the same?"</i>	5

Eight-six percent of the respondents are of the opinion that social inequality has increased, in particular in Matabeleland North, Harare, Mashonaland West, among graduates at the two highest educational levels and among almost all the Tonga. One in ten thinks that social inequality has decreased. These respondents are found disproportionately often in Bulawayo, Masvingo, Manicaland and among the Ndaus; there are none among the Tonga. Respondents in Manicaland and among the Ndaus are overrepresented among the five percent who think that social inequality is more or less unchanged.

*Here are two descriptions of social differences in this country.  
With which one do you agree?*

*A small minority has most of the wealth  
at the expense of the majority of poor people.* 74

*or:*

*A majority of people are at a middle level, with  
fewer people who are rich or poor.* 26

Three quarters of the respondents agreed with the first statement and one quarter with the second. Agreement with the first option is greatest where income differences are crassest, i.e. in Harare, but also in Mashonaland West. Agreement is disproportionately high among 35-49-year-olds, university graduates, semi-skilled manual labourers and self-employed and retired persons. The second statement finds above-average agreement in Matabeleland North and Bulawayo, among the youngest age group, senior-secondary school graduates, farmers, unskilled manual labourers and unemployed persons not looking for a job and among the Tonga and Ndebele.

As we shall see below, more than three fifths of the respondents regard themselves as lower class and another one fifth as lower middle class. Hence, it is not surprising that only one fifth of the interviewees feel that Zimbabwe is a middle-class society.

How do economic and ethnic markers compare?

*"What is more important to you: personal wealth or your group?"*

<i>Wealth</i>	51
<i>Group</i>	49

The sample split down the middle, half favouring personal wealth and half favouring their ethnic group.

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Support for the ethnic group is above average in Matabeleland North, Bulawayo and Masvingo, among respondents without any formal schooling and primary-school graduates, retirees, semi-skilled manual labourers and unemployed persons not looking for a job, Tonga, Ndebele and, to a certain degree, even among the Ndau.

Interviewees with a job, those in a higher income group, white collar workers, unskilled manual labourers (76%) and Shona opted disproportionately for wealth.

How do respondents perceive their own social stratum?

*"Some people say that there are different levels in society which others call classes. Here we are thinking of economic levels and not of groups with different language/ethnic groups. What level in society are you closest to:*

<i>Upper class, upper middle class</i>	3
<i>Middle class</i>	15
<i>Lower middle class</i>	20
<i>Lower class?"</i>	62

In most societies the majority of respondents define themselves as middle class, and a smaller group as upper class. In Zimbabwe, more than 60 percent define themselves as lower class,<sup>24</sup> 20 percent as lower middle class, only 15 percent as middle class and just three percent as upper middle class or upper class. This is another indication of the economic decline experienced by the country in recent years.

Those that categorise themselves as upper class or upper middle class are disproportionately common among respondents in Harare and Bulawayo (6% each), extremely common among university graduates (15%), students and teachers and professionals (7% each) and the highest income group, in terms of both personal and household income.

The perception of belonging to the middle class is shared by an above-average number of respondents in Harare (31%) and Bulawayo (28%), the youngest age group (21%), people with a job, i.e., teachers and professionals (44%), the self-employed (41%), skilled traders (31%) and students (25%) and the highest income group by both personal and household income, and to a lesser degree the Pentecostals (21%) and Ndebele (22%). This perception correlates directly with education.<sup>25</sup> This is genuinely a group of people with middle-class values.

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. the question on social differences in this country: 74 percent agreed that "A small minority has most of the wealth at the expense of the majority of poor people".

<sup>25</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 0 - 5 - 8 - 15 - 22 - 31 - 38.

Perceptions of belonging to the lower middle class are overrepresented among respondents in Bulawayo (39%) and Mashonaland West (30%), graduates of the two highest educational levels, people with a job, teachers and professionals (35%), street vendors (33%), civil servants and office workers (32%) and students (29%), the highest income group, Seventh Day Adventists (31%) and the Ndebele (36%) - respondents who, as already mentioned, normally tend to think of themselves as middle-class. This raises the question of whether the poor really are poor.

Those who perceive themselves as lower class are overrepresented among respondents in Manicaland (86%), Masvingo (83%) and Matabeleland North (82%), the 50+ group (74%), unemployed persons not looking for a job (76%), unemployed persons looking for a job (72%) and housewives (73%), the lower income groups, members of the African Independent Churches and adherents of traditional beliefs and Tonga (90%) and Ndau (87%). Agreement correlates inversely with the level of education.<sup>26</sup>

The members of the Zimbabwean sample are clearly able to realistically assess their living standards.

In this connection we looked at the question of what social policy respondents would prefer:

*"What kind of government would you prefer?"*

*A government which tries to make all people as equal as possible in wages, housing and education, even if incomes are heavily taxed.*

77

*or:*

*A government which allows people who are clever and work hard to become wealthier than others, even if some remain permanently poor."*

23

Seventy-seven percent of respondents would prefer a government that pursues social equality for all and 23 percent think people who work hard should be paid accordingly.

Socialist principles seem to strike a chord. In Masvingo in particular support for a one-party state is strong (86%), whereas respondents in Matabeleland North prefer payment for performance (38%), as do the Tonga (33%). The effect of all other social variables was insignificant.

<sup>26</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 97 - 78 - 74 - 59 - 60 - 28 - 11.

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To summarise:

It is clear a cleavage runs through Zimbabwean society between rich and poor. Poor, less educated, older, rural respondents feel more powerless, are more risk-averse, have great fear of the future for themselves and their children, perceive the deterioration in their living standards and realistically regard themselves as lower-class.

The Ndebele are a special case: although they are economically better off and have a better image of themselves, as far as risk is concerned they appear to be guided more often by despair than reason. They tend to be more dissatisfied than others with their income, and also less envious.

## Religion, ethnicity and identity

The two preceding chapters dealt with social and economic factors. In this section we shall examine differences in respect of religion and identity more closely. Zimbabwe is a secular state; there is no discrimination, persecution or proscription on the basis of religious affiliation.<sup>27</sup>

The first group of statements investigates respondents' religiousness.

	Agreement
<i>"Whatever people say, there are hidden forces of good and evil which may help or harm me."</i>	91
<i>"There are many ways of conducting a religious life."</i>	90
<i>"I try hard to live my daily life according to the teachings of my religion."</i>	89
<i>"I believe in a better life after death, where good people will be rewarded and bad people will be punished."</i>	86
<i>"I believe in some form of existence after death."</i>	85
<i>"I am convinced that my religion is the only true one."</i>	39
<i>"I can be happy and enjoy life without believing in God."</i>	26

Nine in ten respondents, regardless of their origins, age, religious affiliation, occupation and education, believe in the existence of supernatural powers of good and

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Stefan Mair, Masipula Sithole, *Blocked Democracies in Africa, Case Study Zimbabwe*, Harare: Konrad Adenauer Foundation 2002, p. 2.

evil, including witchcraft. The Shona (89%) are slightly underrepresented and the Ndaou and Ndebele (95 percent each) slightly overrepresented; hardly any Tonga (98%) disagree. In short: the belief in supernatural powers is surprisingly high. About the same proportion of interviewees, regardless of social background, accept that there are many ways of expressing religious preferences.

Almost as many respondents try to live according to the teachings of their religion. Agreement with this statement is greatest in Matabeleland North (99%), Bulawayo (95%) and Masvingo (93%) and lowest in Harare (81%). Women make a greater effort than men to live their lives in accordance with their belief. This attitude is shared by all farmers, most street vendors, housewives and unemployed persons not looking for a job. Unskilled and semi-skilled manual labourers are underrepresented (77 percent and 74%, respectively). Education, income and ethnic affiliation do not significantly influence responses to this statement. Even among non-believers, 54 percent expressed agreement, as did 84 percent of those with traditional beliefs; among all other groups support was above average.

Support for the ideas of life after death and justice after death is pretty even: 85 percent believe in both, irrespective of social background.

Just fewer than 40 percent of the respondents are convinced that their religion is the only true one.<sup>28</sup> This conviction is stronger in Matabeleland North and Bulawayo (both over 50%), among the 50+ (49%) - but not among the 35-49-year-olds (32%) -, among vocational training, college and pre-university graduates (56%), retirees (56%), students (49%) and semi-skilled manual labourers (47%). Agreement is below average among farmers and the self-employed (29 percent each). Agreement among adherents of traditional beliefs is disproportionately high (49%). Tonga (61%) and Ndebele (50%) are most convinced that their religion is the only true religion.

A good quarter of the sample can imagine a happy life *without* God.<sup>29</sup> Such a life is least conceivable for respondents in Bulawayo (7%) and Matabeleland North (14%), for Penetcostals (17%), Ndebele (6%) and Tonga (18%). Forty-seven percent of adherents of traditional beliefs and only 70 percent of non-believers answer the question in the affirmative. In other words, as many as 53 percent of those that attribute greatest significance to other beings and forces and 30 percent of those who do not believe in God cannot imagine a happy life without God.

To summarise: the vast majority of Zimbabweans are very religious. At the same time, compared with the results of similar studies in other African countries,<sup>30</sup> a far

<sup>28</sup> By comparison: in Kosovo 78 percent agreed with this statement. Theodor Hanf, *Attitudes on Society, Religion and Politics in Kosovo. An Empirical Survey*, Byblos: Centre International des Sciences de l'Homme, 2005, p. 24.

<sup>29</sup> In Chad 13 percent agreed with the statement, cf. Dickow, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>30</sup> Admittedly, in other countries results are influenced by relations between Christianity and Islam.

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greater percentage can imagine a happy life without God and the country exhibits a remarkable degree of religious tolerance.

The responses to the following statement confirm the level of religious tolerance:

*"No matter what people's religious beliefs are, the most important thing is that everybody leads an honest life and is a good human being."*

97

Ninety-seven percent of the respondents agreed, without significant differences by social variable.

People *are* religious; but do they also practise their religion?

Religious practice is reflected in the exercise of religious rituals: the social profile of people who regularly pray broadly resembles that of those who regularly practise religious rituals.

	<i>"How often do you pray?"</i>	<i>"Do you practise religious rituals (attend services, fast)?"</i>
<i>Regularly or often</i>	74	67
<i>Sometimes or never</i>	26	33

Almost three quarters of all respondents regularly or often pray and a good quarter sometimes or never. Two thirds regularly or often attend religious rituals and one third sometimes or never.

Of the respondents that regularly or often pray, 83 percent regularly or often practise religious rituals, and vice versa: of those that never or sometimes pray, 77 percent never or sometimes practice religious rituals.

Interviewees that regularly or often pray or practise religious rituals are over-represented in Masvingo (85 percent and 82%, respectively) and Manicaland (81% and 77%), among women (85% and 77%), housewives (89% and 86%) and adherents of the African Independent Churches (90% and 86%) and the Pentecostals (82% and 72%).<sup>31</sup>

Respondents that never or sometimes pray are overrepresented in Matabeleland North (40%) and Mashonaland West (31%), among men (36%), unskilled (50%) and

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<sup>31</sup> Street vendors (83%) and Protestants (81%) are overrepresented only among those that regularly or often pray.

semi-skilled manual labourers (47%), retired persons (37%),<sup>32</sup> unemployed persons looking for work (33%), students (32%), skilled manual workers and traders (31%), non-believers (93%), adherents of traditional beliefs (89%) and Tonga (48%), Ndaou and Ndebele (31% each).

Respondents in Matabeleland North (44%), Bulawayo (48%), Harare (39%), among men (43%), the youngest age group (43%), the self-employed (47%), people currently working (43%), unemployed persons looking for work (42%), farmers (41%), students (39%), every non-believer in the sample (100%), adherents of traditional beliefs (58%) and Seventh Day Adventists (46%) never or sometimes practise religious rituals.

The group that regularly prays is largely identical with that which regularly practises religious rituals: inhabitants of the two rural provinces of Masvingo and Manicaland, women and adherents of the African Independent Churches. Adherents of traditional beliefs appear to be less religious, possibly because their understanding of what constitutes cult expression and practice differs from that of the Christian churches. This may explain the figures for the Tonga, a disproportionate percentage of whom, as established in the first chapter, practise traditional beliefs. There is no significant correlation between religiousness and education. Those that do not attend church are overrepresented among the young and inhabitants of the cities and Matabeleland North. One notable result is that older people who do not pray much still often go to church. For them church appears to be a social event.

How do respondents think the living conditions of their group compare with those of others?

*"Unfortunately, people of my group live in less favourable conditions than others."*

85

Eighty-five percent of all respondents agreed with this statement, in particular in Mashonaland West (95%), Matabeleland North (94%) and Bulawayo (93%). Agreement is also above-average among those that work - not one exception among unskilled and semi-skilled manual labourers (100% each) -, teachers and professionals (93%) and farmers (91%). Ndebele are also overrepresented (98%).

How much solidarity is there between the different ethno-linguistic and religious groups?

<sup>32</sup> Age is insignificant variable for this statement. Yet, it is surprising that older people do not pray regularly, as is the case in other countries. On the other hand, in Zimbabwe they (74%) and retirees (71%) are slightly overrepresented among those that regularly or often practice religious rituals.

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	Agreement
<i>"I feel very close to people of my own ethnic group, whatever their education, wealth or political views."</i>	88
<i>"I would be quite happy if a son or daughter of mine married someone from a different ethnic group if they loved each other."</i>	87
<i>"I prefer to be with people who speak my own language."</i>	43
<i>"I feel very close to people of my own religion, whatever their education, wealth or political views."</i>	94
<i>"I would not mind if a child of mine married someone from a different religion provided they love each other. I would not mind even if it is my daughter."</i>	84

Eighty-eight percent feel close to members of their own ethnic group, but only half as many feel solidarity with people who speak the same language. Eighty-seven percent have no objection to a son or daughter of theirs marrying someone from another ethnic group. These figures indicate a considerable measure of ethnic harmony.

People who feel close to their own ethnic group are overrepresented in Masvingo (96%) and Manicaland (92%), among the less educated<sup>33</sup> and among people who do not work, in particular retired persons (94%). Agreement to mixed marriages across ethnic divides is particularly strong in Matabeleland North (96%), Manicaland and Masvingo (94% each), and much lower in Bulawayo (79%) and Mashonaland West (77%) and among the Ndebele (80%).

Respondents in Manicaland (73%) and Masvingo (58%), the 50+ group (54%), people without any formal schooling (68%) and primary-school graduates (55%), unemployed persons not looking for work (56%) and retirees (52%), members of the African Independent Churches (53%) and, in particular, the Ndau (76%) prefer to be with people who speak the same language. Language plays less of a role among city-dwellers and the Ndebele, although they have greater reservations about mixed marriages and are overrepresented those that feel that members of their group are disadvantaged.

Overall, solidarity with people of the same religion is six percent stronger than solidarity with the same ethnic group. Moreover, tolerance of inter-religious mixed marriages between Christians is somewhat lower than tolerance of inter-ethnic mixed

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<sup>33</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 98 - 92 - 92 - 87 - 87 - 79 - 77.

marriages. That said, the acceptance of inter-religious mixed marriages is very high.<sup>34</sup> Respondents with a lower level of education express greater solidarity with co-religionists.<sup>35</sup> Marriage across the religious divide finds above-average acceptance in Manicaland (93%), Matabeleland North (92%) and Masvingo (91%), i.e., in rural areas, among people without any formal education (95%) and among the Ndau (94%).

In particular people in rural areas and respondents with little education appear to have few problems with inter-religious and inter-ethnic mixed marriages.

What roles do religion and ethnicity, among other factors, play in people's cultural identity? The following item has proved useful in exploring people's views of themselves:

*"In any society each person belongs to a number of social groups at the same time. You are either a man or a woman; you have a job; you speak a language; you are (or are not) a member of a religious group, a community and a nationality; you live in a village, town or city; you have political views - and for each person each of these distinctions has a different significance.*

*If somebody asks you what you are, how would you describe yourself?"*

The responses in descending order of first choice are as follows:

	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice
Personal attributes*	28	29	24
Religion	26	19	11
Family role	16	13	9
Occupation	14	13	11
Zimbabwean	7	11	9
Ethnicity	6	6	6
Political adjective	2	3	3
Other	2	2	1
No other	-	4	27

Personal attributes include information such as name, "father/mother of ...", "wife of ...", "human being", characteristics, etc.

<sup>34</sup> By comparison: agreement in Lebanon in 1987 was 40%. Hanf (1993), p. 486. In general, greater importance is attached to this question in societies with different religious communities.

<sup>35</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 100 - 97 - 96 - 94 - 91 - 89 - 87.

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At first sight, the composition is striking: in first, second, third and fourth places Zimbabweans choose personal markers to describe themselves, whether they are personal attributes or religion, family or occupation. In the fifth place they regard themselves as Zimbabweans and only after that as members of an ethnic group. Political attributes play virtually no role at all. Equally striking is the fact that the order of first, second and third preferences is virtually the same.

Formulating the question about identity as a multiple choice question changes the result somewhat, but confirms the underlying trend:

Personal	27
Religion	19
Family role	13
Occupation	13
Zimbabwean	9
Ethnicity	6
Political adjective	2
Other	2

Twenty-seven percent define themselves in terms of personal attributes, 19 percent through religion and somewhat fewer than 13 percent by their family role or work. Nine percent describe themselves as Zimbabweans, six percent by ethnic affiliation and just two percent in political terms.

Zimbabweans appear to have withdrawn en masse into private life. Neither ethnicity nor politics plays an important role in respondents' self-perceptions.

How do respondents' first choices break down by social variable?

Respondents who define themselves in terms of personal attributes are overrepresented in Harare (40%) and Mashonaland West (38%), among men (31%), unskilled manual labourers (40%) and skilled labourers (39%), semi-skilled manual labourers and students (35% each), non-believers (38%) and adherents of traditional beliefs. Those who define themselves by religion are found disproportionately in Masvingo (25%) and among women (23%), housewives (25%) and Pentecostals.

The role of the family is relatively important in Bulawayo (17%) and, as one might expect, among women (16%) and housewives (25%).

Occupation as an identity marker is disproportionately common in Bulawayo (24%) among men (16%), graduates of the two highest levels of education (26% and 33%, respectively), people with a job (21%), teachers and professionals, (33%), farmers (29%), civil servants and office workers (25%) and students (22%), and among Seventh Day Adventists (18%) and Ndebele (17%).

Those who define themselves as Zimbabweans are overrepresented in Matabeleland North (16%) and among people without any formal schooling (15%) and Tonga (17%).

Ethnic identity is emphasised disproportionately often by respondents in Matabeleland North (19%), those without formal schooling (10%), adherents of traditional beliefs (10%) and Tonga (24%).

Correlating the first, second and third choices, we obtain the following picture of identity patterns:

1st place	2nd place	3rd place
Personal (28%)	47% Personal 23% Religion 8% Occupation 7% Family role 4% Zimbabwean 3% Ethnicity 3% Other 3% No other	33% Personal 24% No other 13% Religion 9% Family role 9% Occupation 6% Zimbabwean 4% Ethnicity 1% Other
Religion (26%)	27% Personal 22% Family role 17% Zimbabwean 14% Occupation 9% Ethnicity 6% Other 5% No other	33% No other 33% Personal 11% Zimbabwean 11% Family role 10% Occupation 6% Ethnicity 6% Other
Family Role (16%)	35% Religion 19% Personal 15% Occupation 9% Zimbabwean 8% Family role 5% Ethnicity 5% No other 4% Other	29% No other 21% Personal 16% Religion 15% Zimbabwean 11% Occupation 5% Ethnicity 3% Other

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*continued*

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1st place	2nd place	3rd place
Occupation (14%)	25% Personal 24% Religion 19% Occupation 15% Family role 8% Zimbabwean 4% Other 3% No other 2% Ethnicity	22% No other 19% Personal 18% Religion 17% Occupation 14% Family role 6% Zimbabwean 4% Ethnicity 1% Other
Zimbabwean (7%)	38% Religion 27% Ethnicity 13% Personal 7% Occupation 7% Other 4% Family role 4% No other	21% Personal 17% Ethnicity 16% No other 13% Religion 11% Occupation 11% Family role 11% Other
Ethnicity (6%)	39% Zimbabwean 18% Family role 14% Personal 11% Religion 7% Occupation 5% Ethnicity 3% Other 3% No other	32% No other 19% Religion 12% Personal 12% Zimbabwean 11% Family role 7% Occupation 7% Other

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Respondents who define themselves first by personal attributes also have personal attributes as their second and third choices, followed by religion and family role, respectively (i.e. excluding no other).

Among interviewees who define themselves primarily by religion, personal attributes is the most popular second choice, followed by family role, Zimbabwean and occupation. In third place no other is given precedence, followed by personal, Zimbabwean and family role.

If family role is the primary identity marker, religion is the second choice of preference, followed by personal attributes and occupation, and no other the preferred third choice, followed by personal attributes, religion and Zimbabwean.

If occupation is the first choice for identification, the second-choice ranking is personal attributes, religion, occupation and family role, and the third-choice ranking no other, personal attributes, religion and occupation.

Seven percent of respondents define themselves first as Zimbabweans. Their choice for second place is religion, followed by ethnicity and personal attributes, and for third place personal attributes, followed by ethnicity, no other and religion.

The six percent that choose ethnicity in first place choose Zimbabwean, family role, personal attributes and religion in second place, and no other, religion, personal attributes and Zimbabwean in third place.

To summarise: the Zimbabwean sample defines itself predominantly in terms of personal attributes, as amply attested by the first group of three choices, but also in terms of religion, family and occupation. Identification as Zimbabwean or by ethnic group is far less frequent. Zimbabweans appear to have withdrawn into private life.

As seen above, Zimbabweans are very religious and tolerant, regardless of confession. To what extent does Zimbabweans' religiousness influence their political views?

	Agreement
<i>"Religion is a matter between God and the individual. The country is for everybody."</i>	96
<i>"Obviously there are differences between religious groups in this country, but they should be kept out of politics."</i>	88
<i>"Religious leaders should stay clear of politics."</i>	74
<i>"Faith and religious values must determine all aspects of society and state."</i>	80
<i>"A government which makes laws to make sure that people live according to the rules of religion."</i>	10
or:	
<i>"A government which believes that there should be no compulsion in matters of religion and which leaves religion to the believers' conscience."</i>	90

Ninety-six percent of the sample regards religion as a private matter between God and the individual. Although nine in ten want to keep religious differences out of politics, only three quarters are against religious leaders in politics. At the same time, eight in ten respondents share the opinion that society and the state should be rooted in religious values. However, only ten percent are in favour of legislation to enforce this.

The view that religion is a private matter does not vary significantly by variable. Agreement with all other statements is below average in Harare and Mashonaland West. Agreement with the view that religious leaders should keep out of politics is

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above average in Manicaland (84%), Matabeleland North and Bulawayo (83 percent each) and below average in Harare (62%) and Mashonaland West (63%). Agreement correlates inversely with education.<sup>36</sup> At first glance, these results appear contradictory; however, they are fundamental expressions of their environment. The only people who can still afford to openly oppose and criticise the Mugabe government are public figures such as church leaders and a few civil society leaders. Intellectuals in particular are aware of this circumstance.

To summarise: for the interviewed Zimbabweans personal attributes and religion are the decisive markers of their cultural identity. At the same time, they exhibit a high level of religious tolerance. Although respondents feel a large degree of solidarity with members of their own ethnic group, as a factor of identification ethnic affiliation plays a negligible role. Acceptance of mixed marriage is high.

The overwhelming majority of interviewees regard religion as a private matter. They favour separation of church and state, despite support for the view that politics should be rooted in religious values. Only one in ten believes that the social order should be rooted in religious fundamentalism.

## Political orientations

Do the respondents' political attitudes reflect Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis? How do the respondents perceive the distribution of political and economic power and influence? Do they have clear political perceptions?

What do interviewees think is the most urgent problem facing the country?

*"In the present situation, what is the most important thing the government should achieve?"*

<i>Efficiency in managing the economic development of the country</i>	60
<i>Total honesty of government</i>	24
<i>Enforcement of the law</i>	8
<i>Upholding and promoting national ideas</i>	8

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<sup>36</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 86 - 84 - 73 - 76 - 68 - 62 - 57.

Sixty percent of respondents think that the government should give priority to dealing with the economic situation. One quarter are concerned primarily about good governance, and eight percent each about law enforcement and national ideas. None of the social variables are statistically significant for this question. The strong focus on economic development is evidence of how severely the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy has affected the interviewees in the sample.

The question was then reformulated as an open question with a clear political focus; the answers were as follows:

*"What in your opinion is the most serious political problem confronting our country today which the government should urgently address?"*

Political harassment/intimidation	24
Political conflict (political parties)	15
Corruption	12
Other political issues	24
Disunity	6
Chaos, violence	5
International/public relations	4
Religious/ethnic rights	3
Economic issues	3
None	2
Other	2

When the economic option is removed and respondents are asked to focus on the most serious political problem, their major concerns are political harassment and intimidation and other political issues: each is chosen by a quarter of the respondents. Fifteen percent select political conflict between the parties and 12% corruption; each of the other choices - disunity, chaos, violence, International/public relations, economic issues - is thought to be the most serious problem by six percent or fewer of the respondents.

Political harassment and intimidation are mentioned disproportionately often in Masvingo (55%) and Manicaland (39%), by primary-school graduates (36%), civil servants and office workers and housewives (30% each), persons in the lowest household income group (36%) and Nda (43%).

Other political issues are of greatest concern for respondents in Matabeleland North (44%), among graduates of the two highest levels of education (38% and 51%, respectively), civil servants and office workers (46%), street vendors (44%) and

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students (36%), respondents in the highest of both income categories and Seventh Day Adventists (31%).

Political conflict is the particular concern of interviewees in Manicaland (26%) and Masvingo (21%), among the self-employed (41%), semi-skilled manual labourers (22%) and Ndaou (20%).

Respondents who regard corruption as the major factor are overrepresented in Mashonaland West (21%), among vocational training, college and pre-university graduates (20%), teachers and professionals, but also unskilled labourers (20% each) and Seventh Day Adventists (19%).

Disunity is chosen to an above-average degree by respondents without any formal education.

International or public relations is a particular concern of interviewees in these fields, i.e., of people in Harare (8%) and teachers and professionals (10%).

Respondents who mention religious and ethnic rights are overrepresented in Matabeleland North (11%), among adherents of other religions (8%) and among the Tonga (8%).

Economic issues are the most pressing political problem for respondents in Bulawayo (6%), semi-skilled manual labourers (11%) and adherents of other religions (7%).

How do respondents get their information about political events and society in Zimbabwe?

<i>Radio</i>	39
<i>Friends and relatives</i>	28
<i>TV</i>	25
<i>Newspapers</i>	8

As in most countries in Africa, most people get their political and social information by listening to the radio (39%). Almost 30% get their information from friends, one quarter via television and only eight percent from newspapers. The rural nature of the country is apparent from this break-down.

Radio listeners are overrepresented in rural areas, in particular in the provinces of Manicaland, Mashonaland and Masvingo, among primary-school graduates, farmers, unskilled manual labourers and people with a monthly family income around the mean and by Ndaou and Shona.

The proportion of respondents who receive their information from friends and relatives is well above average in Matabeleland North (74%), among respondents without any formal education (67%) and primary-school graduates (48%) and among

Tonga (77%) and Ndau (46%) and above average in Masvingo and Manicaland, among women, the oldest age group, unemployed people, especially those not looking for work, retired persons, housewives, farmers street vendors, the two lowest household-income groups and the lowest personal income group, adherents of traditional beliefs and of African Independent Churches. In rural areas, the daily exchange with friends and neighbours is part of social life; it is not for nothing that the word palaver has reached us via Africa. In this connection it should be noted that the poor who cannot afford a radio or batteries are even more dependent than most on word of mouth for their information.

TV viewers are heavily overrepresented among respondents in Bulawayo (70%) and Harare (50%) and slightly overrepresented among the youngest age group, university, vocational training and pre-university graduates, interviewees with a job, teachers and professionals, skilled manual labourers and traders, civil servants and office workers, the self-employed, street vendors and students, the highest group in each income category, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals and other religions, Ndebele and respondents who speak mainly English outside the home.

Newspapers tend to be read by respondents in Harare, by men, graduates of the upper two educational groups, people with a job, teachers and professionals, civil servants and office workers, the self-employed, others, students, skilled traders, those in the highest household-income and personal-income groups and those that speak Ndebele at home and English outside the home.

The responses to the following question confirm these results:

*"Do you read newspapers?"*

Yes	54
No	46

Newspaper readers are overrepresented among respondents in Harare (81%) and Bulawayo (66%), men and 25-34-year-olds. Readership correlates directly with education and with employment. A disproportionate number of newspaper readers are found among teachers and professionals, civil servants and office workers, the self-employed, others, students, semi-skilled manual labourers, skilled traders, respondents in the highest group of each income category and the Shona and Ndebele.

Respondents who do not read newspapers are overrepresented in Matabeleland North and among women, people with little or no schooling, housewives and farmers, the poor, adherents of traditional beliefs and African Independent Churches, and Tonga and Ndau.

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How often do newspaper readers read newspapers?

*"How often do you read newspapers IN A WEEK?"*

<i>Regularly (4-7 days a week)</i>	22
<i>Irregularly (1-3 days a week)</i>	55
<i>Less than once a week</i>	23

More than half of this group read a newspaper between once and thrice a week, and a good fifth each regularly or less than once a week.

Respondents who irregularly read a newspaper are overrepresented in Matabeleland North and Harare, among the youngest age group, both those who have and those who have not completed junior secondary school and those who have not completed senior secondary school, the self-employed, semi-skilled and skilled manual labourers and traders and street vendors, the second-highest group in both income categories, non-believers, members of other religions, Pentecostals and Ndebele.

An above-average proportion of respondents in Masvingo, Manicaland and Mashonaland West, among women and the 50+ age group, all of those without any formal education (100%) and more than half of all primary-school graduates, among the unemployed, whether looking or not looking for a job, housewives and retired persons, the lowest and second lowest household income and lowest personal income groups, adherents of traditional beliefs and members of the African Independent Churches and Tonga read a newspaper less than once a week.

By contrast, a disproportionate number of regular readers are found in Bulawayo (43%) and Harare (29%), among graduates at the two highest levels of education, people with a job, teachers and professionals, civil servants and office workers, others, farmers, students, unskilled manual labourers, members of the highest group in each of the income categories, Catholics and Seventh Day Adventists and Ndebele.

These results confirm the general picture: poor and less educated respondents in rural areas read a newspaper irregularly or less than once a week, whereas better educated, better-off city-dwellers read newspapers regularly.

*"Which newspapers do you read? (maximum of three)"*

The Herald	40
The Sunday Mail	17
Manica Post	9
The Chronicle	8
Kwayeda/Umhunywa	7
Financial Gazette	7
Other	12

Since the late 1990s, the press has been subjected to increasing restrictions. Since 2002, every newspaper and every journalist has to be registered with the state-controlled Media and Information Commission. In September 2004, the government banned the Daily News, the only private daily newspaper in the country. Since then, all newspapers in Zimbabwe have been state owned. Zimbabwe ranks 153rd out of 167 on the World Press Freedom Index of Reporters Without Borders.<sup>37</sup>

Of the interviewees that read a newspaper, 40% reach first for The Herald, the Harare daily newspaper, and eight percent for its Bulawayo counterpart, The Chronicle. The two weeklies, the Sunday Mail, which appears in Harare, and the Financial Gazette, are read by 17% and seven percent respectively. Nine percent read the Manica Post, the Mutare daily newspaper, and by nine percent. The Shona-language Kwayeda and Ndebele-language Umthunywa are together read by seven percent. Other printed media are read by 12%. None of the respondents mentioned a foreign publication.

#### Who prefers which newspaper?

The Herald is read above all in Harare (46%), Mashonaland West (53%) and rural areas by the 50+ age group, people without any formal education (50%), graduates of junior and senior secondary school (49%), farmers (64%), unskilled manual labourers (57%), housewives (46%), interviewees in the lowest group of the personal income category and non-believers (56%). It is least popular among graduates of the two highest educational levels (26% and 27%, respectively) and civil servants and office workers (24%); not a single Tonga respondent reads it.

The Sunday Mail is the favoured Sunday reading in Harare and Mashonaland West (25% each).

The Manica Post is particularly popular in Manicaland (41%) and also among the 50+ age group, primary-school graduates (20%), unemployed, the lowest group in both income categories, adherents of traditional beliefs (16%), members of the African Independent Churches (15%) and the Ndau (30%).

Chronicle readers are heavily overrepresented in Bulawayo (41%) Matabeleland North (58%) and among respondents without any formal education (50%), but also disproportionately among those at the two highest (15% and 12%, respectively) levels of education, civil servants and office workers (14%), Seventh Day Adventists (13%), Ndebele (33%) and Tonga (43%). Not a single Ndau reads The Chronicle.

Kwayeda and Umthunywa tend to be read in Matabeleland North (16%) by the 50+ age group, primary-school graduates (19%), housewives (12%), retired persons (11%), Ndau, Ndebele and Tonga (14% each).

The readership of the Financial Gazette is centred on Bulawayo (12%) and among graduates of the two highest levels of education (13% 18%, respectively), civil ser-

<sup>37</sup> Cf. [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=15331](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=15331), 17 October 2006.

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vants and office workers (15%), teachers and professionals (13%) and Tonga (14%); no Ndaou reads this weekly.

To summarise: Newspapers tend to find most of their readership in the region where they are printed. The Herald is the paper of choice among the less educated and the Financial Gazette among the better educated.

How do the Zimbabwean respondents assess the power and influence of traditional leaders and modern political and economic elites?

*"Which of the following influential groups of people do you consider to very important or not very important in Zimbabwe?"*

The responses are ranked in descending order of importance:

Religious leaders	90
Bankers	82
Members of Parliament	81
Civil servants	80
Traditional leaders	79
Military leaders	77
Government members	77
Leaders of political parties	76
Managers of big enterprises	74
Big business men	74

Every single group is considered to be very important by at least three quarters of the respondents. Nine in ten interviewees attribute greatest importance to religious leaders and approx. eight in ten to bankers, members of parliament, civil servants and traditional leaders. It is striking that religious leaders are regarded as most and representatives of the business world as least influential. That said, bankers are in second place, ahead of members of parliament, which is not surprising in view of the country's economic development and hyperinflation and the role bankers play in this.

All these groups rank very high. Although they represent different social groups, perceptions do vary by social variable.

Respondents in the provinces of Masvingo and Manicaland attached above-average importance to every single one of the groups and respondents in Harare to none of them. The Ndaou consider members of parliament, traditional and military leaders, government members, leaders of political parties and managers of big enterprises to be important, and the Tonga regard members of parliament, military leaders (as do the Ndebele) and government members as relatively unimportant.

Religious leaders are highly regarded by the Seventh Day Adventists in particular and less so by non-believers and adherents of traditional beliefs. Respondents in Matabeleland North, older people with little or no formal education and low incomes, unemployed persons, farmers, housewives and members of the African Independent Churches and adherents of traditional beliefs also have an above-average regard for traditional leaders.

In summary, we can say that whereas respect for the authority of traditional and modern leaders appears to be greater in the provinces of Masvingo and Manicaland than elsewhere, respondents in Harare do not attach much significance to either group.

How do respondents feel about the transparency of public processes and procedures?

*"Things being what they are at present in which of the following situations do you have a good chance of being treated properly and fairly?"*

The answers in descending order of frequency are as follows:

In university entrance exams	54
In court	51
At the tax office	43
In electoral procedures	43
In a police investigation	41
In getting a government contract	35
In a procedure of job allocation	31

More than 50% of the respondents felt that people are properly and fairly treated in the university entrance examinations, half felt this way about the courts, 43% about the tax office and when voting, 40% in a police investigation, 35% in obtaining a government contract and 31% in job allocations.

Here, too, there is a pattern: respondents in the three rural provinces of Masvingo, Mashonaland West and Manicaland, an above-average proportion of the Ndaue and marginally below-average proportion of Shona are of the opinion that they have a good chance of being treated properly and fairly. Respondents in Matabeleland North and Bulawayo and among the Tonga and Ndebele do not share this view. Education is not statistically significant for all situations, but appears to play a role inasmuch as it

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correlates inversely with the sense of fair treatment in court,<sup>38</sup> at tax office and in voting,<sup>39</sup> in a police investigation and in job allocations.<sup>40</sup>

To summarise: Respondents in Bulawayo, Matabeleland North und Harare mistrust public institutions the most, and do not place much hope in the private sector. People in rural areas and the less educated appear to be confident that they will be fairly and properly treated by public institutions in particular.

The correlation between the responses on "fair and proper treatment" is high enough to construct a statistical scale.<sup>41</sup> This scale confirms the trend of the above responses, which break down as follows:

No confidence in fair and proper treatment (0 items)	25
Little confidence in fair and proper treatment (1 - 3 items)	38
Confidence in fair and proper treatment (4 - 6 items)	17
Complete confidence in fair and proper treatment (all 7 items)	20

One quarter of the respondents have no confidence that they will be treated fairly and properly, 38% little confidence, 17% are confident and one fifth believe that in all of these situations they will be receive fair and proper treatment.

Respondents with no confidence are overrepresented in Bulawayo (47%) and Matabeleland North (43%), among 35 - 49-year-olds (28%), graduates of the three highest educational levels, teachers and professionals and students (33% each), semi-skilled manual labourers (32%), self-employed persons, civil servants and office workers (29% each), the second highest income group (30%), Tonga (50%) and Ndebele (46%).

Confidence in fair and proper treatment is above average in Masvingo (32%) and the oldest age group (30%), among respondents without any formal schooling (32%) and graduates of the two lowest levels of formal education (25% and 26%, respectively), semi-skilled manual labourers (32%), unemployed people looking for work (28%), retired people (26%), the lowest income group (25%) and the Ndau (28%).

The break-down by ethnic group is as follows:

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<sup>38</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 61 - 59 - 59 - 49 - 46 - 39 - 32.

<sup>39</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 61 - 55 - 51 - 40 - 39 - 22 - 15.

<sup>40</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 61 - 55 - 51 - 40 - 39 - 22 - 15.

<sup>41</sup> Alpha = .882.

Ethnic affiliation	No confidence	Little confidence	Confidence	Complete confidence
Shona	20	41	18	21
Ndau	17	26	29	28
Ndebele	46	34	15	5
Tonga	50	27	8	15
Ø	25	38	17	20

In particular the Ndau are confident or very confident about being fairly treated, whereas the Ndebele and Tonga are not at all confident.

In the African context, family, and in particular the extended and mutual responsibility for all members of the family, plays a leading role. The better-off are obliged to support other members of the family. How far does this support go and how is the concept? How do people react if there is a clash between family interests and fairness?

*"It is permissible to break the law if it is in the interest of your family."* 26

Only a good quarter of all respondents agree that one may break the law in the family's interest.<sup>42</sup> In Bulawayo, less than one tenth are of this opinion, whereas among Pentecostals agreement is above-average (33%). Ethnic affiliation, gender, occupation and income are statistically insignificant in respect of this statement.

*"Women should stay at home and look after the children."* 31

Somewhat less than one third of all respondents share the view that women should not work, but take care of the children.

Agreement with this statement is greatest in Matabeleland North (46%) and Manicaland (42%), somewhat above average among men (34%), the 50+ age group (49%), two lowest levels of education (62% and 44%, respectively) the lowest household income group (41%), retirees (52%), unemployed people not looking for work (41%), non-believers (40%), Tonga (52%) and Ndau (55%). Agreement is lowest in Bulawayo

<sup>42</sup> As a comparison, in Chad almost half of the respondents shared this view; cf. Dickow, op. cit., p. 95.

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(14%) and also considerably lower in Harare (21%), among street vendors (17%),<sup>43</sup> teachers and professionals and the self-employed (18% and 19%, respectively) and Ndebele (20%).

In traditional African society, the household and children are the preserve of women, and many tasks in the family can be taken care of by other female relatives. Reactions to the statement reveal which of the respondents have broken with traditional values, viz. younger, educated respondents and Ndebele.

How do respondents feel about becoming politically involved?

*"If you keep out of politics you have peace and a clean conscience."* 74

Almost three quarters of all respondents agree with this statement. Agreement is above average in Matabeleland North (91%), Masvingo (86%), Manicaland (85%) and Bulawayo (83%). Women are more likely than men to affirm it, as are respondents with a low level of education, farmers (82%), unemployed people not looking for a job (80%) and housewives (80%) and Tonga (90%), Ndau (82%) and Ndebele (80%). All other social variables are statistically irrelevant.

Do people trust political leaders? And how far does support go? The answers to the following questions provide information on this:

*"Thinking of political leaders whom you support, would you agree or disagree with the following statements?"*

	Agreement
<i>Most people like myself support these leaders.</i>	74
<i>Given the situation in the country these leaders cannot do very much to improve our lives.</i>	54
<i>Even if these leaders act in a way I don't understand, I would still support them in an election."</i>	23

Three quarters of all respondents assume that people like themselves support the same political leaders. Agreement is above average only in Masvingo (80%) and below average in Bulawayo (59%). Older people, the less educated and the Ndau also take this view (86%).

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<sup>43</sup> Sixty-one percent of the street vendors are women.

More than half of the respondents believe that political leaders cannot do much to improve their lives. There is widespread political dissatisfaction, little confidence in the ability or will of political leaders and a general sense of powerlessness.

Less than one quarter of the respondents are prepared to vote for political leaders in elections even if they act in a way they do not understand. Unconditional support for any political leader is astonishingly low,<sup>44</sup> which indicates general acceptance of democratic principles. Acceptance is lowest in the capital Harare, where only 16% of respondents agree with the statement. Agreement correlates inversely with education.<sup>45</sup> It is particularly high among unemployed persons not looking for work (34%) and other (56%), and particularly low among skilled manual workers and traders (5%), teachers and professionals (12%) and students (14%). The better educated and better off tend to be fairly critical of their leaders.

All other social variables are statistically irrelevant.

Is this also reflected in respondents' voting preferences? The questionnaire included the following questions:

*"Think of political leaders in our country. Which leader do you admire most?"*

*"Whom else do you admire?"*

*"Which political leader in our country do you most dislike?"*

*"If there were elections for our parliament, which party would you most like to vote for?"*<sup>46</sup>

*"If you could vote for TWO parties, which other party would you vote for?"*

*"Think of people whom you know in your ward, neighbourhood, etc. Which political party would most of them vote for?"*

Zimbabweans' preferred politicians in descending order of popularity are as follows:

<sup>44</sup> In Kosovo 54% agreed with this statement. Cf. Hanf (2005), p. 38, in Chad 28%. Cf. Dickow (2005), p. 96.

<sup>45</sup> Agreement from the lowest to the highest level of education: 31 - 29 - 22 - 22 - 23 - 19 - 9.

<sup>46</sup> Nine percent of respondents did not answer this question.

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	Most popular leader	2nd most popular leader	Most unpopular leader
Robert Mugabe	34	4	34
Morgan Tsvangirai	27	8	23
Joyce Mujuru	10	20	1
Jonathan Moyo	3	6	5
Welshman Ncube	2	6	3
John Nkomo	1	4	1
Joseph Msika	1	4	3
Oppah Muchinguri	1	4	*
Gibson Sibanda	1	3	2
Other	24	31	28

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President Robert Mugabe is the most popular and most unpopular among a good third each of the respondents. Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC is in second place as most popular and least popular politician in the country, with the support of a good quarter and somewhat less than a quarter of the interviewees, respectively. Joyce Mujuru, vice-president of the governing party since September 2004, has the support of one in ten as the most popular and as many as one in five as the second most popular leader. Three percent and six percent, respectively, opted for Jonathan Moyo, a ZANU-PF dissident and independent member of parliament since the 2005 elections, as most and second most politician, but for another five percent he is the most unpopular politician. The last vote almost certainly reflects Moyo's transformation from one of Mugabe's harshest critics in the 1990s to one of his most loyal supporters, before breaking with the president again. Welshman Ncube and Gibson Sibanda of the MDC,<sup>47</sup> though of the break-away faction, receive two and one percent, respectively. Others that draw the support of one percent of the respondents include John Nkomo (national chairman of the ZANU-PF and speaker of parliament since December 2005), Joseph Msika (the second of the two vice-presidents of the ZANU-PF) and Oppah Muchinguri (former governor of Manicaland and minister of women's affairs, gender and community development).

A comparison of the supporters of President Mugabe and opposition leader Tsvangirai presents the following result.

Admirers of the president are overrepresented in Manicaland and Masvingo, among people older than 35, respondents in the three lowest levels of education, farmers, housewives and retired persons, people in the two lowest income groups,

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<sup>47</sup> In February 2006, the MDC split into two factions. Ncube and Sibanda belong to the break-away faction led by Arthur Mutambara.

members of the African Independent Churches, mainstream Protestants, non-believers and Ndau. He is least popular in Harare and Matabeleland North, among the 25-34 age group, respondents in the two highest educational groups, Catholics, Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists and Tonga.

Opposition leader Tsvangirai finds greatest approval in Matabeleland North and among men, the two lowest age groups, respondents who have completed junior high school or not completed senior secondary school or are graduates of senior secondary school, vocational training, college or pre-university, unemployed people and retirees, respondents in the lowest income groups, Catholics, Pentecostals and Ndau. Respondents who disapprove of Tsvangirai are overrepresented in Manicaland and Masvingo, among respondents older than 35, the lowest three levels of education, members of the African Independent Churches, non-believers and Ndau.

The following table shows support for the two politicians in the different age groups:

Age group	Mugabe	Tsvangirai	Others
18 - 24	28	28	44
25 - 34	24	30	46
35 - 49	40	24	36
50 <sup>+</sup>	56	24	20
Ø	34	27	39

By party preference, the respondents in the survey would vote as follows:

	1st choice	2nd choice	People in same district	2005 elections
ZANU-PF	42	9	45	60
MDC	50	16	51	40
ZANU-Ndonga	1	19	*	
ZAPU	*	8		
ZIYA	*	3		
ZUD	*	2		
UFP	*	5	*	
Other	7	39	4	

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Forty-two percent of the respondents support the governing ZANU-PF, half the opposition MDC, one percent the small ZANU-Ndonga, which has not been represented in parliament since the 2005 elections.<sup>48</sup> If respondents had the possibility of choosing between two preferences, the ZANU Ndonga would receive almost one fifth, i.e., the most, votes, the MDC 16% and Mugabe's party nine percent, but a number of smaller parties would also receive between two and eight percent. Respondents tend to think that their fellow citizens will vote the way they do; there is little distinction. However, there is an enormous discrepancy between these results and the results of the elections of 31 March 2005, when the governing ZANU-PF won 60% of the votes cast and the MDC 40%.<sup>49</sup> Thanks to members of parliament appointed by the president, the ZANU-PF gained a two-thirds majority.

Who opts for which party?<sup>50</sup>

Strongholds of the governing ZANU-PF party are the provinces of Manicaland and Masvingo. In Manicaland it gets almost twice as many votes as the opposition party. By contrast, Harare, Bulawayo and Matabeleland North are opposition strongholds. In Harare the MDC received almost twice as many votes as the ZANU-PF and in Bulawayo and Matabeleland North three times as many. The only province in which voters are almost equally divided is Mashonaland West.

Support for the ZANU-PF is above average among women and middle-aged people, and far above average among the 50+ age group,<sup>51</sup> among people without any or only primary-school education,<sup>52</sup> farmers, housewives, members of the African Independent Churches and non-believers and Ndau.

Respondents who view the MDC favourably are overrepresented among men, the two lower age groups, the higher income groups from junior secondary school graduates upwards,<sup>53</sup> people with jobs, teachers and professionals, self-employed, civil servants and office workers, all manual labourers whether unskilled, semi-skilled

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<sup>48</sup> The party's founder, Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, was the party's sole member of parliament until his death in 2000.

<sup>49</sup> On the 2005 elections, see Beatrice Schlee, *Wundersames Traumergebnis in Zeiten der Krise. Die Regierungspartei erringt die Zweidrittelmehrheit bei den Parlamentswahlen in Simbabwe*, in: KAS/Auslandsinformationen 5/05, pp. 93-127.

<sup>50</sup> Here we compare only the support for the two large parties, ZANU-PF and MDC.

<sup>51</sup> In the 50+ age group twice as many respondents voted for the ZANU-PF as for the MDC.

<sup>52</sup> Of the lower education groups, 71% without any formal schooling vote for the ZANU-PF, 26% for the MDC and three percent for other parties; 59% of primary-school graduates vote ZANU-PF, 43% MDC and 7% other parties.

<sup>53</sup> Seventy-four percent of the graduates of the two highest educational levels vote for the MDC, 13% for ZANU-PF and 13% for other parties.

or skilled as well as traders, unemployed people looking for a job, students,<sup>54</sup> middle and upper personal income groups, Catholics, adherents of traditional beliefs, Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists, Ndebele and Tonga. Essentially, the MDC is the party of younger, educated city-dwellers and the Tonga and Ndebele.

ZANU-PF tends to recruit its supporters in rural areas, among older, less educated, poorer strata, the Ndau and marginally disproportionately among the Shona.

The following two tables show party preferences by education and ethnic group.

#### Party preference by educational level

	ZANU-PF	MDC	Others
No formal education	71	26	3
Primary school	59	34	7
Junior secondary school not completed	47	49	4
Junior secondary school completed, senior secondary school not completed	39	54	7
Senior secondary school completed	36	52	13
Vocational school, college, pre-university	13	74	13
University	13	74	13
Ø	42	50	8

<sup>54</sup> The distribution among unemployed persons not looking for work and retirees is about the same. Support for the MDC is greatest among teachers and professionals at 74%.

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### Party preference by ethnic group

	ZANU-PF	MDC	Others
Shona	44	48	8
Ndau	64	31	5
Ndebele	22	57	21
Tonga	15	77	8
Other	37	57	7
Ø	42	50	8

What is the relationship between party preference and the support for political leaders?

Eighty seven percent of the respondents who admire Robert Mugabe most among politicians would vote for ZANU-PF and 60% of those who admire Joyce Mujuru most would also vote for ZANU-PF, although 37% would vote for the opposition MDC. Of the supporters of opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai, only 2% would vote for ZANU-PF, but 97% for the MDC. In short, an overwhelming proportion of respondents vote for the party of the leader they most admire.

When asked for their second choice, there is a noticeable shift in preferences. A good third of ZANU-PF voters would give their second vote to the opposition MDC, one fifth to the ZANU-Ndonga and seven percent to ZAPU; the rest of the ZANU-PF second votes are spread around other parties. Twenty-two percent of the MDC voters would cast their ballots for the ZANU-Ndonga, 17% for the ZANU-PF and ten percent for the ZAPU.

A disproportionately high percentage of ZANU-PF and MDC voters (74% and 77%, respectively) assume that people in their surroundings would vote the same way as they do. May one deduce from this that people prefer the company of people who share their political convictions?

In a comparison between the most and second most admired leaders, Joyce Mujuru is the second choice of Mugabe supporters, whereas supporters of Joyce Mujuru favour Oppah Muchinguri and supporters of Oppah Muchinguri choose Joyce Mujuru. It appears female supporters of women stick with women. Welshman Ncube is the favourite choice of admirers of the opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai.

How do Zimbabweans view the impact of other states on their country? For this question respondents were shown a list of countries with which Zimbabwe has relations.

*"Relations with a number of foreign governments, peoples and international organisations have had a certain impact on our country. For each country or organisation we mention, please tell us whether you consider its impact as more helpful or as more harmful."*

The answers in descending order of frequency of positive impact are as follows:

	Generally more helpful
<i>UN</i>	81
<i>South Africa</i>	79
<i>SADC</i>	78
<i>World Bank/IMF</i>	71
<i>United Kingdom</i>	60
<i>USA</i>	58
<i>European Union</i>	54

The UN is regarded as having the most positive impact on the country. Eight in ten respondents place them at the top of their list, just a head of South Africa, closely followed by SADC. The World Bank and the IMF are thought to be most helpful by seven in ten interviewees, and three in five choose the former colonial power, almost as many the USA and a good half the European Union.

The UN is viewed most positively in Mashonaland West (87%) and least positively in Bulawayo (66%); South Africa draws its strongest vote in Matabeleland North (90%) and among skilled manual workers and traders (94%). With respect to SADC, the World Bank and the United Kingdom all social variables are statistically insignificant. Respondents in Bulawayo (40%) are particularly critical of the USA and the European Union (39%).

Does this reflect disappointed Ndebele hopes and expectations of help from the international community?

Which country do respondents see as a model?

*"In your mind, which country comes closest to being an ideal country, the country which other countries should attempt to be like?"*

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South African	34
Zimbabwe	17
United Kingdom	14
Botswana	11
USA	6
Zambia	3
Mozambique	2
Other African countries	2
Immigration countries (Canada/Australia)	2
China	2
Europe	1
All other states	1
None	5

Neighbouring South Africa is the ideal country for one third of the sample, notably for respondents in Masvingo, for street vendors, self-employed people, unskilled manual labourers and unemployed looking for a job, Catholics, Ndau and Ndebele, i.e., in particular for those groups of respondents that can also be found as migrant workers in South Africa.

The country they know is the ideal for respondents in Manicaland and Masvingo, the 50+ age group, those without any formal schooling, unemployed people not looking for a job and housewives, members of the African Independent Churches and non-believers and Ndau.

Respondents who favour the former colonial power as model are overrepresented in Bulawayo and Harare, vocational school, college and pre-university graduates, semi-skilled manual workers, students, Seventh Day Adventists and Ndebele.

Neighbouring Botswana is particularly popular among unskilled manual labourers.

An above-average proportion of university graduates and teachers and professionals look to the USA. The same groups make up the constituencies favouring Europe and the immigration countries. The last group is also overrepresented among respondents in Bulawayo and students.

Zambia's appeal is substantially above average in the adjacent province of Matabeleland North (33%), among those without any formal education, farmers, the lowest income group, adherents of traditional beliefs and Tonga.

Farmers and Ndau, the largest groups in the region along the eastern border, vote for neighbouring Mozambique.

The results also highlight China's growing influence in Africa: China is particularly popular in Mashonaland West and among farmers.

Other African countries is the choice of civil servants and office workers. "None" is above average among respondents in Matabeleland North, the oldest age group,

interviewees without any formal schooling, street vendors, members of the African Independent Churches and Ndau.

The following trends can be discerned: education correlates directly with choices for the western world, i.e., Europe, the USA and the classic immigration countries. Respondents with little schooling or in rural areas either know, or cannot imagine more than, only the outside world bordering immediately on their province, or even no other world at all. It may be assumed that China runs or has run projects in Mashonaland West.

To summarise: There is a correlation between confidence in the institutions of state and respondents' political preferences. Confidence is lower and critical attitudes towards the governing party and President Mugabe are more pronounced in Harare, Bulawayo and Matabeleland North. The other three rural areas included in the sample are less critical, more traditional and on the whole more accepting of authority. Once again there is a cleavage between town and country (with the exception of Matabeleland North) and between less and more educated respondents: the latter clearly prefer the opposition.

## Opinions on the political order

In these circumstances can the population develop democratic attitudes? Which political order would they prefer? Do they believe in democratic mechanisms and the possibility of a peaceful change of power? Do they have any confidence in the government of the country?

What policies do respondents think the government should be pursuing? How democratic are they? Do they have any idea of the political order they want?

*"It is harmful for society that individuals or groups have different opinions and pursue different interests."* 28

*"It is normal that people have different opinions and pursue different interests as long as they respect the rules."* 93

A little less than 30% of the respondents reject diversity of opinions and interests. i.e., a good 70% accept one of the fundamental prerequisites of democracy. Taken in conjunction with the replies to the next question, the trend is even clearer: as many as

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93% of all respondents agree with democratic principles in the form of freedom of expression and observance of the law.

Support for the first statement is lowest in Matabeleland North and Bulawayo (18% each). Other groups also strongly in favour of diversity of opinion include self-employed people (6%), teachers and professionals (9%), street vendors (11%) and adherents of traditional beliefs. Unskilled manual labourers (42%), those in the lowest personal income category (38%) and non-believers (at 53% well above average) are overrepresented among those that approve of the first statement.

Every respondent in Bulawayo and Matabeleland North agreed with the second statement, as did all non-believers and virtually all adherents of traditional beliefs (99%!). All other social variables were statistically insignificant.

Asked about which of the following statements they preferred:

*"A state authority which controls particular interests and preserves social harmony."* 23

or:

*"Freedom for people to pursue different interests provided they respect the rules."* 77

almost one quarter favour a state authority that enforces social harmony. Somewhat fewer than 80% of the respondents voted for people's freedom to pursue their own interests.

An above-average number of respondents agreed with the first option in Manicaland (36%), among the oldest age group (32%), those without any formal education (38%), unskilled manual labourers and farmers (31% and 36%, respectively) and the Ndau (37%).

The second option finds greatest support among respondents in Matabeleland North and Bulawayo (95% and 94%, respectively), graduates of the two highest educational levels, teachers and professionals (91%), civil servants and office workers (87%), Catholics (86%), Tonga (95%) and Ndebele (88%) and least in Manicaland (64%), among people with no formal education, farmers (64%), non-believers (53%) and Ndau (63%).

Responses to the following statement are further evidence of undemocratic convictions:

*"It is permissible to falsify election results in order to allow the better candidate for the country to win."* 17

Only 17% of the respondents agree with this statement. This result reflects a well-developed sense of democratic behaviour. Agreement is particularly high in Masvingo (30%) and Matabeleland North (25%) and among the Tonga (27%) and Ndaue (23%). Disapproval of electoral fraud is strongest in Bulawayo (87%), Harare (93%) and Mashonaland West (97%).

All other social variables are statistically irrelevant.

Other measures of democratic attitudes include the approval or rejection of the independence of the courts, the separation of powers, controls on power, the freedom of expression and a multiparty system. To examine these, respondents were asked to choose between pairs of questions.

*"Here is a list of statements on different ways of governing a country like ours with different regional, language and religious groups. Please tell us which one of each pair of statements you agree with."*

The responses are in order of descending support for the democratic option:

<i>"A government which allows one state language only.</i>	
<i>or:</i>	
<i>A government which gives everybody the right to use his own language in public, in offices, courts and parliament."</i>	95
<i>"Local authorities elected by the people of the respective region, town or village.</i>	90
<i>or:</i>	
<i>Local authorities appointed by the central government.</i>	
<i>"A president who's power is balanced by the parliament.</i>	87
<i>or:</i>	
<i>A president who can act without interference by members of parliament."</i>	
<i>"Shops and factories owned by private businessmen who will work hard to make the business grow.</i>	75
<i>or:</i>	
<i>Factories and trade owned by a government elected by the people."</i>	
<i>"Judges who follow the instructions given by government.</i>	
<i>or:</i>	
<i>Judges, who apply the law whatever the government says."</i>	72
<i>"Control of newspapers by government in order to prevent disunity.</i>	
<i>or:</i>	
<i>Newspapers free to criticize government and enjoy freedom of expression."</i>	71

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Ninety-five percent of the respondents 95% favour a government that allows people to use their own language for all official business; 90% prefer decentralisation, elected local government, and 87% express support for a strong parliament that can control the president. Three quarters of the respondents approve of private property and competition, 72% of independent courts and almost as many of a free press.

The break-down by social variable reveals that many are statistically insignificant for most questions.

It is striking that support for state-controlled businesses is above-average in Bulawayo (35%), Matabeleland and Masvingo (38% each) and among students and housewives (35% each).

Support for an independent judiciary is particularly strong in Mashonaland West and Harare, among graduates of the upper educational levels, civil servants and office workers, self-employed persons, skilled traders, students and teachers and professionals and the highest household income group, and is lowest among the Ndaus.

A free press is particularly favoured in Bulawayo (90%), Matabeleland North and Harare (87% each), among graduates of the upper two educational groups, teachers and professionals and students and among the Tonga and Ndebele.

Which groups are very democratic, democratic, and undemocratic? Unlike in surveys in other countries, in which there is a high correlation between most items, this time our democracy scale is constructed with only four<sup>55</sup> - multiparty system, independent judiciary, freedom of the press and pluralism of interests.

The responses break down as follows:

undemocratic (0 - 1 items)	19
democratic (2 - 3 items)	36
very democratic (all 4 items)	45

In their answers just under one fifth of the respondents reveal themselves to be undemocratic, a good third democratic and 45% very democratic.

Undemocratic respondents tend to be found in Manicaland (38%) and Masvingo (35%), among women (22%), the oldest age group (33%), those without any formal

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<sup>55</sup> The following questions were used to construct the index: "A single party open to everyone rules without opposition." (rejection); "Judges who follow the instructions given by government." or "Judges who apply the law whatever the government says." (second option); "Control of newspapers by government in order to prevent disunity." or "Newspapers free to criticize government and enjoy freedom of expression." (second option); "A state authority which controls particular interests and preserves social harmony." or "Freedom for people to pursue different interests provided they respect the rules." (second option)

schooling (47%), primary-school graduates (27%), farmers and unemployed not looking for work (27% each), housewives (24%), those in the lowest income group (27%), non-believers (37%), members of the African Independent Churches (27%) and Ndaou (39%).

The most democratic respondents, by contrast, were found in Harare (63%), Matabeleland North (59%), Bulawayo (57%) and Mashonaland West (56%), among men (51%), the 24-34 age group (53%), graduates of the two highest educational groups, (61% and 79%, respectively), those with a job (58%), civil servants and office workers (68%), skilled manual labourers and traders (65%), teachers and professionals (63%), retired persons (57%), street vendors, (56%), students (54%), the self-employed and semi-skilled manual labourers (53% each), those in the highest income group (56%), Catholics (53%), mainstream Protestants (51%), Tonga (63%) and Ndebele (57%).

As can be seen in the following table, there is a striking correlation between education and democratic attitudes.<sup>56</sup>

Democracy index	Undemocratic	Democratic	Very democratic
Highest level of education achieved:			
No formal education	47	32	21
Primary school	27	43	30
Junior secondary school not completed	17	38	45
Junior secondary school completed, senior secondary school not completed	15	35	49
Senior secondary school completed	17	34	49
Vocational school, college, pre-university	1	38	61
University	4	17	79
Ø	19	36	45

<sup>56</sup> In addition, in Zimbabwe the degree of repression and democratic consciousness appear to play a role, as reflected in the high democracy values in Matabeleland.

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How do Zimbabweans feel about the power of the state? Which powers do they think the state should have or not have?

*"A government can use different methods to protect its ability to govern a country. Which of the following methods do you approve of and which do you disapprove of?"*

	Approval
<i>Seeking political solutions by negotiation</i>	90
<i>Prosecuting criminals only</i>	85
<i>Prosecuting violent political action</i>	84
<i>Prosecuting people and groups working against the national interest</i>	59
<i>Introducing material law</i>	24
<i>Prohibiting political activities of the opposition</i>	19
<i>Censorship or banning newspapers</i>	15

Nine in ten respondents prefer to try to negotiate solutions, 85% feel that only criminals should be prosecuted and marginally fewer think that violent political action is also a ground for prosecution. Almost 60% are in favour of prosecuting people and groups that work against the national interest. A bare quarter support the proclamation of martial law, just under one fifth would like to prohibit political activity by the opposition and 15% support censorship or even an outright ban on newspapers.

Whereas respondents in Masvingo (99%) and Manicaland (95%) are extremely amenable seeking political solutions though negotiation, those in Bulawayo (70%) and Matabeleland North (80%) and among the Tonga (80%) and Ndebele (79%) have strong reservations.

Similarly, interviewees in Masvingo (94%) and Manicaland (92%) as well as among the Shona (89%) strongly favour prosecuting only criminals, whereas those in Bulawayo (60%) and among the Ndebele (68%) are less inclined.

Support for the prosecution of violent political action is strong in Mashonaland West (95%) and Harare (91%) and among Seventh Day Adventists (91%) and weaker in Bulawayo (72%) and among the Ndebele (74%).

Prosecuting people and groups working against the national interest draws considerably greater support in Manicaland (66%) than in Harare (51%).

In respect of martial law all social variables were statistically insignificant.

As for banning political activities of the opposition, this policy would tend to draw approval among respondents in Manicaland (33%), the two lowest educational groups and farmers (36%), but is met with strong disapproval in Bulawayo (5%), among graduates of the two highest educational levels, self-employed persons (not one in

favour), teachers and professionals (5%), street vendors (6%), students (7%), skilled traders (8%) and Ndebele (9%).

Support for censorship or banning newspapers is strongest among respondents in Masvingo and Manicaland (19% each) and those without any formal education (28%) and weakest in Bulawayo (4%) and among university graduates (4%).

How do people express their criticism of the government and political opponents?

*"Think of a situation in which many people are dissatisfied with the government and want to change it. Which of the following do you consider appropriate or not appropriate?"*

The answers in descending order of frequency are as follows:

<i>Peaceful meetings and protests</i>	88
<i>Waiting for next elections</i>	78
<i>Violent action</i>	10

Almost nine in ten respondents prefer to express opposition to the government in the form of peaceful protest, almost four in five would rather wait for the next elections and just one in ten is in favour of violent action.

In Harare and Bulawayo the proportion of respondents prepared to wait for the next elections is below average (68% each); the same holds for graduates of the two highest educational groups (59% and 64%, respectively), teachers and professionals (45%) and Ndebele (73%). Respondents in Manicaland (90%) and Masvingo (87%) show greater patience, as do the 50+ age group, the less educated, farmers (91%) and Ndau (90%).

People who approve of violent action are disproportionately common in Harare (18%), among the 18-25 age group (15%), university graduates (20%), vocational training, college and pre-university graduates (15%) and Catholics (20%). Disapproval of violence is above average in Manicaland (4% for) and among respondents without any formal schooling (3%).

The following complex of questions investigates attitudes towards the practice of democracy in multiethnic states. The respondents were asked to say whether they agreed with different forms of government or not. They were expected to respond to each statement and afterwards choose one as the best solution for Zimbabwe.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Hence the lower percentages for the "best solution for Zimbabwe".

*"There are many countries like ours - that is, a country with different religious, language and ethnic groups. There are different forms of government in these countries and different opinions about what is the best way of ruling such a country. We will give you some of these opinions. Please tell us whether you find each of the following opinions acceptable or not."*

The answers in descending order of frequency are as follows:

	Acceptable	Best solution for Zimbabwe
<i>"All people vote for any party they like, and the winning party (parties) rules (rule) with other parties in the opposition."</i>	92	61
<i>"A joint government with a quota (corresponding to each group's numerical strength) for all major groups."</i>	64	21
<i>"A single party open to everyone governs without opposition."</i>	32	9
<i>"The most numerous group governs, and the other groups accept what is decided."</i>	28	1
<i>"One group (majority or not) rules over the others, and people that refuse to accept this have to keep quiet or leave."</i>	24	2
<i>"The country is divided up and groups form their own states."</i>	11	6

The preferences for acceptability and the best solution for Zimbabwe are almost identical. The striking exception is the option for partition, which is regarded as the fourth-best solution for Zimbabwe, although it is the least acceptable.

More than 90% of the respondents prefer a system of majority democracy and 65% a system of proportional democracy. Almost one third favour a one-party system, and nearly three in ten find domination by the largest group acceptable. One quarter could live with a repressive dictatorship and one in ten does not reject partition.

The discussion of the statistical significance is limited to the "best solution for Zimbabwe".

Support for a system of majority democracy is particularly strong in Harare (73%), Mashonaland West (70%) and Manicaland (67%), among men rather than women, semi-skilled manual workers (84%), self-employed persons (71%), unskilled manual workers (69%), members of the African Independent Churches, Shona and Ndaou (67% each). Respondents in Bulawayo (33%) and Matabeleland North (28%), graduates of the two highest educational groups (54% and 55%, respectively), Seventh Day Adventists and adherents of traditional beliefs (50% each), Tonga (27%)

and Ndebele (35%) have greater reservations; the Ndebele in particular feel inadequately represented in a majority democracy system.

A system of proportional democracy, on the other hand, is acceptable to respondents in Bulawayo (31%), among university graduates (28%) and skilled manual labourers and traders (31%), but less so in Mashonaland West (12%) and among farmers (5%).

A one-party system tends to appeal to women and farmers (32%) and least of all to people without any formal education or a university degree (3% and 2%, respectively), retirees, skilled manual labourers and traders (3% each), teachers and professionals (not one!) and the Tonga and Ndau (5% each).

Domination by the strongest group finds above-average support among street vendors; not a single Ndebele thinks this is the best solution for Zimbabwe.

All social variables are statistically insignificant with respect to dictatorship by one group.

Supporters of partition are heavily overrepresented in Bulawayo (24%) and Matabeleland North (33%) and overrepresented among graduates of the highest two educational groups (13% and 14%, respectively), civil servants and office workers (13%), students (12%), retired persons (11%), Ndebele (23%) and Tonga (39%); however, partition finds no support at all in Manicaland and Masvingo and Harare (0%), very little in Mashonaland West (2%), none at all among farmers, unskilled or semi-skilled manual workers and the Ndau and virtually none among the Shona (1%).

To summarise: Partition as the best solution finds strongest support in Matabeleland North and Bulawayo and among the Tonga and Ndebele, who are also the groups most critical of a system of majority democracy.

## Perceptions of differences and coexistence

*"Which of the following differences would you consider to be the biggest difference in Zimbabwe?"*

The answers in descending order of frequency are as follows:

<i>Differences between rich and poor</i>	58
<i>Differences between government and opposition</i>	14
<i>Differences between urban and rural areas</i>	13
<i>Differences between Black and White</i>	12
<i>Differences between Shona and Ndebele</i>	3

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Differences between ethnic groups, between black and white, town and country and even political differences take a back seat to the differences between rich and poor: for more than one in two respondents this is the major difference in Zimbabwe. In view of mass unemployment and hyperinflation, this is not surprising. Agreement is highest in Harare, where the differences are most visible, and among the unskilled and semi-skilled manual labourers.

Those that choose differences between the government and opposition are overrepresented among inhabitants of Bulawayo, white collar workers and students,<sup>58</sup> i.e., generally among the better educated, and among non-believers and Seventh Day Adventists and the Ndebele.

The perception of differences between urban and rural areas is more frequent among the oldest age group (50+), those with no formal schooling (29%), unemployed people not looking for a job, street vendors (22%) and the Tonga and Ndau.

Respondents who mention differences between Black and White are overrepresented in Masvingo and Manicaland and, hence, among the Shona and Ndau.

Regarding perceptions of ethnic differences, representation is greater among respondents in Matabeleland North and Bulawayo, the educated, e.g. students, and the Ndebele and Tonga (12% each).

Real or imagined discrimination or preferential treatment in awarding jobs in the private sector, the public sector or the army can also precipitate conflict in multiethnic states. Respondents were asked to choose which criteria should be used in awarding jobs.

*"If you were to choose people for jobs in your own business, whom would you prefer?"*

*"When choosing people for jobs in the ARMY, who should be chosen?"*

*"When choosing people for jobs in GOVERNMENT SERVICE, who should be chosen?"*

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<sup>58</sup> Farmers are also above the average at 32%.

The break-down of the responses is as follows:

	Own business	Civil service	Army
<i>Anyone who is qualified</i>	65	90	87
<i>Members of my family</i>	15		
<i>People I know and trust</i>	14		
<i>People of my nationality</i>	6		
<i>People of all ethnic groups according to their numbers in the population</i>		9	11
<i>Mainly people from the majority ethnic group (Shona)</i>		1	2

Empty field: answer category not provided

Qualifications are by far the most popular criterion for filling positions in all three occupational fields. Personal and kinship relations or group quotas are far less important. Nine percent and 11%, respectively, of respondents approve of ethnic quotas for civil service or army appointments. Even in the business world qualifications is the leading criterion for a job. Only 15% and 14%, respectively, turn to family members or people they trust to fill positions.

If choosing people for their own business, respondents in Bulawayo in particular prefer skills, as do graduates of the two highest educational groups, students, teachers and professionals, civil servants and office workers, and semi-skilled as well as unskilled manual labourers.<sup>59</sup> The job prospects of family members are best in Manicaland, among respondents with no formal education, self-employed persons and the Ndau. Trust plays a big role in Masvingo, among the 50+ age group and street vendors (44%). Respondents without any formal schooling and Tonga are most likely to employ people of the same nationality.

Social and economic background plays no role in appointments in the civil service or the army.

What do Zimbabweans think about the opportunities, problems and possibilities of coexistence between the different groups in Zimbabwe? To obtain an idea, respondents were asked to choose one of the following pair of statements.

<sup>59</sup> Ndebele and Tonga were more likely to agree with this statement than respondents of other ethnic groups.

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*"Think of the serious the problems and conflicts which have developed in our society in recent times. Which one of the following descriptions do you agree with most?"*

*I fear that peace and co-operation between ethnic groups in our country may have become impossible.* 29

*or:*

*In spite of everything, peace and co-operation can still be achieved."* 71

*I fear that peace and co-operation between government and opposition may have become impossible.* 49

*or:*

*In spite of everything, peace and co-operation can still be achieved."* 51

The responses to this question are somewhat unsettling. Close to one in three does not believe that peace and co-operation between ethnic groups is still possible.<sup>60</sup> Interviewees who hold this opinion are overrepresented in Bulawayo (45%) and Matabeleland North (43%) and among the Tonga (53%) and Ndebele (50%) - the groups that suffered most severely during the massacres of the 1980s. The fact that the government, and in particular the president, refuse to apologize for their actions frequently crops up in public discussions and is a source of great bitterness among the Ndebele. Are they only bitter, or do they fear a repetition of the massacres?

Even more disturbing is the result of the second question. Almost half the respondents, in particular in Mashonaland West (66%) and Harare (56%) and non-believers (63%), do not think that peace and co-operation between government and opposition is still possible.

What do respondents think about the need for peace and cooperation?

*"Open conflict between groups in our society would cause everyone to lose in the long run."* 88

*"Violence and killing can never be justified, no matter how important the struggle."* 83

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<sup>60</sup> In Chad, after 30 years of civil war and ethnic conflict only 16% of the respondents took this view; cf. Dickow, op. cit., p. 125.

Almost 90% of the respondents are of the opinion that in the event of violent conflict between the groups they will all lose in the long run. A slightly smaller proportion of the respondents think that violence and killing are never justified. This is in essence a very peaceable, not a militant, society.

Who are the people who believe that their group would benefit from open conflict? They are overrepresented among the inhabitants of Harare and tend to hold a job,<sup>61</sup> are not among the poorest and are often Pentecostals. But they are not necessarily the same people who would tolerate violence and killing. Apart from in Harare, the latter are overrepresented among respondents in Manicaland and Mashonaland West, include almost one third of those without any formal schooling, again Pentecostals but above all members of the African Independent Churches and the Shona. Inhabitants of the capital, respondents without any formal education and members of the African Independent Churches appear to be marginally more militant than other groups.

Does the rejection of violence also mean that respondents are ready to make compromises to preserve peace and thereby reduce conflict potential?

*"In the present conflicts in our country all sides concerned should seek compromises and try to find agreement."*

94

Ninety-four percent of all respondents agree with this statement. Agreement in Manicaland and Masvingo and among the Ndau is close to 100%! It is below average in Matabeleland North (85%) and among the members of the smaller ethnic groups.

In addition to the regulation of conflict and conflict potential, the perception of ethnic and cultural diversity has a role to play in coexistence.

*"A good friend is a good friend whether he is called [Shona name or Ndebele name or English name]."*

97

*"Ethnic diversity makes a country culturally richer and more interesting."*

88

*"Whether one likes it or not, when groups of different ethnic origin and different religion live in one country, a group either controls others or is controlled."*

82

*"Even very different ethnic groups living in one country can easily accept each other as they are and respect each others' mutual rights."*

80

Almost all respondents are convinced that a good friend is a good friend, regardless of his origin. All respondents in Masvingo share this view, as do all without any formal

<sup>61</sup> Twenty-four percent of self-employed persons as well as skilled and unskilled manual labourers and street vendors.

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education, all teachers and professionals, semi-skilled manual workers, members of the African Independent Churches and non-believers. In Bulawayo, on the other hand, "only" 92% agree, and only 91% of interviewed university graduates, 92% of retired persons and 82% of the farmers. On this point it is difficult to detect any clear distinctions in terms of education, occupation or region.

Eighty-eight percent of the respondents are convinced that a country is wealthier for its ethnic diversity. This view is overrepresented in Matabeleland North (98%) and Bulawayo (96%), among respondents without any formal schooling and university graduates (95% and 96%, respectively), Catholics (95%), Tonga (98%) and Ndaou (94%).

Eighty-two percent of the respondents are convinced that in a multiethnic and multi-religious state one group will control others. Here, too, this view is shared to an above-average degree in Matabeleland North and among the Tonga (95% each). Otherwise there are no significant differences by social variable.

Eight in ten respondents are of the opinion that different groups in a country can live together and respect their mutual rights. Agreement with this statement is highest in Manicaland (91%), among primary-school graduates, semi-skilled manual labourers and the Ndaou. University graduates (61%) teachers and professionals and students (67% each) and Tonga (63%) and Ndebele (71%) have less faith in mutual acceptance and respect.

To summarise: It is clear that the majority of the respondents are convinced that coexistence in mutual respect is possible. The interviewed Zimbabweans are willing to compromise and fear open conflict.

## Life in the future

Respondents' assessments of whether they are happy or not with life are coloured by the current political and economic situation in Zimbabwe. To assess optimism about the future, respondents were also asked to say how they thought they would feel in ten years' time.

*"Think about your life in Zimbabwe. How do you feel? Are you:"*

<i>Satisfied</i>	11
<i>Not satisfied but also not dissatisfied - in the middle</i>	16
<i>Dissatisfied</i>	73

*"How do you think you will feel in ten years' time?"*

<i>Satisfied</i>	22
<i>Not satisfied but also not dissatisfied - in the middle</i>	15
<i>Dissatisfied</i>	63

Eleven percent of the respondents are satisfied with their life at present, but twice as many think they will be satisfied in ten years' time. The middle group is almost equal in size. Whereas currently 73% of the respondents are dissatisfied, only 10% fewer, i.e., 63% expect this to be the case in ten years' time.

The highest level of satisfaction is found in Manicaland (17%). Dissatisfied respondents are overrepresented Bulawayo (76%) and Matabeleland North (91%) and, hence, among the Ndebele (77%) and Tonga (93%). Catholics (80%) and non-believers (83%) are also among the most dissatisfied.

Expectations of satisfaction in ten years' time are also highest among respondents in Manicaland (25%), while respondents in Harare move up into the middle group. By contrast, Interviewees in Masvingo, Bulawayo (71% each) and in particular Matabeleland North (77%) fear that they will be more dissatisfied than average in a decade's time, as do 77% of the Tonga and 73% of the Ndebele. University graduates (34%) and respondents who have completed senior secondary school hope to be satisfied in ten year's time, whereas the proportion of primary-school graduates who expect the opposite is well above average at 86%.

Today	In ten years' time		
	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Satisfied	83	8	9
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	25	41	34
Dissatisfied	12	11	78
Ø	22	15	63

Of those who are very satisfied today, 83% also expect to be in ten year's time. Moreover, one quarter of those who are still in-between expect that their standards of living will improve over the coming decade, as do a good tenth of those who are currently dissatisfied. Of those who are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 41% so not think their situation will change. And 78% of those who are dissatisfied today fear that this will also be the case in ten year's time. On the other hand, just under one quarter

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of this group think they will be able to improve on their current situation. In short, the view of the future is tinged with optimism.

To summarise: In general, the respondents in our survey of Zimbabwe reveal deeply democratic convictions and political maturity. They accept the rules of democracy. People recognise the country's pluralistic nature, but do not necessarily feel that it is divisive. However, expectations of their own and the country's future are more muted. Given the current economic situation, this is not surprising. Indeed, more astonishing is the respondents' forbearance and the absence of any desire for militant change.

## Conclusion

It is obvious that the country's economic and political situation colours the attitudes of its citizens to a great degree. They are cautious, are fearful about the future, wary about change and feel powerless. This is particularly true of less educated, poor and rural people. Education, income and city air is liberating: university and college graduates, students, salaried employees and city dwellers take a less pessimistic view of the world and believe that they can change things.

But the social and cultural identities of members of both groups are very similar. People identify themselves in terms of personal, and in particular family, roles as well as religion. The Ndebele constitute an exception. They alone express a strong ethnic identity, obviously a consequence of historical experience. They have the least trust in state institutions, stick together, feel less powerless and are more likely to imagine the country partitioned.

But then, the majority of all respondents place little trust in the state. This is particularly true of educated people and inhabitants of cities. The most dependable factor working in the government's favour is the apathy of the less educated and the rural population.

Yet, despite widespread pessimism, the fact is that people still generally hold positive attitudes about democracy; this in itself is a remarkable finding. Nearly half the respondents express solidly democratic convictions, and only one fifth hold clearly undemocratic views. As in other countries, support for democracy correlates directly with the level of education.

All the same, the majority of democrats shy away from conflict, reject the use of violence and prefer political compromise. Although democracy in Zimbabwe has eroded in the past decade, the majority hope that what has been lost can be restored peacefully.

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# **Zimbabwe at the Crossroads**

## **Structural conditions and future scenarios**

ELDRED MASUNUNGURE

### **Introduction**

Zimbabwe is at the crossroads; it is at its most vulnerable and precarious stage in its post-colonial history. The situation in the country is very fragile and unpredictable. Which prong Zimbabwe will take will determine whether the country heads for catastrophe or salvation.

The Zimbabwe society is presently a sharply polarised one along two axes; pro-establishment or anti-establishment with the situation admitting few if any grey areas. This polarisation cuts across all sectors of society from political parties to non-governmental and civil society organisations, from churches to sports, from trade unions to student associations, etc.

The interpretations of Zimbabwe's predicament are also invariably binary. The Government uses a pan-Africanist framework to interpret everything and views the catastrophic condition of the country as stemming from 'neo-colonial and imperialist' onslaught using their domestic 'stooges' to effect "illegal regime change" in the country. The root of the crisis is seen in the "illegal economic sanctions" imposed by the West and its domestic backers who are out to punish the ruling Zanu-PF and its Government for daring to compulsorily repossess land under its fast-track land reform pro-

gramme started in the new millennium. The main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change and anti-Government civic society organisations are all viewed and treated within this paradigm.

On its part, the major opposition political formations and “progressive” civic society organisations label those who are not with them as against them. Those who are ‘non-aligned’ are not accepted by either of the two camps as neutral or capable of being impartial. A critique of either, no matter how valid and objective, is immediately dismissed by the offended party as promoting the interests and positions of the other party. Sober political analysis under these circumstances becomes a very difficult task.

## Zimbabwe’s Structural Conditions

The starting point for understanding the country’s politics is to recognise some structural realities that define the country’s political economy and society. These conditions, though not immutable, are variables that are difficult to manipulate in the short term because they are embedded in Zimbabwe’s history and culture.

### Zimbabwe as a Party-State

The first and perhaps the most important is that Zimbabwe is a party-state. By this we mean that the ruling party and the Zimbabwe state are like Siamese twins; they are virtually inseparable. In the Zimbabwean context, a party-state means that the party is supreme over the Government and state institutions. This is, however, not the formal or constitutional position. In fact, the Constitution of Zimbabwe does not recognise or mention any single political party but mentions by name the pillars of governance. For instance, section 32 (1) of the Constitution states that “the legislative authority of Zimbabwe resides in the legislature consisting of the President and Parliament.” The Constitution also clearly and explicitly states that central government is comprised of the President, two Vice-Presidents, Cabinet, and Ministries and is responsible for the formulation and execution of policy. In practice though, this juridical position does not represent the reality. On the contrary, the ruling Zanu-PF party structures, especially its administrative body (the Politburo) and key policy making organ (the Central Committee) are superior to the formal state structures. In reality, the party makes policy, Cabinet and Parliament endorse it, and the state bureaucracy implements it.

### A Risk-taking Ruling Party

The second structural reality is that the ruling party, particularly its leader, is a risk-taking party. This party has ruled the country since independence in April 1980 and to

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this extent Zimbabwe has witnessed twenty seven years of risk taking in both domestic and international politics. Evidence abounds of Robert Mugabe and his Zanu-PF's risk taking decisions and risk-taking behaviour. The reconciliation policy enunciated by Robert Mugabe on the eve of Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 was a risk<sup>1</sup>; *gukurahundi* in Matabeleland in the 1980s was a risk<sup>2</sup>; a commitment to socialism and the one-party state at a time when everybody was running away from the Marxist-Leninist anachronism was a risk; to defy the Bretton Woods Institutions (i.e. the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) from the 1990s to the present has been a risk; the decision to pay gratuities to the liberation war veterans in 1997 was a risk<sup>3</sup>; the violent and largely chaotic "fast-track" land seizure of white commercial farms was a risk from which the country will probably take a generation to recover; the decision to use violence as a campaign instrument in the 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections was a risk; probably the riskiest decision of all was the Government's decision to embark on *Operation Murambatsvina* in mid-2005, a decision that attracted both domestic and international opprobrium, leading, for the first time in the country's post-independence history, to a United Nations inquiry; the decision by the Government to assault trade union leaders in police custody in September 2006 and "bash" high profile opposition political and civic leaders in March 2007 was a big risk; and

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<sup>1</sup> The policy of reconciliation was enunciated by Mugabe in his maiden speech as Prime Minister when, according to one observer and critic, Mugabe "performed a volte-face by calling for reconciliation and national unity" (Peter Stiff, *Cry Zimbabwe: Independence - Twenty Years On*, Alberton: Galago Books, 2000). Mugabe reassured the white community that it would not be victimised and that he would draw a line through the past in order to achieve reconciliation between all parties involved. Many inside and outside Zanu-PF had wanted retribution against the settler Whites, particularly their leader Ian Smith and his associates. In a way then, Mugabe was taking a risk by sailing against the wind.

<sup>2</sup> *Gukurahundi* is a Shona word that means "the rain that sweeps away everything" and it was used in reference to the high risk scorched-earth military operation to hunt and wipe out armed dissidents operating in Matabeleland and Midlands. In the process, the operation killed far more armed civilians (estimates vary but a systematic and respected study claims about 20 000 civilians were killed) than the dissidents. Some commentators accused the Government of 'ethnic cleansing.' For details of the *gukurahundi* campaign, see the authoritative CCJP/LRF, *Breaking the Silence: Building True Peace. A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*. (Harare, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> War veterans of the liberation war era physically protested against the Government and Mugabe directly claiming, justifiably in many people's view, that they were living a destitute life when they had endured untold hardships during the armed struggle while their leaders were enjoying the fruits of independence. These 'war vets' were the biggest threat to Mugabe's continued rule and Mugabe felt compelled to award every war veteran huge and unbudgeted gratuities and monthly pensions and other benefits. Some analysts trace the beginning of the collapse of the Zimbabwe economy to this high risk decision. Political rationality superseded economic rationality, a feature of Zanu-PF rule since independence.

finally, the decision by Robert Mugabe to stand again (at 84) in the 2008 presidential elections is a high risk decision.

Regionally and internationally, the decision to be outspoken against a strong and superior-armed apartheid South Africa throughout the 1980s was a risk; the decision to get involved in the Mozambique civil war (1985 to 1994) was a risk; sending troops to the DRC crisis in 1998 was a risk; and defying the international community's assessment of his victory in the 2002 presidential and 2005 parliamentary elections is another big risk which has led to painful "targeted" sanctions; also risky was the decision to abruptly and unilaterally withdraw from the Commonwealth in December 2004; the tendency to condemn United States president George Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair at every available forum is another risky behaviour; and equally risky is the decision to "look East" in order to spite the West.

More risky decisions are no doubt going to be taken in the future. None of these risky decisions can be defended on grounds of having benefited the country and its people. They have invariably been characterised by more costs (often very heavy) than benefits. At best, the risky decisions have benefited the ruling party in terms of extending and/or consolidating its hold on power.

## Political Culture

Another structural but related condition lies in the realm of political culture. By political culture we mean *orientations to political action*, or, following Almond (1956, 396), "the manner in which individuals organise and select their perceptions, preferences, and values in the process of establishing a position vis-à-vis political action." In a study of political culture by this author ten years ago, some of the findings made were "pervasive culture of fear in the context of disillusionment," "the reticence of Zimbabweans on political matters" and "an overwhelming subject orientation of Zimbabweans" (Masunungure, 1998, 44). The latter conclusion, based on nation-wide survey of 1335 respondents, is particularly critical for our understanding of present Zimbabwe and the role of the citizen in it.

This culturalist line of analysis was pursued further in an article entitled "Why Zimbabweans Won't Rebel, Part 1" (22 September 2006) partially in response to a problematique earlier posed by Maggie Makanza (see her "The Anatomy of the Zimbabwean Problem", August 2006). In it, she posed the lamented:

Why has the pro-democracy movements not been able to capitalise on the so many reported failures by the Zanu PF government? Operation Murambatsvina, failed Land Reform Programme, the economy characterised by high inflation, high prices of basic food commodities, unemployment, the list is endless. Some people say all the necessary conditions needed for combustion to happen exist in Zimbabwe. All that is needed is a spark. Why then has there been no spark despite numerous opportunities that if presented elsewhere in the world would have brought about a change of the ruling government? Why has there been no eruption in Zimbabwe? (2006, 1).

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The answer to Makanza's salient question, which is related to many other people's puzzlement over the docility of Zimbabweans, actually lies deep in Zimbabwe's political culture. In the article referred to above, this author argued:

While the state elites are a risk-taking elite, the masses in Zimbabwe are predominantly a risk-averse demos.... The risk-averseness is now an integral part of Zimbabwe's political culture. This is now a fundamental reality, unpalatable though it might be to activists. Scholars describe this kind of political orientation as a subject political culture. In Zimbabwe, this subject political culture is a historical product of three layers of political authoritarianism: the traditional variant of political authoritarianism, settler colonial repression, and the commandist liberation war discourses and practices. The articulation of these three sources of authoritarianism has produced a variant of post-colonial authoritarianism we witness today whose binary features are a risk-taking elite and a risk-averse demos (Masunungure, 2006, 2).

Faced with the choice of resisting the regime that causes them misery or withdrawing from it, most Zimbabweans choose to withdraw from the state. This withdrawal takes various forms; migration - legally or by 'border-jumping' - and up to three million Zimbabweans left their country for more habitable destinations; or for those who can not take the migration route, withdrawing from the state i.e. disengaging from the state by avoiding the state through participation in informal economic and political activities. In short, and in terms of Albert's Hirschman's voice-exit dichotomy, the majority of risk-fearing Zimbabweans have opted for "exit" rather than "voice."

## Political Violence

Another structural reality of the Zimbabwean polity is political violence. Settler colonialism was implanted in Zimbabwe through violence, it sustained itself through violence, and because violence begets violence, it spawned violent resistance to settler colonialism. By definition an armed struggle is violent and when the armed liberators captured power and became the rulers of a newly born Zimbabwe, they also sustained their rule partly and oftentimes through violence. This political violence tends to oscillate with the electoral season; it rises towards elections and subsides thereafter and its magnitude depends on the threat perception of the ruling party i.e. how much of a threat the ruling party perceives the opposition to be at any given time. Commenting on the dialectic between democratisation and authoritarianism, Stefan Mair wrote:

The more the civil society and opposition pressed for democratisation and change of government, the more repressive the government reacted. The more the government increased its grip on power and resorted to oppression, the more determined and uncompromising the opposition became (2002, 27).

Moreover, political violence is infectious, as David Blair writes in his aptly titled book: *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the Struggle for Power in Zimbabwe*. During the height of state repression on the opposition Movement for Democratic Change from 2000 to 2002, Blair wrote:

Political violence was contagious. Once the ruling party elevated mayhem to the central method of winning elections, it was only a matter of time before the opposition joined in. Perhaps inevitably, the MDC was contracting the virus (2002, 207).

Today, violence, often state-initiated or state-supported, has almost become second nature in the country's politics. And the violence takes both inter-party and intra-party forms.

### Politics of Scarcity

The political violence in Zimbabwe, as is in many an African country, is rooted in another structural defect of African politics, the politics of winner-takes-all in the context of economic scarcity. In pre-independence Zimbabwe, for instance, most white politicians were already wealthy and had independent status *before* they entered and rose to prominence in politics. They were successful not because of, but despite politics. This was the case from medical doctor Sir Godfrey Huggins (Prime Minister of Rhodesia from 1933-1953) to successful farmer Ian Smith (Prime-Minister from 1964-1979). Politics among whites was a vocation rather than a means to livelihood; it was not a "do-or-die" affair. As each of the white politicians retired or lost to the other, they had a viable livelihood to return to. As such, losing an election did not mean losing everything. In other words, politics was not a zero-sum game. White politicians could survive outside of and without politics.

This is radically different from post-independence Zimbabwe where politics is a means of livelihood, not a vocation. Politics is zero-sum game, a do-or-die affair. This is what lends Zimbabwean and indeed African politics their peculiar violent flavour.

### Politicisation of Ethnicity

Another the structural variables is ethnicity. There is little doubt that ethnicity, in Zimbabwe as elsewhere, is a salient feature in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. Where race used to be the defining social and political variable in colonial Zimbabwe, ethnicity has taken over since independence. In fact, Masipula Sithole persuasively argues the case for the salience of ethnicity in both pre- and post-Independence Zimbabwe<sup>4</sup>. For him, Zimbabwean politics cannot be fully understood outside the framework of the politics and economics of ethnicity; that ethnicity is a fact of life, not only in Zimbabwe, but throughout the world where we have culturally plural societies. And Zimbabwe is clearly a multi-cultural society, though many may see the society more in binary terms, i.e. the majority Shona and the minority Ndebele.

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<sup>4</sup> For pre-independence Zimbabwe, see his seminal work, *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle*. Harare: Rujeko, 1979. Also see his "Ethnicity and factionalism in Zimbabwe nationalist politics 1965-1979" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (January 1980) 3, 1, 17-39.

Zimbabwe has more than a dozen ethnic and sub-ethnic and linguistic groups. This of necessity gives rise to the problem (or is it a challenge!) of sub-nationalism and sub-national identities. The ethnic topography of the country can be gleaned from the following table.

Zimbabwe Ethnic Groups

Ethnic group	Percentage
Shona-Oriented Groups	77
Karanga	22
Zezuru	18
Manyika	13
Korekore	12
Rozvi	10
Ndau	3
Ndebele-Oriented	19
Ndebele	14
Kalanga	5
Tonga and others	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The horrendous developments in Matabeleland and Midlands in the early 1980s i.e. *Gukurahundi* have been interpreted in these terms with some commentators even alleging ethnic-cleansing by the majority and ruling Shona against the minority Ndebele people. Political entrepreneurs will always resort to politicised ethnicity as a resource in the struggle for power when other potential resources can not achieve the same political goals. Luckily, both ruling party and the main opposition MDC party have a national spread, the latter perhaps more so than the former. What needs to be realised is that ethnicity, like a butcher's knife, needs to be handled carefully if it is not to cause harm to the singularity of the nation.

### The Rural-Urban Divide

A contending school of thought is the rural-urban thesis according to which ethnicity, even if it were salient at one point in Zimbabwe's history, has overtime lost its explanatory potency. It argues that the salience of ethnicity has been eroded, particularly since 2000. This erosion of ethnicity thesis was at one time articulated by Yusuf Bangura in *The Herald* (8 April 2002) in an article entitled: "Government of national unity should be rejected." Bangura begins his thesis by arguing:

The referendum of 2000, the parliamentary elections of 2001, and the just concluded presidential elections, however flawed they are, point to a significant development in African politics and democratization. The elections signal a decentring of ethnicity and assertion of policy issues over sentiments in public debate.

Bangura actually uses the urban-rural dichotomy to account for the outcome of the 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections. He writes:

Significantly [since Independence], the Shona vote has fragmented, allowing elites from the Ndebele and other minorities to play central roles in both parties. In the 2000 referendum which the Government lost, most urban dwellers voted against the Government whilst the rural people supported the Government. In the 2001 parliamentary elections, the opposition MDC won 57 seats and Zanu-PF 62. All 15 seats in Matabeleland, the heartland of the Ndebele, and most urban ones were won by the MDC. Zanu-PF won most rural seats.

The two largest cities, Harare (with a majority Shona population) and Bulawayo (majority Ndebele) voted overwhelmingly for the MDC. The pattern in the 2002 presidential elections is similar to previous ones except that the Ndebele vote fragmented for the first time. The cities in Matabeleland still went to the MDC but Cde Mugabe was able to make substantial inroads into that region's rural areas, winning about 33% of the regional vote. The MDC won the majority of the council seats in cities for which elections were held.

*These trends suggest that ethnicity is becoming less important in Zimbabwe's politics. The major dividing line is now rural-urban, and the two main parties reflect this. Zanu-PF has failed to connect with the urban workers and middle class, whereas the MDC, which is heavily supported by the West and local whites, offers no credible message to the land-hungry peasantry. Indeed, it is seen as an instrument to reverse the gains of independence and block land reform. (emphasis added)*

But are the ethnicity and rural-urban theses competing or complimentary explanations? Are they mutually exclusive? Or, as Bangura contends, has the rural-urban divide *replaced* the ethnic divide that he noted as having been primary in the first decade (pre-Unity Accord of December 1987) of the country's independence? Could it not be that the rural-urban divide *added to* and therefore complicated the ethnic divide rather than simplifying it?

A further complicating factor is that the ethnic tends to be geographically coterminous with the regional. That is, the minority Ndebeles occupy the West of the country while the majority Shonas are settled in the rest of the country. There is therefore a perception that if the majority rulers want to punish the minority tribe, they can do so by simply targeting the geographical area predominantly settled by the Ndebeles and that this is what happened in the early 1980s during the so-called anti-dissident war. The Fifth Brigade targeted the whole of Matabeleland and only parts of Midlands where the Ndebeles were in significant proportions.

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The fact of the matter is that both ethnicity and rural-urban cleavages are a fact of political life in Zimbabwe. Moreover, they are structural realities which give the country's politics its special flavour. The vital question is not whether, for instance, ethnicity is good or bad, ugly or beautiful, but what do both leaders and commoners (especially the former) do about it. Ethnicity can not be liquidated. It is attempts to liquidate ethnicity that result in atrocious state campaigns like the Gukurahundi or other genocidal activities. To deny ethnicity it to engage in self-denial and is unhelpful in the wrong run in nation building.

It may be noted that Zimbabwe is lucky in that to date religion has not been such a salient and divisive factor in the country's politics. Zimbabwe is a predominantly Christian society but there are many Christian denominations and they happily co-exist among themselves and between them and non-Christian communities. This raises the question: if diverse Christian and other religious faiths can live happily together, why should other social categories, e.g. ethnic, racial, regional and class, not be able to harmoniously co-exist?

## Generational Gap

Finally, among the structural variables is a demographic one; the generational factor. This is a potentially potent and emerging dynamic in the country's politics. Twenty years ago, two eminent students of age and politics, Braungart and Braungart asserted that

... in many societies some of the traditional explanations for political behaviour, such as social class, political party, and personality, are losing their potency, while age may become increasingly important in understanding politics, especially with rising youth populations in developing countries and rapidly expanding aged populations in advanced societies (1986: 206).

In Zimbabwe, the generational factor is between the "old guard" political class and the "new blood" that aspires to the top political positions and regard this period as their moment to rule. This generational cleavage is particularly evident in the ruling Zanu-PF, especially between the founding fathers and mothers (though rarely the latter) and the war veterans, those who actually fought in the liberation war. For the 'war vets', time is ripe now for them to take over from their fathers and grandfathers and this is now a source of great tensions and strains, particularly so as this has to contend with the ancient African tradition of deference to elders.

The generational gap also manifests itself at the inter-party level, most distinctly between the ruling Zanu-PF and the opposition MDC. Since the formation of the MDC in September 1999, there has been a clear generational gap whereby the MDC draws its support and votes from the younger adults while those who are older, especially those forty years and older, have leaned towards the ruling party. The leadership of the two major parties is also from different generations. For instance, while the MDC

leader and his deputy are both below 55 years, two members of the presidential triumvirate of Zanu-PF are octogenarians. This generational divide between the ruling and opposition parties and within the ruling party, will be of great significance in the next few years.

Some of the structural variables discussed above have a bearing on the current state of political affairs in the country. Whether one is sympathetic to the ruling establishment or for "regime change," it can not be disputed that Zimbabwe is at the crossroads. It is a country in turmoil, buffeted by a cocktail of crises.

## Zimbabwe: Fractured Politics and Society

Zimbabwe today is characterised by a number of developments chief among them the following:

- 1) The succession problem and intra-elite conflicts in the ruling Zanu-PF party;
- 2) The "harmonisation" or rather synchronisation of presidential and parliamentary elections in 2008;
- 3) the re-fielding of President Robert Mugabe as Zanu-PF presidential candidate in the 2008 elections;
- 4) the onslaught on the opposition MDC leaders and civic society activists;
- 5) high levels of social and political polarisation and a civil society that is fractured, if not confused.
- 6) Along with the polarisation of society as a whole is the atomisation or individualisation of society.
- 7) Convergence of opinion by regional and international players and their outrage over the conduct of the Zanu-PF regime.

Of the above major developments in the fast-paced and riveting politics of Zimbabwe, the succession question looms very large. The succession issue is a dual one: succession at the macro or national level; and succession at the ruling party level. Succession struggles at both levels breed their own dynamics, complexities and dangers. Succession struggles within the ruling party are the central theme and it is believed that whoever wins this struggle will not only inherit the mantle of the party but that of the state. And because there can be only one winner, the struggle is and will become increasingly vicious and lethal. It is our considered view that the succession to the ruling party presidency will need to be very carefully managed than is the case with the national presidency. This is why the difficulties of managing the transition from Mugabe to his successor inside the ruling party have fractured the party.

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There is presently a lot of factionalism and leadership instability in the ruling party. In fact, Zanu-PF is at its most factionalised since 1977 when Robert Mugabe was elevated from party Secretary-General to party President. There are presently three (not two) factions that are gladiating for power within the ruling party: that of former military supreme and kingmaker, retired General Solomon Mujuru; that of Secretary for Legal Affairs and former chief of the spy agency (the Central Intelligence Organisation) and that of the party president himself, Robert Mugabe. However, the real fight is between Mugabe and Mujuru because Mnangagwa does not really have a solid and extensive political base. His political strength is more apparent than real.

*Endgame on the Succession Issue.* In March 2007, the Zanu-PF leader announced that the parliamentary elections which are not due until 2010 were going to be brought forward to 2008 and held concurrently with the presidential elections that are due in March 2008. Further, and very significantly, he expressed his interest to stand again for the party as its presidential candidate. His party reportedly but controversially endorsed his wish at the end of March. Our view is that President Mugabe's decision to stand again in 2008 does not in any way solve the succession crisis and leadership instability that have been boiling inside the party. Mugabe's decision merely suspended the inevitable day of reckoning or moment of truth<sup>5</sup>. And when the issue re-emerges, it will do so with a vengeance. It is like the progress of malaria disease which proceeds in stages if not treated. Each successive stage is more vicious than the preceding one with the last and potentially fatal stage manifesting itself in cerebral malaria. We see the same tendency with regard to the succession question in Zanu-PF.

As the country moves towards the March/April 2008 elections, the spiral of violence is again manifesting itself and it is systematically being directed at the main but equally fractured opposition MDC and its civic society allies. March and April 2007 were particularly unhappy months for the MC as attested by the Human Rights Watch report entitled "Bashing Dissent: Escalating violence and state repression in Zimbabwe."

In discussing the onslaught on the MDC and other sources of dissent, it is important to realise that the ruling Zanu-PF, like most other African liberation movements, almost congenitally intolerant of dissent, especially in its organised form. This issue prompted William Gumede, an activist in South Africa's liberation struggle, to pose the question: Is there something inherent in the political culture of liberation movements that makes it difficult for them to sustain democratic platforms?" to which he supplied the answer: "The problem for most liberation movements is how to establish a democratic culture" (in *New Statesman*, 2 April 2007).

The recent political developments in the country have starkly exposed the polarisation in the non-state sector. In the face of the deepening syndrome of crises, civil

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<sup>5</sup> Zanu-PF secretary for administration, Didymus Mutasa confirmed as much when, after conceding the existence of two factions, he claimed that they (factions) have since "closed ranks" following Mugabe's decision to stand in 2008: "his staying has put out the fire" (see "Zanu-PF factions close ranks" in *The Sunday Mail*, 6 May 2007.)

society takes fragmented initiatives to address the same problem as if the various civic organisations are in competition with each other. Civil society itself is hopelessly divided between pro-establishment and anti-establishment groups and this is the case across the board, including churches. Rarely does the Christian community as a whole speak with one voice on critical political matters<sup>6</sup>.

## Zimbabwe: Towards a Breaking Point?

An inter-denominational Christian triad comprising the Heads of Denominations of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches produced a widely discussed report entitled *The Zimbabwe We Want: towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe* (hereafter referred to as the NVD) which made despondent reading. After noting the tremendous strides the country had made in the first two decades of independence, it then lamented:

Yet in 2005, Zimbabwe celebrated its Silver Jubilee of independence under the throes of a crisis, which persists to this day. The patriotic fervour, national pride and the once lofty and romantic ideals of independence seemed to be lost, at least in the considered view of many of our nationals, in the stark reality of a nation divided, traumatised and impoverished by this political, economic and social crisis (NVD, October 2006, 1).

Just before the 2007 Easter Season, the Catholic church hierarchy, the ZCBC circulated a powerful pastoral letter provocatively entitled "God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed" which described the country's triple crises: "a crisis of governance", "a crisis of moral leadership" and "a spiritual and moral crisis." The pastoral letter then dissected the roots of the crisis:

The present crisis in our Country has its roots deep in colonial society. Despite the rhetoric of a glorious socialist revolution brought about by the armed struggle, the colonial structures and institutions of pre-independent Zimbabwe continue to persist in our society. None of the unjust and oppressive security laws of the Rhodesian State have been repealed; in fact, they have been reinforced by even more repressive legislation, the Public Order and Security Act and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, in particular. It almost appears as though someone sat down with the Declaration of Rights and deliberately scrubbed out each in turn.

Why was this done? Because soon after independence, the power and wealth of the tiny white Rhodesian elite was appropriated by an equally exclusive black elite, some of

<sup>6</sup> This is not to contradict an earlier statement about the harmonious inter-denominational relations. The discordant inter-denominational relations are over different interpretations of the current crisis and its roots and these divisions exist only at the level of church elites and have not infected relations between and among church members at the grassroots level.

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whom have governed the country for the past 27 years through political patronage. Black Zimbabweans today fight for the same basic rights they fought for during the liberation struggle. It is the same conflict between those who possess power and wealth in abundance, and those who do not; between those who are determined to maintain their privileges of power and wealth at any cost, even at the cost of bloodshed, and those who demand their democratic rights and a share in the fruits of independence; between those who continue to benefit from the preset system of inequality and injustice, because it favours them and enables them to maintain an exceptionally high standard of living, and those who go to bed hungry and wake up in the morning to another day without work and without income; between those who only know the language of violence and intimidation, and those who feel they have nothing to lose because their Constitutional rights have been abrogated and their votes rigged. Many people in Zimbabwe are angry, and their anger is now erupting into open revolt in one township after another (ZCBC Pastoral Letter, 5 April 2007, 2).

It is important to note that the two church documents, i.e. the NVD and the Pastoral Letter, received radically different responses from the State. The NVD process was done in collaboration with the State with the authors briefing the state President at the beginning and end of the process. President Mugabe was at the official launch of the NVD in October 2006 where he appealed to the nation to receive the document in the spirit of constructive debate. In marked contrast to the State's position on the NVD, the ZCBC Pastoral Letter received a very hostile reception from State elites including, and particularly from the President Mugabe himself who warned the Catholic Bishops:

If I had gone to church and the priest had read that so-called pastoral letter, I would have stood up and said nonsense. It is not something spiritual, it is not religious, the bishops have decided to turn political, we regard them as no longer being spiritual and our relations with them would be conducted as if we are dealing with political entities, and this is quite a dangerous path they have chosen for themselves (quoted in The Herald, "President warns bishops" 4 May 2007).

This is the state in which Zimbabwe finds itself today: a highly polarised society; an economy in a state of implosion with inflation of 2 200% and expected to rise spectacularly; with only 20% of the labour force in formal employment; the swallowing of the formal economy by the informal or "black" economy; a state that is struggling and failing to provide basic social services like health and education; rampant shortages of virtually everything that is valued in society, and endemic corruption that threatens to tear the society apart.

More tragic is the widespread misery and suffering and the deep-seated pessimism about the future. For instance, in October 2006, the Mass Public Opinion Institute conducted a survey on the state of the economy and people's survival strategies. On macro-economic evaluations, up to nine in ten (89%) adult Zimbabweans described the state of the country's economy as either "bad" (38%) or "very bad" (51%) and 71% of survey respondents said they foresee the economy deteriorating in 2007. Moreover, less than a third (28%) of Zimbabweans had confidence that the Government would be able to solve the country's problems.

In terms of micro-economic assessments, more than eight in ten (85%) adult Zimbabweans described their personal economic condition as bad or very bad. Up to 68% of respondents could only envision themselves in a worse or much worse off position in 2007.

Given this dire state of affairs, many observers puzzle over why Zimbabweans "tolerate" this condition. This is where the "risk-aversion" thesis becomes handy. The risk-fearing orientation of Zimbabweans makes it very difficult if not impossible for opposition and civic movements to mobilise and organise Zimbabweans to take collective action in response to collective grievances, and they are many. Most citizens would rather withdraw from the source of their misery, i.e. the state rather than confront it. This is integrally linked to another phenomenon; the atomisation of society. Each individual or household deals with the grievance (which has a collective impact) individually rather than mobilising people in a similar position and collectively agitating for the author of the grievance to address it for the collective benefit of the citizens. It is as if Zimbabweans are saying and agreeing that "each person for himself/herself and God for us all!" Thus, when the local authorities fail to provide running tap water, the well-to-do build boreholes for their household use; the poorer residents fetch water from unprotected wells and polluted rivers. When the public utility responsible for providing electricity fails to do so, which is now routine, those who can afford buy electricity generators and the less privileged buy candles for lighting and firewood for cooking. When public transporters fail to provide transport or hike fares to unaffordable levels, those who have the resources buy bicycles and those who cannot, they walk to and from work, often for a distance of more than ten to twenty kilometres.

The above characterises the typical exit option, and they have no choice but to take such an option. And the people who are taking such exit options are angry people, very angry. The Pastoral Letter referred to above did not miss this point: "The people of Zimbabwe are suffering. More and more people are getting angry, even from among those who had seemed to be doing reasonably well under the circumstances" (5 April 2007, 1).

*Here lies the danger for Zimbabwe: these are people who are unhappy and angry, people who do not or cannot take the "voice" option [courtesy of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and repressive pieces of legislation] but have not taken the ultimate exit option, i.e. migration. This sort of scenario makes Zimbabwe a giant pressure cooker. And it is bound to explode sooner rather than later. Angry and hungry people who can not express themselves are a dangerous people. They are a highly inflammatory material and this appears to be where Zimbabwe is or is inexorably heading towards.*

The giant pressure cooker has all the ingredients for what sociologists call "anomic" action. This refers to "unorganised mobs and riots, more or less spontaneous expressions of grievance or protest, rising quickly and quickly subsiding" (Almond and Powell: 1978, 172). Smouldering discontent may be sparked by even a perfectly non-political incident and may suddenly explode in unpredictable and uncontrollable ways.

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Because anomic political action can hardly be predicted in terms of its timing, scope and ferocity, the 'wrath' of the state cannot be deployed to pre-empt such an occurrence.

Moreover, such sudden eruptions of mass anger benefit neither the rulers nor those who aspire to rule. Often a demagogue (a warlord of sorts) emerges to take command of the situation and the situation can quickly descend into anarchy and chaos. This is a scary scenario, and yet one that cannot be ruled out in present-day Zimbabwe. The ZCBC's Pastoral Letter recognised this threat when they warned:

The confrontation in our Country has now reached a flashpoint. As the suffering population becomes more insistent, generating more and more pressure through boycotts, strikes, demonstrations and uprisings, the State responds with ever harsher oppression through arrests, detentions, banning orders, beatings and torture. In our judgement, the situation is extremely volatile. In order to avoid further bloodshed and avert a mass uprising the nation needs a new people-driven Constitution that will guide a democratic leadership in free and fair elections that will offer a chance for economic recovery under genuinely new policies (ZCBC, April 2007).

However, a spontaneous mass eruption of anger is neither necessary nor inevitable. In other words, there are alternative scenarios to this frightful prognosis.

## Alternative Scenarios

The mass uprising possibility is the worst case scenario. The best case scenario is associated with the on-going but rather invisible intervention by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The SADC Initiative arose from an emergency meeting of the regional body held to consider the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe following the assault on opposition MDC and civic society leaders on March 11, 2007. That 28-29 March 2007 Dar es Salaam meeting appointed South African President Thabo Mbeki to mediate between the ruling Zanu-PF party and the MDC and come up with a solution to the crisis.

Though there is deep-seated mistrust and suspicion between the two bitter rivals and between the MDC and Mbeki, this mediation provides a window of opportunity (albeit small) to amicably break the long-standing impasse. The elements of the solution could include: a new, broadly accepted constitution, repeal or amendment of the vicious POSA and AIPPA, comprehensive electoral reform, liberalising the media to enable all parties to be able to reach out to their constituencies, and finally a free, fair, open and credible election. These are apparently the minimum conditions for the MDC, one of which - the demand for a new people-driven constitution - is certain to be

rejected by the ruling party which has repeatedly made it clear that the current constitution is "sacrosanct and non-negotiable."<sup>7</sup>

The above roadmap seems to provide a conflict-free route to a more democratic Zimbabwe. In this scenario, it is virtually impossible to hold elections in March 2008 given the time needed to negotiate a new constitution. In any case, even when a political settlement is agreed on, an interim governmental arrangement would need to be put in place for at least two years after the agreement and before the elections. This interregnum will be necessary for a 'cooling off' or healing period.

The other scenarios include the possibility of 'reformed,' powerful Zanu-PF elements (allied by those from the security agencies) 'advising' their principal, i.e. President Mugabe, to step aside at the expiry of his current term or soon after his re-election (which is highly likely) in March 2008. This, though good for the nation, is likely to cause or deepen divisions and ruptures in the ruling party as the various factions struggle to overtake the other in the race to State House.

Another possible scenario is for President Mugabe contesting the March 2008 elections and serving his new five-year term of office in full. This scenario will have ghastly consequences for the country in that the present economic meltdown, governance crisis and standoff with some powerful members of the international community will worsen. In fact, this is one of the scenarios that President Mbeki and SADC are consciously trying to avoid. And yet it is not only possible; it is probable, at least going by the recent utterances of Didymus Mutasa, the ruling party's secretary for administration and number five in the Zanu-PF hierarchy. Commenting on Mugabe's decision to again contest the March 2008 elections, Mutasa said:

This is what has happened and many people are very pleased about it. .... There is absolutely nothing to talk about the succession issue any more for the next six years because we shall have the President as our leader. He is not going to be succeeded for that period ("Zanu-PF factions close ranks" in *The Sunday Mail*, May 6, 2007).

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<sup>7</sup> At the launch of the NVD in October 2006, President Mugabe derided calls for an indigenous constitution: "It is clear from those pushing for the so-called 'home-grown constitution' that the objectives they hope to achieve are neither home-grown nor majoritarian. They relate to regime change, itself a goal grown outside our home, indeed, outside the Zimbabwe we want. It carries a hostile vision, a vision of a Zimbabwe wanted only by those we fought yesteryear" (in "Church launch document on national vision" *The Herald* 28 October 2006).

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## Conclusion

As repeatedly pointed out in this essay, Zimbabwe is at a historical conjuncture where taking the wrong path will result in irreversible damage in virtually all aspects of life. One foreign diplomat who prays that the SADC/Mbeki Initiative succeeds, exhorted the rival political leaders "to subordinate their egos to the national good." He then added: "It would be unfortunate to squander this window of opportunity and allow the situation to worsen than it already is now, or the institutions of the state will start to collapse completely" (quoted in IWPR, April 20, 2007).

The tragedy for Zimbabwe is that even if the immediate or trigger factors are addressed, the structural variables that are part of Zimbabwe's political economy and society are not conducive to democratisation of the policy and its society in the short and medium term. The existence of the party-state and the vanguard role it has arrogated to itself, the risk-averseness and subject orientation of the populace, the culture of political violence in the context of the politics and economics of scarcity, and the politicisation of ethnicity all provide inhospitable soil for the germination and healthy growth of the seed of democracy.

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