

**CONTESTING HEGEMONY: CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STRUGGLE
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE IN ZIMBABWE, 2000 – 2008**

By

CORNELIAS NCUBE

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Abstract

This thesis employs Gramsci's language of hegemony in order, firstly, to explore the role of civil society in legitimating and resisting state hegemony, and secondly, to examine the sociological basis of counter-hegemonic politics in post-2000 Zimbabwe. The thesis arose out of a critique of reductionist approaches in the theorising and study of changing state-society relations in post-2000 Zimbabwe that identifies civil society exclusively with opposition politics and excludes organisations aligned to the ruling party, and therefore resulting in functionalist discussions that view civil society as necessarily anti-state. This thesis demonstrates however that a dense hegemonic civil society also exists and it is organically aligned to ZANU-PF in its advocacy for a social change based on a radical transformed terrain of the relations of social forces of production, vis-à-vis land redistribution, albeit implementing this vision through coercive violence, persuasive but exclusionary discourses of radical nationalism, Afro-radicalism and nativism. Confronting it, is an equally militant counter-hegemonic civil society aligned to the MDC, and it deploys the discourses of constitutionalism and human rights to resist state hegemony and to unravel the violent nature of ZANU-PF's nationalist project, but in ways devoid of a serious critique of the structural inequalities of a post-independent Zimbabwe.

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List of Abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
AU	African Union
BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BSA	Broadcasting Services Act
CA	Christian Alliance
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CC	Constitutional Commission
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CCZ	Crisis Coalition of Zimbabwe
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
CNN	Cable News Network
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COSATU	Congress of South Africa Trade Union
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DC	Delimitation Commission
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ED	Electorate Directorate
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ESC	Electoral Supervisory Commission
FORUM	Forum for Democratic Reform Trust
FRELIMO	The Liberation Front of Mozambique
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IBA	International Bar Association
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCPR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICWU	Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
IDPs	Internal Displaced People
IFI	International Financial Institutions (World Bank and IMF)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPFP	Inception Phase Framework Plan
IWPR	Institute of War and Peace Reporting
LOMA	Law and Order Maintenance Act
LRF	Legal Rights Foundation
LRRP	Land Reform and Resettlement Programme
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change (before the 2005 split)
MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change – Mutambara
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai
MIC	Media and Information Commission
MISA	Media Institute for Southern Africa
MMPZ	Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe
MNHM	Matebele National Home Movement
MNR	Mozambique National Resistance
MOVC	Make Our Vote Count

MPOI	Mass Public Opinion Institute
NANGO	National Association of Non Governmental Organisations
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
PAPEOM	Pan African Parliament Observer Mission
PASS	Poverty Assessment Study Survey
PC	Peace Committees
PF-ZAPU	Patriotic Front – Zimbabwe African People Union
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PVO-ACT	Private Voluntary Organisations Act
RGE	Registrar General of Elections
RNA	Rhodesia Native Association
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC-SEOM	Southern African Development Community – Election Observer Mission
SATRC	South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WC	Women’s Coalition
WOZA	Women of Zimbabwe Arise
PF-ZAPU	Patriotic Front- Zimbabwe African People’s Union
ZANLA	Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (military wing of ZANU)
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

ZEC	Zimbabwe Election Commission
ZESN	Zimbabwe Election Support Network
ZHRF	Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum
ZILWACO	Zimbabwe Liberation War Collaborators
ZIMCET	Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust
ZIMCODD	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation
ZIMRIGHTS	Zimbabwe Human Rights
ZINASU	Zimbabwe National Students Union
ZINATHA	Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association
ZIPDRA	Zimbabwe Political Detainees and Restricttees Association
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (military wing of ZAPU)
ZLHR	Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
ZNLWVA	Zimbabwe National War Veterans Association
ZNPC	Zimbabwe National Pastors Conference
ZWLA	Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association
\$ZW	Zimbabwe dollar

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 The problem and its theoretical context

This thesis is about state-society relations in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2008. In particular, it employs Gramsci's language of hegemony in order to examine the role of civil society in Zimbabwe in legitimating and resisting state hegemony in the context of the post-2000 struggle for democratisation. The study is informed by two closely linked methodological problems in the deployment of the civil society discourse, in both journalistic and academic literature, in order to understand the violent and polarised post-2000 Zimbabwe politics. Firstly, there is a predominantly functionalist approach that theorises civil society exclusive of the broader notion of the state. In other words, civil society in post-2000 Zimbabwe (and even before) exists in the liberal sense as self-organising and autonomous institutions that are fighting and are equally being fought by an authoritarian and hegemonic state. This functionalist approach to theorising civil society's struggle for social change was further compounded by the state-defined civil society discourse that was overly negative: challenging civil society's 'right to speak and act on the political stage and questioned their commitment to the social and economic development of Zimbabweans' (Dorman, 2001:2).

Consequently, a sub-problem arises out of this functionalism: i.e., a tendency within post-2000 Zimbabwe scholarship to view civil society, monolithically, as social actors that are only aligned to the democratisation movement, which include mostly human rights and democracy groups such as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZIMRIGHTS), Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), National Association for Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), Crisis Coalition of Zimbabwe (CCZ), among many others. Among this group

are 'critical intellectuals' (Tendi, 2008) that either support or generally sympathise with the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opposition party. As a result the debate on state-civil society relations in post-2000 Zimbabwe excludes from the rubric of civil society, groups such as for example the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), the Zimbabwe Liberation War Collaborators (ZILWACO), the Zimbabwe Political Detainees and Restrictees Association (ZIPDRA), among others (see Appendix 8 for an illustrativematrix table on the relative positioning of civil society groups along the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic bloc continuum). These groups are organically linked to the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) because of their participation – in one form or the other – in the war of liberation and collectively share the 'war veterans' tag. Because of their support for the state in the violent land occupations of 2000 and thereafter in the violent mobilising of electoral support for ZANU-PF, war veterans have a negative reputation as shock troopers of the ZANU-PF regime and therefore are viewed by most main stream human rights and democracy groups as not part of the rubric of civil society. In view of the general negative discourse on civil society by the ZANU-PF regime, the war veterans also refused to be labelled as civil society (see McCandless, 2005). Furthermore, a functionalist view of civil society in post-2000 Zimbabwe rarely considers elites or, more specifically, intellectuals aligned to ZANU-PF, i.e., 'patriotic intellectuals' (Tendi, 2008), as part of civil society. This is perhaps because these intellectuals do not oppose the state in the neoliberal sense and/or are not organisations in the Weberian institutional sense.

The consequence of a one dimensional view of civil society is that in post-2000 Zimbabwe, a phenomenon of labelling and counter-labelling arose where entities seeking autonomous political space from the state were labelled as the real 'civil society' whilst those groups that sought to operate under the ambit of the state were labelled 'un-civil society'. Moreover, social actors aligned to ZANU-PF categorised themselves as patriots and revolutionaries whilst labelling those aligned to the MDC as traitors, sell-outs and puppets. Inversely, social actors aligned to the MDC categorised themselves as

'democratic activists' and 'human rights defenders' whilst those aligned to ZANU-PF were generally labelled as 'war-mongers', 'violent thugs' trying to defend an illegitimate and unpopular regime. There is therefore need to widen the definition of what and who is part of civil society in Zimbabwe because a reductionism that theorises civil society as only social actors and/or institutions aligned to the democratisation movement fails to consider that it can both legitimise and resist state hegemony.

Secondly, in the deployment of the civil society discourse in order to understand post-2000 Zimbabwe politics, there is a methodological polarisation between what David Moore terms 'economism' versus 'a narrow politicism' (Moore, 2007:1). Through the former methodological focus, scholars concentrate on the socio-economic justice issues hinging on land redistribution that is advanced by social actors in the hegemonic movement (ZANU-PF and war veterans) (e.g., Moyo and Yeros, 2007). In the latter methodological focus, scholars concentrate on the human rights injustices experienced by social actors within the 'opposition' movement (the MDC and mostly human rights and democracy civil society groups) (e.g., Blair, 2002). Moore (2007:1) argues that this polarisation, both in the practice of post-2000 Zimbabwe politics and in the theoretical interpretation of it, has generated different perspectives as to what a democratic social change means, but more fundamentally how it should be achieved, in both political and socio-economic terms.

In order to address the problems flagged above, this thesis initially proposed to use the language of patronage, clientelism and neopatrimonialism in order to investigate how and why civil society negotiates political space in order to influence policy in Zimbabwe (the Interview Guide in the Appendix 1 and 2 reflects this earlier focus). However, faced with a politically tense and violent 2008 election period in Zimbabwe, which coincided with the thesis' field work (see section 1.2.3.4 and chapter 5), and also informed by literature on the challenges of using an amorphous and sensitive concept like

neopatrimonialism as an analytical framework, I reconsidered this approach. More importantly, when I was in the field, two respondents – both renowned academics on Zimbabwean politics and who also lead two influential NGOs in the country – challenged me, in the friendliest and most thought provoking way, on my choice of neopatrimonialism to problematise the role of civil society in Zimbabwe (Interview 1, 2008 and Interview 15, 2008). Therefore, the two major methodological problems in the deployment of the civil society discourse to understand post-2000 Zimbabwe politics that were flagged above reflects partly a synthesis of those two interview-discussions and partly a synthesis from wider literature on Zimbabwean NGOs / civil society and politics (e.g., Moore, 2006 and 2007; Dorman, 2001; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006).

Therefore, Gramsci's language of hegemony is adopted in this study in order to address the problems flagged above in the following way: firstly, through the idea of 'the integral state' combining both 'the apparatus of government' (i.e., political society) and 'the 'private' apparatus of 'hegemony' (i.e., civil society), there is the widening of the civil society discourse beyond the dominant liberal view of civil society that locate these actors exclusively within the democratisation movement in the post-2000 Zimbabwe. We can thus begin to conceptualise groups like the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), the Zimbabwe Liberation War Collaborators (ZILIWACO), the Zimbabwe Political Detainees and Restrictees Association (ZIPDRA), pro-ZANU-PF intellectuals (Tendi, 2008) and pro-ZANU-PF activists as hegemonic civil society actors that remained organically attached to the state, in part out of envisaged benefits from the latter's patronage system and in part, and perhaps more fundamental, out of organically and genuinely societal rooted socio-economic justice grievances over the unfinished business of land restitution. Most fundamentally, the idea of the 'integral state' allows a focus on civil society, which does not necessarily negate the state and even party politics hence avoiding '[...] obscuring the bigger picture of Zimbabwean politics, [...] overwhelm[ing] the more mundane concerns of NGOs [/ civil society]' (Dorman, 2001:4).

Secondly, the primacy that Gramsci put on ideology (or discourses) as informing 'all modes of thought and behaviour' (Femia, 1981:24) of social actors in the contest for hegemony informs the need for empirical work such as the present thesis to examine the role of discourse or ideology in influencing the function of the 'hegemonic civil society' and the 'counter-hegemonic civil society' to legitimate and resist state hegemony, respectively. Cameron and Dorman (2009) identify nationalism and democracy as two over-arching discourses that clashed in post-2000 Zimbabwe thus creating a "multiplicity of antagonisms" [...] in and by way of the social relations of civil society' (Katz, 2006). Within this polarised context different social actors defined and justified their politics and actions towards others (see also Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006). Furthermore, within the polarised context wars of position and manoeuvre were taken to advance different visions of social change, which explains why even at an academic level scholars are divided between 'economism' and 'a narrow politicism'.

Following this introduction, the rest of the chapter sets out the aims and objectives of the thesis, its research questions and the parameters of inquiry. The chapter also discusses the methodology and methods of the thesis and details in depth the field work exercise that was carried in Zimbabwe between March and August 2008. Finally, the chapter concludes with an outline of the structure of the rest of the thesis.

1.1.1 Aims and objectives of the study

This section discusses the aims and objectives of the thesis. The broad aim of this thesis is to employ Gramsci's theory of hegemony in order to explore the changing state-society relations in post-2000 Zimbabwe, from the perspective of civil society's struggles for social change, and to further demonstrate how and why the contest for hegemony between Gramsci's two models of civil society

(i.e., hegemonic and counter-hegemonic civil society) affects the attainment of a collectively desired democratic social change in Zimbabwe. The thesis has two specific objectives that talk to several sub-issues:

(i) To investigate the role played by civil society in Zimbabwe in legitimating and/or resisting hegemony in the context of the post-2000 struggle for social change. This objective is achieved in two ways: first, by examining how the state's discourses of nationalism, sovereignty and empowerment were used by a hegemonic civil society to legitimise state hegemony – using both force and persuasion – in ways that promoted passive resistance towards ZANU-PF's authoritarian and exclusionary politics. Within this context, I also aim to demonstrate how civil society's legitimising role was abated through the 'criminalisation of the state' that saw the state's institutional structures lending support and stabilising the hegemonic project. Second, the objective is achieved by examining the employment, by a counter-hegemonic civil society, of a counter-hegemonic strategy based on the constitutional and human rights discourses that sought to demystify ZANU-PF's nationalism as retrogressive. Within this context, I further examine how and why this counter-hegemonic strategy influenced civil society's strategies to engage an intransigent state.

(ii) To explore the sociological determinants of counter-hegemonic politics in Zimbabwe by examining the organisational and material factors influencing the transformative politics of counter-hegemonic civil society. This objective is also achieved in two ways: first, under organisational factors this objective explores the urban–rural divide characteristic of the civil society sector in Zimbabwe, the politics of civil society coalitions and networks and finally the embeddedness of civil society struggles for social change in the politics of political parties. Second, in terms of the material factors, this objective examines the advantages and disadvantages of donor funded struggles for social change in post-2000 Zimbabwe.

1.1.2 Research questions

The aim of this section is to present the thesis' research questions. The study has two major research questions, each with sub-questions that help in answering it. Each major question is presented concurrently with its sub-questions:

1. What role did civil society play in legitimating and resisting state hegemony within the context of post-2000 Zimbabwe's struggles for social change?

To help answer research question 1, the following sub-research questions are asked: How and why was the discourse of nationalism employed by a hegemonic civil society to promote passive resistance against ZANU-PF's authoritarian and exclusionary politics? What role did state institutional structures play in supporting and stabilising ZANU-PF hegemony? How and why were the constitutional and human rights discourses used by the counter-hegemonic civil society to resist state hegemony? What strategies does the counter-hegemonic civil society employ to engage an intransigent state with the view of effecting a democratic social change?

2. What are the organisational and material factors influencing counter-hegemonic politics in post-2000 Zimbabwe and how do these sociological determinants influence the struggle for social change?

To help answer research question 2, the following sub-questions are asked. First, under organisational factors the following questions are asked: What is the nature of the interface between urban based and rural based civil society organisations and how do these relations strengthen or weaken the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe? How and why do inter civil society relations influence the struggle for

social change in post-2000 Zimbabwe? How and why do internal dynamics of political parties shape civil society positioning along the hegemony – counter-hegemony continuum in the struggle for social change in post-2000 Zimbabwe? Second, under material factors the following question is asked: To what extent is civil society autonomous from donor defined agendas and how does this impact on its capacity to influence policy processes?

1.1.3 Scope of the study

The Gramscian approach adopted here informs the research design, methodology and analysis of the thesis. It is important to note that ‘there [is] no single Gramscian’, and therefore, different disciplines are bound to use ‘Gramsci’s fragmentary and often contradictory thoughts concerning social theory’ (Gill, 1993:2) at different levels of analysis, on different units of analysis and for different purposes. For this thesis, the analysis of the contest for hegemony is done at the national level in the same manner Gramsci initially applied hegemony to analyse Italy’s working class’ quest for social change against fascism. Within this context, the focus is ‘[...] centred upon the state, upon the relationship of civil society to the state, and upon the relationship of politics, ethics and ideology to production’ (Cox, 1993:49). By focusing on the national level of analysis, I am not negating the contemporary increase in the application of Gramscian analysis at the international level, especially within the field of international relations and the rich literature that unpacks hegemony within the context of inter-state system, focusing mainly on US hegemony.

Although reference to international social actors is made in the thesis, the international level of analysis plays an auxiliary role and is deployed only where it assists in explaining the actions of different national social actors. Combing the two levels of analysis, albeit on an uneven scale, enriches the explanatory power of the concept of hegemony in explaining democratisation processes in Africa

(Abrahamsen, 2000:8). Gourevitch argues that focusing analysis of hegemony exclusively at the national level may underplay the extent to which local hegemony is part of an interactive system that combines itself and hegemony at the international level (cited in Abrahamsen, 2000:7). As the discussion in chapter 4 shows, the hegemonic civil society drummed the interplay between politics at national level and politics at international level, hence its self-understanding as a counter-hegemonic force against a global force (neo-imperialism) that uses local actors in the democratisation movement to destabilise its 'progressive' nationalist politics.

Moreover, the primacy of the national level of analysis permitted me to limit the sampling of civil society groups within Zimbabwe, again without negating the fact that the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe also involved regional and international civil society organisations (see chapter 5). Zimbabwe's civil society is rich and diverse. Therefore, civil society organisations that operate at national level are selected for this study. As already alluded in the introduction above, there is need to widen the scope of civil society to include those entities like the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), the Zimbabwe Liberation War Collaborators (ZILWACO), and the Zimbabwe Political Detainees and Restrictees Association (ZIPDRA), among others. These organisations are discussed collectively under the label 'war veterans' and constitute key players of the hegemonic civil society. Within the counter-hegemonic civil society, focus is on organisations that are loosely categorised as governance, democracy and human rights groups. Within this governance-human rights sector it is not possible to study all organisations. For this reason only those perceived or considered opinion-makers in civil society were selected, not entirely arbitrarily, but also through informed informants during field work. This also entailed a bias towards urban based civil society formations such as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), Crisis Coalition of Zimbabwe (CCZ), the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights), among others. What this means is that a spectrum of groups that range from Community Based

Organisations (CBOs), service delivery/ development NGOs, business associations and many others are not part of this thesis. The study therefore does not purport to be representative of Zimbabwe's entire civil society landscape. A detailed discussion of the thesis' sampling process is discussed in section 1.2 below.

There are two broad perspectives in the interpretation of hegemony. For Marx, hegemony entailed consent of the dominated through force applied by a group of ruling elites, which constituted the State, hence the idea that all states are a dictatorship (Bates, 1975:352). On the contrary, Gramsci replaced force with the primacy of ideas, arguing that hegemony was an outcome of a dialectical discursive activity where the political leadership sought to impose its own social construction of reality. As Mumby (1997:346) puts it succinctly, 'it is precisely in the struggle between various groups over interpretive possibilities and what gets to count as meaningful that the hegemonic dialectic of power and resistance gets played out.' This dichotomy is however unhelpful in the case of post-2000 Zimbabwe where, as the discussion shows, discursive activities complemented state-condoned use of force in order to seek compliance of society to the status quo. The thesis therefore combines both interpretations of hegemony as consent by force and consent by ideas and the more explicit use of security forces (i.e., the military) to investigate and persecute those opposing the state.

1.2 Methodology

This section discusses the research strategy of the thesis. According to Schramm (1971), a research strategy aims to explain 'why [...decisions] were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result' in order to achieve the objectives of a research (quoted in Yin, 2003:12). The decisions are influenced by the researcher's underlying assumptions, *vis-à-vis* ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology. In the first instance, ontological and epistemological assumptions influenced me to

choose between a positivist and interpretive approach to the research. In the second instance, the approach chosen influenced me to collect data using *either* qualitative *or* quantitative methods *or* a combination of the two (Creswell, 2003). The thought process in the design of the research strategy of the thesis is structured as follows. Section 1.2.1 discusses Gramsci's Marxist Sociology in relation to my preferred interpretive approach to research and the implications on methodology and methods of the study. Section 1.2.2 discusses the research design and the process of designing and selecting the sample population for the thesis. Section 1.2.3 discusses the methods and process of data collection. Section 1.2.4 elaborates on the challenges of the field work and how these were dealt with. Finally, section 1.2.5 discusses the framework for data analysis.

1.2.1 Methodological paradigms and approaches

Gramsci's Marxist sociology

A researcher's assumptions about the nature of social reality being studied are influenced by his or her ontological views (Hay, 2002:61). Blaikie defines ontology as the 'the claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other' (1993:6). The context of Gramsci's theory of hegemony and his interpretation of Marxism was his objection to positivist ontology that viewed history as a product of deterministic frameworks associated with the natural and physical sciences. Social reality in the positivist ontological view, as Neuman (1994:59) and Bryman (2001:17) argue, has an external pattern and order that can be objectively and logically predicted provided standardised 'scientific' procedures are followed. In this formulation human beings do not create history.

Gramsci (1971) objected to this positivist view of history. He argued instead that history is a product of a conscious 'organised collective will' by a people through hegemony in the superstructural sphere. If the superstructural sphere is dialectically linked to the base, Gramsci argued that to remove the active role of people in the authorship of history is to deny Marxism the dialectical component that Marx (and Engel) recognised when they argued,

In every epoch the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas, that is, the class that is the ruling *material* power of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* power. The class having the means of material production, has also control over the means of intellectual production, so that it also controls, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of intellectual production (quoted in Femia, 1981:32).

The dominant ideas about social reality in a given period are accepted not without a conscious appreciation of how they were historically developed through human action. In other words, ideas have a dialectical relationship with human activity in history. Thus Gramsci argues that '[t]he philosophy of praxis [Marxism] is absolute "historicism", the absolute secularisation and earthliness of thought, an absolute humanism of history' (1971:465).

Therefore Gramsci's interpretation of Marxism is ontologically interpretive. Social reality and the meanings attached to it, as Bryman (2001) and Blaikie (1993) argue, are linked to the actions of social actors. People, Bryman (2001:14) further argues, 'act on the basis of the meanings that they attribute to their acts and to the acts of others'. Thus to understand and interpret the way civil society in Zimbabwe transforms and maintains a hegemonic social reality requires that the researcher empathises with its world view. Similarly, to explore the material and organisational determinants of counter-hegemonic politics in Zimbabwe and how it affects social actors' struggle for social change requires an in-depth discussion with the actors involved or at least observing the actors in action, in a 'natural setting'. Therefore, the idea of an external patterned, objective and logic model of how social actors act to maintain and resist hegemony is, in an interpretive ontology, a fallacy.

The researcher's ontology in turn influences his or her epistemological views (Hay, 2002:87). Blaikie (1993:6-7) defines epistemology as 'the claims or assumptions made about the ways in which it is possible to gain knowledge of this reality, whatever it is understood to be; claims about how what exists may be known.' Positivists advance the view that knowledge is acquired through employing the methods of natural sciences (Neuman, 1994:60-61; Bryman, 2001:12). This is because history, as Femia (1981:68-9) summarises the positivists' epistemological position, '[...] is a process obeying discoverable evolutionary laws of universal applicability' that '[...] can be predicted with all mathematical certainty.' This treatment of history inevitably leads to a deterministic view of the nature of a human being (Blaikie, 1993:13; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Simplified for the purpose of this thesis, the material and organisational determinants of counter-hegemonic politics in Zimbabwe would, for instance, be expected (by positivists) to be universally applicable.

Gramsci disagrees with the positivists' epistemology. Instead, Gramsci argues, human beings are different from the natural world. Human related knowledge is gained through elaborating people's 'subjective meaning of social action' (Bryman, 2001:13). This is because facts and knowledge, as Neuman (1994:65-66) argues, are context-specific and contestable, respectively. The human being, Burrell and Morgan (1979:2) argue, is 'the creator of his [or her] environment, the controller as opposed to the controlled, the master rather than the marionette.' In other words, the primacy of human nature is the voluntary creation of his or her social world systems and making sense of this system through interacting with other social actors. Thus, a causal theory abstracted from the feelings, experiences, motives and aspirations of human beings does not allow the researcher to gain firsthand knowledge or explanations about the decisions and actions people take (Neuman, 1994:63).

Methodological implications

Different ontologies, epistemologies and views on human nature incline the researcher towards different methodologies (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:2). Blaikie defines methodology as ‘the analysis of how research should or does proceed. It includes discussions of how theories are generated and tested – what kind of logic is used, what criteria they have to satisfy, what theories look like and how particular theoretical perspectives can be related to particular research problems’ (Blaikie,1993:7). In relation to positivism, the researcher aims to test universally applicable theories in a deductive manner. That is, one starts with theory, collects data and uses it to interrogate the same theory that informed data collection. If theory was animate, one could talk of it as attempting to self-regenerate so that it remains to have an instrumental value to the social world. The aim is to confirm or reject a theory (Bryman, 2001:8-9).

In contrast, interpretive research aims to generate theory about the social world in an inductive manner. The researcher starts with observations or ‘findings’ and seeks to draw ‘generalisable inferences’ (Bryman, 2001:10). The inferences by the researcher come at the backdrop of interpretations by the social actors being studied. As Blaikie (1993:36) puts it, ‘the social world is already interpreted before the social scientist arrives.’ The difference between deductive and inductive methodology is however far from a strict dichotomy. As Bryman (2001:21) argues, it is still possible to use a positivist epistemology in an interpretive study. Furthermore, Bryman observes that interpretive studies do not always aim to generate theories. Instead, interpretive studies can also aim to test a theory, especially where existing literature on a topic is used as a proxy to theory. Bryman thus cautions against ‘hammering a wedge between them [approaches] too deeply’ (Bryman, 2001:21).

This thesis' ontological position recognises the existence of a social reality only subjectively understood by social actors under study. To elaborate this world, therefore, requires an open minded engagement with divergent perspectives about the subject (Snape and Spencer, 2003:19). The importation of positivist features of objectivity and neutrality in data collection, interpretation and presentation; reflexivity, reliability and validity are very much in congruence with the priority given to respondents' perspectives and interpretations in interpretive research (Snape and Spencer, 2003). Our focus, as Snape and Spencer (2003:21) argue, is to be able to triangulate the respondents' world views and analyse them in our own 'language, conceptualisation and categorisation' without missing the initially intended meaning. Therefore, the Gramscian language of hegemony is used in this thesis *a priori* as the theoretical and analytic framework. In other words, I am using the theory of hegemony in an inductive sense because, as argued above, an inductive study does not always entail theory generating. It can equally be used, as Bryman argues '[...] as a background to qualitative investigations' (Bryman 2001:11). The purpose of this background, as argued in chapter 2, is to enable the conceptualisation of the building blocks of the Gramscian theory of hegemony in order to apply it beyond its original historical context.

Implications for data collection

Positivism and interpretive research approaches are associated with quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, respectively. There are merits and de-merits for using either and/or both methods to collect data in a study. Before Glaser and Strauss' 1967 grounded theory, quantitative studies were generally thought to have superior status to qualitative studies (Charmaz, 2003:249). The criticism against qualitative research is often pinned on the argument that its methods – e.g. participant observation, in-depth interviews and content or documentary analysis, etc – cannot overcome the subjective position of the researcher. Another criticism of qualitative research is that it tends to focus on

small sample population, which is then taken as possible representation of a big whole. This focus is said to be prone to falsification (Johnson and Joslyn, 1995:27).

Thus, in defence of quantitative methods (e.g. experiments, surveys and statistics, etc) the argument, Bryman (2001) puts it, is advanced that numeric measurements guarantee reliability and validity of findings because the methods aim to establish unambiguous causal influences between independent and dependent variables. As a result, the test of generalisability in contexts outside the confines of a current study is easier to fulfil because the researcher's unique characteristics or circumstances are said to have no determining factor on the findings (Bryman, 2001:74-76). In addition, quantitative research methods such as survey are argued to have the capacity to generate findings from large samples, over a short period of time and with minimum cost (Johnson and Joslyn, 1995; Denscombe, 2003). However, a criticism against quantitative methods is that they often fail to distinguish between natural science objects and people and social institutions. Particularly, questions are asked as to how realistic it is to 'control' subject variables such as human beings in experimental research; and how appropriate and reliable are studies that exclude the social context within which human action is exercised (Snape and Spencer, 2003:8; Bryman, 2001: 77; Morgan and Smircich, 1980:498). Brumer (1956) argues therefore that quantitative methods can negate (and indeed lose) the interpretations, perceptions and definitions that are variedly given by respondents during face-to-face engagement (cited in Bryman, 2001:78; see also Babbie, 1990). In addition, as Snape and Spencer (2003:9) argue, the focus on testing hypothesis in statistical studies, for instance can sidestep alternative meanings and understandings.

The argument for qualitative methods therefore, as Creswell (2003:19) argues, is that they are best suited to the study of the meaning and purpose of human action because knowledge claims are derived

from the varied, constructed and interpreted perspectives of research participants. Qualitative methods therefore can facilitate, Ritchie (2003:32) argues, a 'delicate and responsive questioning' process that unpacks a '*complex*' and '*deeply rooted*' phenomenon. Ritchie (2003:33) further argues, if 'views are being sought from the vantage of particular positions, then the nature of information is likely to require exploratory and responsive questioning.' This is particularly crucial where data needs to be collected from specialists in a given subject area and where the flow of delicate information from the respondent to the researcher needs not endanger both parties (Ritchie, 2003; Devine, 1995).

Furthermore, Boulton and Hammersley (1996:286) argue, qualitative methods can permit easier collection of perspectives from different people within the chosen sample population. This can permit easier triangulation of data. Miles and Huberman aptly capture the core defence of qualitative methods when they argue that,

Good qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to new integrations; they help researchers get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks. [...] The findings from qualitative studies have a quality of undeniability. Words, especially organised into incidents or stories, have a concrete vivid, meaningful flavour that often proves far more convincing to a reader –another researcher, a policy maker, a practitioner – than pages of summarised numbers [...] (Miles and Huberman, 1994:1).

This thesis uses a qualitative methodology. However, because the distinction between positivism and interpretivism is not a 'hard and fast' opposite, qualitative and quantitative strategies should also not be seen as strict opposites (see Creswell, 2003:208; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Thus, the choice of a qualitative methodology for this thesis was also influenced by pragmatism. On pragmatism, Snape and Spencer (2003:21) argue, emphasis is put on '[...] ensuring a suitable 'fit' between the research methods used and the research questions posed than [...] the degree of philosophical coherence of the epistemological positions typically associated with different research methods.' Therefore, a pragmatic

decision was made that the two major objectives of this thesis are best answered with a qualitative methodology.

In addition, a qualitative methodology was best suited for the thesis because it fits the precepts of Gramscian Marxism discussed above; and hegemony as the key defining moment of Gramscian dialectics is rarely ever quantified. The question of how civil society legitimate or resist hegemony or how its hegemonic or counter-hegemonic roles are shaped by material and organisational factors requires an engagement with civil society actors' own subjective construction of social reality and the social reality of real or perceived adversaries in the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe. To sum up, a qualitative methodology is adopted for this study, in terms of both data collection and analysis processes. The next section discusses the research design and sampling process for the thesis.

1.2.2 Research design and sampling

Bryman (2001:29) defines a research design as a 'framework for the collection and analysis of data. [The] choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process.' Lewis (2003:47) identifies some of the dimensions of a research process as the 'practical constraints of time and money and [...] the reality of the research context and setting.' In addition, Lewis (2003) and Robson (2002) argue that research designs should also exhibit coherence between purpose, research questions, approaches, methods and the sampling strategy being employed. Following from this definition of a research design and the emphasis placed on interpretivism and a qualitative strategy in previous sections, this thesis is designed as a case study.

The case study approach

Gerring (2007:20) defines a case study as ‘the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population).’ Another useful definition is that given by Yin who argues that a case study ‘[...] investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context’ [...and that] ‘the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (Yin, 2003:13, emphasis in original). Yin (2003:13-14) further argues that a case study ‘relies on multiple sources of evidence’ and a ‘prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.’ In a case study, the data collection methods (e.g. interviews, observation and documentary analysis) are often of a qualitative nature (Neuman, 1994:27; Lewis, 2003:51). In addition the researcher has no control over events. Moreover, Yin (2003:5-7) argues that a case study is often answered by ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions although ‘what’ questions can also be asked, particularly in an exploratory way (Robson, 2002:91).

This thesis has the hallmark of a case study research design as defined by the two definitions above. In relation to Gerring’s definition, this study can be viewed as a small case (i.e. of civil society in Zimbabwe) that has a potential to illuminate analytic generalisations on a larger population (i.e. civil society in developing countries). Alternatively, a small case (the sample of civil society) will be used to shed light on a larger population (civil society in Zimbabwe in general). In relation to Yin’s definition, the role of civil society as a vehicle of social change is topical in contemporary political science and public policy debates. Furthermore, this study seeks to examine how civil society legitimate or resist hegemony in a ‘real-life [Zimbabwean] context’. In line with Yin’s definition, we can also highlight the contested ‘boundaries’ between civil society and the state in the context of African polities, about which more is said in chapter 2.

In relation to other features in Yin's definition, this thesis also employed multiple qualitative methods (e.g. interviews, observation, and documentary analysis) to collect data. These methods permitted the collection of data from different sources. In the context of this study, this was important for triangulating data collected through interviews with evidence collected through document analysis and participant observation. Neuman (1994:141) defines triangulation as the use of two or more 'data collection techniques, in order to examine the same variable' and then use evidence gathered 'to build a coherent justification for themes' (Creswell, 2003:196). The use of triangulation aims at guaranteeing the validity and reliability of the study's analytic generalisations by checking consistencies of 'findings generated by different data-collection methods' and/or of diverse 'data sources within the same method' (Burns, 2000:419).

Furthermore, and in line with Yin's definition of a case study, this thesis' two major objectives are framed as 'what' questions, in an exploratory sense. The 'how' and 'why' sub-questions help to answer the two major questions of the thesis. Overall, the use of a case study approach to investigate the 'what' major questions, the 'how' and 'why' sub-questions, in conjunction with qualitative methods permitted me to present descriptions, understandings and analytic explanations that are central in interpretive research (Tellis, 1997). The case study also allowed me to probe deep and analyse how the contestation for hegemony in and within civil society in Zimbabwe facilitates or impedes social change. In addition, this thesis hopes to contribute knowledge by either challenging (or extending or confirming) the utility of the application of the Gramscian dialectics beyond its original historical context. By using Zimbabwe as a single case, the case study approach further 'assist in refocusing the direction of future investigations in the [same] area' (Burns, 2000:461) and it lays ground for possible future comparative research.

Limitations of a case study approach

Like all research design approaches, a case study has its own disadvantages. As Tellis (1997:2) argues, the history of a case study approach before 1935 is 'marked by periods of intense use and periods of disuse.' Yin (2003:10-11) lists three commonly cited weaknesses of a case study approach as 'lack of rigor' due to researcher bias and use of unsystematic procedures, and 'little basis for scientific generalisation.' In addition a case study is said to 'take too long and result in massive, unreadable documents.' These criticisms as can be deduced are related to the age-old research philosophical (positivism vs. interpretivism) debate, as well as the debate between qualitative and quantitative research method strategies. Furthermore, the criticisms are about the extent to which a case can be 'scientifically' generalised beyond producing a 'microscopic' study (Giddens cited in Yin, 1993).

Yin (2003) argues, however that these criticisms are also common to other research strategies. The problem of rigor, Yin argues, arises first, out of the confusion that exists between the use of a case study as a teaching instrument and the use of a case study in research. Second, a study that is grounded within an interpretive philosophy aims at generalising theoretical propositions and therefore should not be confused with studies that aim to enumerate scientific frequencies. Finally, Yin argues that a case study can be designed to optimise time and therefore should not be confused with lengthy research strategies such as ethnographies. Tellis (1997) also argues that what is important is to clearly set the parameters of the study, methodology and its goals. Once this is achieved with rigor, the validity of the study is beyond doubt. Furthermore, the weaknesses of data collection techniques as they shall be argued below can be allayed through methodological triangulation. Because the limitations of a case study approach can be allayed by clarifying them in the manner argued above and also by optimising the principles of validity and reliability through data and methodological triangulation, it (the case study

research design) was deemed appropriate for this thesis. Logically, alternative research designs were avoided for reasons discussed below.

Problematising alternative research designs

This thesis is largely grounded within the interpretive research philosophy. Therefore, in designing this study a decision was made to discard alternative designs, first, those with strong leaning towards the positivism strand. This means that laboratory experiment could not be applicable given the emphasise that it places on manipulating the independent variable so as to ascertain its influence on the dependent variable (Bryman, 2001:33). For example, it is not possible for this researcher to manipulate how material and organisational determinants of counter-hegemonic politics in Zimbabwe influence the struggle for social change. Similarly, survey research (cross-sectional and longitudinal) and statistical designs were deemed inappropriate for a thesis that aims to explore subjectively constructed and interpreted social world views by civil society actors in Zimbabwe.

Second, a decision was made against research designs such as ethnography, grounded theory approach and phenomenological research, despite their leaning towards a qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2003; Robson, 2002). Ethnography studies are pre-occupied with describing and interpreting socio-cultural features of a research population, over a longer period. This is not the focus of this thesis. Grounded theory approach aims to generate theory from data, which again is not the case with this thesis. In addition, the approach is cumbersome as it involves numerous visits to the field and it starts from a fallacy of zero pre-assumptions and theoretical ideas about the subject (Robson, 2002). While a phenomenological research has the advantage of focusing on people's subjective explanations and interpretations of the social world view, it however demands, as Robson (2002:196) argues, a 'highly specialised vocabulary and a solid grounding in some challenging philosophy' which the researcher has

no background of. Having ruled out these alternative research designs, in favour of a case study research design, I then set out to design and define the sample population of the thesis as below.

Sampling in qualitative studies

Ritchie *et al.* (2003) argue that a researcher cannot study all cases or units that make up the study population. Instead, the researcher needs to design and define a sample population to be representative of the study population. An important criterion for designing and defining a sample population, Ritchie *et al.* (2003:80) argue, is that the process must 'stand up to independent scrutiny.' Sampling is a process of identifying and selecting relevant sources of data (e.g. people, organisations, settings, actions, etc) and discussing the rationale for choosing a case (or cases) and for rejecting others (Mason, 2002:120; Burgess, 1984:53; Ritchie *et al.*, 2003:77). There are two broad models of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling¹ is the preferred model by quantitative researchers who aim to ensure that all cases in the study population have an equal probability of being selected into the sample population so that the sample can statistically be generalised to a wider population (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003:78). Because probability sampling is suited for quantitative studies I did not use it to select the sample population of this thesis.

Instead, I employed the non-probability sampling model. This model does not aim to achieve any statistical representation of cases. Instead, the selection of a case is not guaranteed. As Ritchie *et al.* (2003:78) argue, '[t]he sample units are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study.' There are two types of non-probability sampling – theoretical and

¹ The variants of probability sampling include single random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified random sampling and multi-stage sampling.

purposive. Theoretical sampling is common in grounded qualitative research designs. It entails a stage process sampling, where the first sample generates categories and theories that are refined by the next sampling process, and the next, until a point of 'data saturation' is reached. At each given stage of sampling, emphasis is placed on '*theoretical purpose and relevance*' of the sample unit (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:48, emphasis in original; see also Ritchie *et al.*, 2003:80). This model was deemed inappropriate because of the same reasons or limitations that were given for rejecting the use of a grounded theory research design for this thesis above.

Therefore, the thesis used the purposive sampling model to select the sample population. Purposive sampling is also discussed in some literature as criterion based sampling (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003) or strategic sampling (Mason, 2002). Ritchie *et al.* (2003) identify three major features of purposive sampling (the features are also applicable to theoretical sampling) as (i) the prescribed selection criteria, (ii) the sample size and (iii) the potential to add or supplement samples. Ritchie *et al.* further argue that the criteria for choosing samples are dependent upon the research questions or the themes to be explored. The sample must aim for diversity so as to explore all possible structures or factors of the subject as well as to allow in-depth analysis of interdependent variables. In terms of the sample size, less or equal to fifty [50] is desirable because 'much larger than 50 [the sample] start to become difficult to manage in terms of data collection and analysis that can be achieved' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003:84). The third criterion alludes to the advantage of flexibility as the researcher can add more sample units whilst in the field. This is related to the idea of snowballing research participants using those already known (Burgess, 1984; Mason, 2002).

The selection of the thesis' sample population (respondents) was influenced, first, by the principles of purposive sampling as discussed above and second, by the political situation in the study's population

site (i.e., Zimbabwe) at the time of data collection. The respondents were drawn from social actors representing the state, political parties, civil society, social and political commentators (loosely the intelligentsia) and donors. Most of the civil society respondents fell into the category of what I call 'governance NGOs' that are concerned with democracy, governance and human rights issues. These include the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), Crisis Coalition of Zimbabwe (CCZ), the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisation (NANGO), the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), among others.² It is this group that constitutes the main players in the counter-hegemonic civil society bracket. These organisations are involved in 'hard politics' because their struggles for social change, as will be shown in chapter 5, are embedded in political party politics (in particular the MDC) and were seen as a threat by the state.

Thus, from the broad rubric of Zimbabwean civil society, I excluded groups that I loosely categorised as 'development NGOs' such as CBOs, service delivery NGOs and various business associational groups. These organisations are involved in what I call 'soft politics', because their activities do not explicitly pose political threats to the ruling elites, although they may influence policy changes or institutionalise bottom-up approaches to policy processes that might occasionally be viewed as a threat by the state. Indeed on several occasions the government accused 'development NGOs', especially humanitarian organisations, of using food aid to advance the cause of the opposition party. Nonetheless, for purposes of manageability of the study, they were excluded from the sample population. The hegemonic civil society category is represented by entities like the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), the Zimbabwe Liberation War Collaborators (ZILIWACO), and the Zimbabwe Political Detainees and Restricttees Association (ZIPDRA), ZANU-PF youth militia, among

² Some of these organisations are coalitions or umbrella entities with a wide institutional based membership. There are organisations such as for example service delivery NGOs that are members of umbrella organisations such as NANGO but do not necessarily view themselves as part of the counter-hegemonic bloc. This is therefore a relative categorisation representing a general leaning towards counter-hegemonic politics within the broad context of the politics of polarisation in post-2000 Zimbabwe (see Chapter 6 and Appendix 8).

others. These organisations are discussed collectively under the label 'war veterans', which in many ways might conceal their sometimes divergent interests when they lobby government (or ZANU-PF). At the time of my field work, these groups were united and violently mobilised the electorate to vote for ZANU-PF.

Civil society in Zimbabwe is heavily dependent on donor funding for its operations. Donors provide the material dimension needed by civil society to sustain its struggle for social change. Views from donor respondents help us to explore the second objective of the thesis. Specifically, exploring the implications for donor funded civil society *vis-à-vis* the relations with the state and the perceptions toward civil society struggle for social change, especially struggles waged within the counter-hegemonic historic bloc. State actors were selected because they control the institutional channels that are vital for the legal operations of civil society. In this context, it was crucial to unpack the state's discourse concerning civil society's role in social change. The initial plan was to interview a number of officials from different government departments or ministries. In the end, because of the volatile political situation at the time of the field work, I decided to seek only an audience with officials from the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, because the ministry oversees the operations of civil society in Zimbabwe and during the fieldwork it ordered all NGOs in the country to cease 'field operations'.

The thesis's respondents were also drawn from political parties and lecturers from the University of Zimbabwe. University lecturers, in particular from the Department of Political Science and the Institute for Development Studies, were selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement of them as having potential or capable of providing specialised knowledge on the subject being investigated. Most of the informants have one foot in civil society and a second foot in academia. For example some informants

are university lecturers (and some are former lecturers) who hold senior positions in civil society organisations. One of my informants held an executive position in a civil society organisation and was also a Member of Parliament elect for a political party following the 2008 elections. The advantage of key informants, especially those with feet in both civil society and academia was that they provided this researcher with a critical and balanced understanding and interpretation of the role played by civil society in maintaining and transforming hegemony without being emotional about the subject. The next section discusses the challenges encountered in designing the sample for the thesis.

Challenges of the sampling process

The major challenge encountered was to determine who to interview and who not to interview in each sample category, such as for example, which civil society organisations to include in the sample population and which ones to exclude? The researcher used the Zimbabwe's National Association for Nongovernmental Organisations' (NANGO) data base to identify civil society organisations in Zimbabwe, from which a few were selected. Although NANGO is the official umbrella body of civil society organisations in Zimbabwe, its membership is voluntary and therefore not all civil society groups are affiliated to it. In this case, the researcher had to use informants already known to him and then snowballed potential participants. I also used my personal judgement on the basis of the high and visible profile of civil society organisations in civic advocacy and activism for social change to interview respondents from organisations such as for example the vocal National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), which is not affiliated to NANGO.

A second challenge encountered was the polarised political environment in Zimbabwe, which was worsened – during the time of the field work – by the controversial and violent 2008 elections. Therefore, one of the challenges in designing and selecting the sample population for this thesis was to

balance interviewees aligned to either ZANU-PF (hegemonic camp) or the opposition MDC (counter-hegemonic camp). Whilst I initially hoped to balance informants from the two political camps, this was not easy, especially with actors representing the hegemonic bloc such as war veterans. As discussed in the field work diary below, political tensions that exploded during fieldwork made it impossible to achieve this balance. As a result, the discussion on the role of the hegemonic civil society in legitimating state hegemony was based mainly on secondary sources.. The next section elaborates on methods and process of data collection – the advantages and disadvantages of the methods for this thesis. The section also elaborates on the solution to the two challenges discussed here and the implications that this had on the overall thesis.

1.2.3 Data collection: methods and processes

This section discusses the morphology of the data collecting instruments and both the opportunities and challenges encountered during field work carried out in Zimbabwe, between April and August 2008. The data building blocks of the thesis came from secondary and primary sources. First, secondary data (e.g. published books and journal articles) informed (i) the conceptual and analytic framework discussed in chapter 2,(ii) in clarifying the ontology and epistemological positions of the researcher as discussed in earlier sections of this chapter and (iii) in the analysis of the role of the hegemonic civil society groups as stated above. Second, primary data (e.g. interviews, documentary analysis and observation) were used to empirically explore the two major research questions of the study. The first three sub-sections discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the data collection methods in general. The fourth sub-section discusses the application of these methods during field work. The fifth sub-section discusses the framework for analysing fieldwork data.

1.2.3.1 Interviews

Data was collected through one-to-one semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews, as Robson (2002:270) describes them, have predetermined questions which can be modified, re-worded, explained to the interviewee, or omitted as when the situation is deemed appropriate. Semi-structured interviews are often contrasted with structured interviews that have predetermined, but fixed worded questions and unstructured interviews that have no preset questions. One of the disadvantages of structured interviews is that they can constrain a conversation and often interesting data can be ignored. On unstructured interviews, Denscombe (2003) argues that the discussion risks straying away from the focus of the study and the interview also requires more time which more often than not the researcher might not have. For the above reasons against structured and unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews were preferred over the other two types for this thesis.

The semi-structured interviews were intended to answer both research questions of the thesis because of the emphasis put on subjective meanings and interpretation of social reality by research participants. A semi-structured interview, as Legard *et al.* (2003:142) argues, permits interviewer-interviewee interaction that has great potential to generate new revealing data on a subject. This was important, especially given the extent of political polarisation in the country and the high level of criminalisation of opposition politics by the ruling ZANU-PF party, which often results in social actors taking uncritical positions regarding not only their 'supposedly enemies' actions but theirs as well. In this context, as Robson (2002:272) argues, semi-structured interviews offered '[...] the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives [...].' Moreover, in a polarised, political tense environment and also given the sensitiveness and often contested role of civil society in Zimbabwe, where trust was established with research informants, interviews were a good source of in-depth and inside information (see Mikkelsen, 1995:105).

However, semi-structured interviews as a data collection technique have disadvantages which are also shared by other types of interviews. For instance, small sampling caused by a biased selection of informants may distort the objectivity of a wider population. The researcher may also misinterpret data given by informants due to his or her preconceived viewpoint about the subject of research (Mikkelsen, 1995:105). As Hay (2002:87) argues, researchers 'are all socially and politically embedded within a complex and densely structured institutional and cultural landscape which they cannot simply escape by climbing the ivory tower of academe to look down with scientific dispassion and disinterest on all they survey.' In addition, face-to-face interviews are often criticised for unmaking the 'natural setting' necessary for the interviewee to give unbiased or self-censored responses to questions. There is also the risk of the researcher asking leading questions hence compromising the validity and quality of the research (Creswell, 2003:186; Legard *et al.*, 2003:154). The solution to the above drawbacks of the interview technique might, as Robson (2002:273) argue, just as well depend on the professionalism of the researcher and the training on interviewing techniques or research methods in general.

In this thesis, the researcher used the topic guide approach during the interviewing process to overcome some of the problems identified above. Arthur and Nazroo (2003) define an interview topic guide as a framework that identifies broad topics or themes to be explored. It 'helps to ensure that relevant issues are covered systematically and with some uniformity, while still allowing flexibility to pursue the detail that is salient to each individual participant' (Arthur and Nazroo, 2003:115). For this thesis and in broad terms, the guiding topics and questions focused on the role civil society play to maintain or transform hegemony and the material and organisational characteristics that influence civil society's hegemonic or counter-hegemonic role.

1.2.3.2 Documentation

The thesis also made use of published and unpublished documents. The use of documents, also known as documentary analysis, doubled as both a source for secondary and primary data. As sources of secondary data, documents (e.g. the episodic type) that relate to the activities of civil society and the challenges that it encounters in the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe were gleaned. Such episodic documents included brochures, pamphlets, and manuscripts and other published academic literature. Some of the episodic documents were accessed during field work whilst others were accessed during the initial preparatory phases of the study through the internet. Secondary sources of data were particularly important for identifying explicit or implicit hegemonic civil society's documented activities or strategies for maintaining state hegemony. As primary source of data, running documents such as policy papers, speeches (by politicians and civil society actors), and interviews from news outlets and other mass media material, especially newspapers, was used.

Furthermore, the importance of data collected from these documents was that it aided a critical exploration or analysis of the political discourse(s) that shapes the nature of the political space, state-civil society relations and position of civil society in relation to the hegemonic or the counter-hegemonic social forces in Zimbabwe. As Howarth (1995:115) argues, an analysis of 'the role of meaningful social practices and ideas in political life' as expressed in the political discourses of various actors is crucial in unpacking the salient strictures of the struggles for social change. Thus, by analysing political statements or speeches, this researcher was able to decipher, through the 'Gramscian way of thinking' (see chapter 2), how actors or institutions represented by the actors aim to influence the direction of social change in Zimbabwe.

The other advantage of documentary sources of data for this thesis is that they allowed access to subjects in the past and present that are usually impossible to reach through one-to-one interviews. This was particularly important in terms of examining the Gramscian moments since the country's independence in 1980 through the 1990s leading to 2000. During interviews these Gramscian moments were often overlooked by the research participants. Johnson and Joslyn (1995:252-254) also argue that using documentary data saves time, especially when availability and access are not a problem. In addition, Hay (2002:149) argues that combining both episodic and running documents is important because it 'allows [...researchers] either inductively or empirically to advance theoretical statements about the temporary aspects (the time, timing, and temporary) of the process of change under consideration or to test deductively derived theoretical hypothesis about that process of change.' In relation to this thesis, data on the past and present life of civil society in Zimbabwe shed light on the minutiae continuities and/or discontinuities on the role of civil society in the struggle for social change.

However, using written documents as source of evidence has its own disadvantages, the principal one being that there is a process of 'selective survival' (Johnson and Joslyn, 1995) that determines what material to keep and what to exclude and why. In other words, documents that survive to be consulted by outside researchers more often would have gone through a process of conscious authoring, collection and preservation. This means that issues of incompleteness and/or bias of the contents of documents cannot be ruled out (Creswell, 2003:187; Hay, 2002). In relation to this thesis, this called upon the researcher to be critical of information contained in documents. The use of semi-structured interviews was used as a form of methodology triangulation to compensate for the limitations of document sources.

1.2.3.3 Observation

The thesis also utilised observation as a data collection method. The technique of collecting data using observation is often associated with anthropology and ethnography researchers when the aim is to observe a community or group of people over an extended period of time, months or years (Ritchie, 2003:35; Burns, 2000:408). However, this thesis is not of any of these designs and therefore did not enjoy the privilege of an undefined time span for collecting data. So, how was observation used in this thesis? To begin with, observation is an unavoidable process of collecting data when one engages directly with research participants. As Yin (2003:92) argues, '[by] making a field visit to the case study "site", you [the researcher] are creating the opportunity for direct observations. [...] some relevant behaviors or environmental conditions will be available for observation.' There are therefore two ways in which observation was used in this thesis. First, the researcher is a Zimbabwean and therefore has been following the struggle for social change since the political and economic crisis began in 2000. In a sense therefore, the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe is also the lived experience of the researcher. Naturally, there are dangers of a subjective or bias approach to a subject that one is part of it. To allay these fears, the rigors of thinking in a Gramscian way (see chapter 2) and of keeping to the objectivity dictates of academic research in general and of a doctoral research project in particular, were strictly adhered to. Thus, direct observation in this first usage did not entail that the researcher should be literally present at all activities involving civil society. It simply means that the researcher was able to interpret the struggle for social change over time.

The second manner in which observation was used is in the sense defined by Yin (2003) above. During the process of collecting data in Zimbabwe, the researcher was able to 'observe' civil society actors and document or record striking phenomena which were cross-checked or further interrogated during interviews. In particular, I participated in various civil society advocacy and campaign activities as a

temporary staff member of NANGO.³ Furthermore, I attended public discussion meetings which brought together representatives from different political parties and civil society. Although the discussions focused on the challenges that emanated from the 2008 Harmonised Elections, they were also informative in terms of how the different actors rationalised their different struggles for social change in ways that clearly positioned them either within the hegemonic historic bloc or the counter-hegemonic bloc. There were also opportunities for self-criticism by civil society activists and criticism of civil society by political party players, which provided data to some of the thesis's research questions.

It is important to note, however, that observation is not so much a distinct data collection technique that requires designing. Instead, as Robson (2002:310) argues, it is a 'technically in-built' process that occurs concurrently (conscious or unconscious) with other data collection methods such as interviews and documentary analysis. This is important because events that relate to the subject of study can be acknowledged as they occur and can be used to illuminate on-going interviews by serving as concrete referral points. In addition, and related to the above point, there are some readily observable artefacts of civil society that might illuminate its organisational and/or material setup (the second research objective of this thesis). These artefacts were directly observed when the researcher visited civil society organisations' offices. Such information was noted as when deemed relevant to the study. The next section discusses the implementation of the methodology discussed above during field work.

³ The researcher made an arrangement with NANGO to use its offices as an operation base. In return I assisted and also participated in NANGO's advocacy activities, whenever I was free and when I felt doing so contributed towards my data collection exercise.

1.2.3.4 'In the field': implementation and reflections

As already stated above, the data collection for this thesis was carried in Zimbabwe between March and August 2008. To meet the University of Birmingham's ethical code of conduct by its research community, consent of all would-be interviewees was obtained by giving as much information about the study and the researcher as befitting. Full consent for the interviews to be recorded was also sought and interviewees were given guarantees that anonymity and confidentiality in the use of information will be professionally observed. This procedure was important – given the volatility of the political environment at the time – in order to protect both the interviewees and the researcher from harm or ill-effects (see Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 66-70; Peil *et al.*, 1982:22). Thus, an official letter of the University of Birmingham identified me as a registered student and also explained the purpose of the study (see Appendix 5). The university letter was further supported by a second letter from NANGO where I was an attaché for the duration of my field work (see Appendix 6). Consequently, care has been taken not to explicitly attribute statements or direct quotations to particular individuals.

The data collection period coincided with the 29 March 2008 Harmonised Elections. The scheduled work plan was to start interviews in April, after political tensions over elections had ebbed away. Over ninety four interview requests were initially sent, first, by email and second through physical visits to the offices of civil society organisations (see Appendix 4). The interview topic guide was attached with emails (see Appendix 2). On each physical visit to an organisation's office or when reporting for interviews I gave my interviewees hard copies of the interview guide plus university and NANGO letters of identification. In total, thirty two interviews, of approximately one hour were conducted. The response to interview requests was initially slow because of the 29 March Harmonised Elections. The electoral process was thrown into a crisis by the Zimbabwe Election Commission's (ZEC) decision to delay announcing the results, about which more is discussed in chapter 5.

The ZEC's delay in announcing election results fanned an already political tense environment as rumours spread at the time that the opposition MDC party had defeated ZANU-PF. The government denied the rumours and responded by deploying state security agents (police, army, intelligence) in urban centres to monitor possible outbreaks of violence. The sight of security forces on the streets made the political situation more edgy and further aggravated by reports of politically motivated violence, initially from rural areas and latter in cities. Civil society organisations initiated advocacy campaigns to pressure the ZEC to release the results. Thus, a number of my would-be respondents became involved in these advocacy campaigns, meetings and workshops, which reviewed the electoral impasse and mapping strategies of responding to political violence. This made it difficult to get interviews confirmed or granted; hence out of ninety four requests originally sent I managed to be granted thirty two interviews, as already stated above.

My position as a temporary staff member of NANGO however permitted easier access to several civil society meetings and workshops where I became a participant observer. I also researched and wrote policy paper briefs on behalf of NANGO for immediate use in their advocacy activities. These policy briefs were posted on NANGO website and also summarised for press release in the print media. I also contributed articles in NANGO's *Civil Society Space Barometer*. NANGO claimed the authorship of all policy briefs while articles in the *Civil Society Space Barometer* were entered in my name as academic pieces. These documents were also used as sources of data. Attending civil society's meetings and workshops was helpful because I was able to analyse the 'political language' that was used in these meetings – 'language' that is often edited out when documents are released for public consumption. The meetings also presented me with an opportunity to meet and network with some of my would-be respondents. Although the meetings and workshops focused on the challenges of the electoral process underway, they were also informative in terms of how the different actors rationalised their struggle for social change and/or what they viewed as the underlying causes of the 'Zimbabwe crisis' in general.

There were also opportunities for self-criticism by civil society activists and criticism of civil society by political party players, which provided data to some of the thesis's research questions. The discussions also revealed a high level of political polarisation and intolerance that has become ingrained in the body politics of post-2000 Zimbabwe.

An important civil society campaign project that I participated in was the *'Make Our Vote Count Campaign'* (see chapter 5). The campaign was coordinated by the NANGO secretariat and as a member of staff I automatically became a member to the Working Group that was set aside to design the campaign's modalities. The struggle by civil society organisations to preserve their institutional identities within this collective process was intriguing for me and threw some light onto the strength and cohesion of the counter-hegemonic historical bloc. Because of the general climate of fear that prevailed at the time no organisation, it seemed, – not even the NANGO secretariat – was ready to take an explicit political lead to coordinate the campaign. The climate of fear emanated from the political motivated post-election violence, torture, abductions and murder that occurred as political party supporters fought each other ahead of the June 27 Presidential election runoff. Initial reports were that ZANU-PF – using war veterans and youth militia – implemented a political program code-named *'Operation Makavotera Papi'* (How Did You Vote?) in which those who voted or were suspected of having voted for the opposition were harassed, beaten and even killed. The army and the police were later reported to be part of the operation, explicitly intimidating people to vote for ZANU-PF in the Presidential election runoff. Civil society activists and election observers representing the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) were also targeted for abductions and harassments. ZESN is a coalition network of civil society that monitors the conduct of elections in Zimbabwe.

Against the backdrop of increased political motivated violence against the opposition and civil society activists, on the 16th of April 2008, an anonymous authored pamphlet further littered the streets of Harare alleging that the 'MDC, ZCTU, NCA and all major players in civil society are calling for a general strike and for violent retaliation [against ZANU-PF supporters]'. It stated that '[...] ZANU-PF had killed people during the last days and thus retaliation with murder would be the answer' (NANGO, 2008a). Indeed, on many cases MDC supporters were reported to have fought ZANU-PF supporters. The inter-party political violence and the anonymous pamphlet alleging civil society complicit in the violence had a negative impact on NANGO's work and my overall data collection schedule. NANGO as the umbrella body for NGOs in the country experienced some challenges in terms of galvanising non-violent public responsive action against state sponsored violence as state security agents (i.e., the police) began coordinated raids on civil society offices, confiscating office equipments such as computers, laptops and arresting staff members (see chapter 5).

On my part, the raids, harassments, and arrests of civil society activists made it difficult for respondents to readily grant me interviews. A major challenge that I experienced as a result of the violence and raids on civil society activists was the general suspicion by some respondents that I could be a state secret agent or a police masquerading as an academic researcher. Although I presented introduction letters issued by the University of Birmingham to squash such suspicions, given the fact that I am a Zimbabwean, naturally the question of where my political sympathies lay, *vis-à-vis* ZANU-PF versus MDC remained.⁴ The letter proving that I was temporarily working for NANGO was very helpful in this regard. The challenge of being granted interviews was further made worse by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare's decision to suspend all NGO field operations. The Ministry's circular instructed NGOs to '[...] suspend all field operation until further notice' because, the Minister

⁴ On my first visit to NANGO to discuss my position as an attaché for the duration of the field work, I was asked about my 'political sympathies', although the importance of the expected answer seemed glossed by the lighter tone of the welcoming occasion.

alleged, [...] it has come to my attention that a number of NGOs involved in humanitarian operations are breaching the terms and conditions of their registration [...].’ (Goche, 2008). There were conflicting interpretations of what ‘field operation’ meant. Even though the circular categorically referred to ‘NGOs involved in humanitarian operations’, the police interpreted it to mean that all NGOs were suppose to close their offices and therefore went by harassing NGOs in cities for defying ‘government policy’. The police visited NANGO offices once to ask the leadership to close offices. My position as a researcher was at great risk of being compromised. There arose in particular the risk – in the process of visiting NGOs or being at NANGO – of being caught up in the ongoing raids and/or expose my interviewees to further undue harassment.

As the gruesome violence escalated, a collective decision was made by my two supervisors representing the Department and myself to temporarily suspend the research and briefly go to South Africa and complete part of the field work that I had initially planned to do there. The journey to South Africa never materialised, as it was halted by xenophobic attacks against foreigners in South Africa that occurred in June 2008. By the time the xenophobic attacks were contained, Zimbabwe’s economic crisis with its ever rising inflation and price increases had dwarfed the budget that I had for the entire research period. Zimbabwe’s economic meltdown further rendered the research exercise more stressful, characterised by shortage of cash in banks and basic food commodities. There were times when I would wake up around 3am to queue for hours in order to get money from the bank (Western Union). Depositing money in local banks proved counterproductive to the speed at which I had planned the research. For example, at one point, the permitted amount of money to withdraw from the bank per day was \$ZW100.00 when a one way fare to the city was \$ZW50.00.

Because of the general economic dire situation in the country, many agreed interview appointments were cancelled at the last minute either because the interviewees were out of office, possibly in bank queues, or searching for basic commodities or the organisation had to respond to a sudden outbreak of violence by sending its staff to monitor or assist victims. This economic crisis and struggle for day to day survival was identified in all interviews held as one of the major factors influencing the material and organisational setup of civil society in Zimbabwe. Despite these challenges I was still able to collect enough informative data to be able to answer the research questions of the thesis. As already noted above, a lot of documents were sourced during field work and after, through the internet and library. The data from the written documents augmented well the information that was collected through interviews and observation.

The field work experience discussed here has possible lessons for future and budding researchers planning to conduct research in politically volatile environments such as the one that ensued in Zimbabwe in 2008, and perhaps that characterise the political landscape of sub-Saharan Africa, in general. I flag out two lessons in particular. Firstly, it is important to avoid, where possible, conducting research during the period of electioneering because, as the cases of Kenya in 2007 and Zimbabwe in 2008 demonstrate, elections in most African countries can be characterised by pre- and/or post-election violence. In my case, as I have extensively discussed above, the 2008 elections related violence made it hard to pin down some respondents for interviews.

Secondly, it is also important especially when conducting politically sensitive topics that may invariably conjure up a sense of criticism towards the ruling elites to know the political leanings of your respondents and therefore to continuously re-structure your interview guides as dictated by such circumstances. In this regard, I found out during field work that the dichotomy often made between an

'insider researcher' and an 'outsider researcher' can be a very thin one (see also Dugbazah, 2008). I was a Zimbabwean conducting research in my home country (hence an 'insider'), but affiliated to a UK university (hence an 'outsider'). Thus, as I preoccupied myself with knowing in advance the political leanings of my respondents, there was an inverse interest by some of my respondents to also know my political leanings, *vis-à-vis* the MDC-ZANU-PF conflict over political power. In other words, whether a researcher is an insider to his or her research community or is an outsider, there is need to be aware of the existing centres of conflict and the key social actors involved. Once the 'gatekeepers' are known and are given their due respect and trustworthiness between the researcher and respondents has been established, it is possible and easy to conduct field work in Africa.

The next section discusses the treatment of the data that was collected from the field.

1.2.3.5 'Off the field': the framework for data analysis

The original plan was to transcribe the interviews during the field work. However, several factors militated against transcribing the interviews in the field. First, because of the busy election period and difficulties to be granted interviews as already noted above, priority was put on simple recording interviews and collecting written materials, especially from newspapers and documents from different NGOs. Second, frequent power cuts in Zimbabwe made it difficult sometimes to do any afterhours work. Thus, all the transcription was done once I was back at the University of Birmingham. The transcriptions were written in an exercise book, with the intention to encode them to enable computational aided qualitative analysis using the NVIVO software, which I had undertaken training prior to going to the field. Transcribed interviews were labelled 'Interview 1', 'Interview 2', 'Interview 3', etc. The order of labelling was determined by the completion of each transcription and not necessarily

the order in which the interviews were carried out back in Zimbabwe. This labelling is the one that has been used throughout the thesis for the purposes of referencing within the explanatory accounts or text and for keeping the respondents anonymous.

The process of transcribing the interviews took longer than initially planned because upon returning from the field, I had to redesign the entire research proposal, the conceptual and analytic framework of the study in line with the Gramsci's theory of hegemony as already noted above (see section 1.1). The audio versions of interviews were stored in the computer but because of time constraints the transcribed interviews were not encoded to enable qualitative analysis using the NVIVO software. Thus, in this age of grand advancements in computer aided qualitative data analysis, I found myself still immersed in the 'old' method of treating qualitative (interview) data. The task entailed a three pronged analytic hierarchy process (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) involving, first, the immersion stage where I re-read all the transcribed interviews in order to identify emergent and/or generate themes and concepts. Logically, some of the themes and concepts were derived from the thesis' two major research questions and the sub-research questions. Second, I indexed or flagged out relevant or interesting parts of the interviews and coloured them for easier locating during the writing up stage. Third, I used the themes generated at stage one to design the chapter outlines and then assign the indexed data under the different sections of the chapters. Once I had completed stage three, I found developing explanatory accounts to the research questions of the thesis easier and quick. The remainder of the chapter outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This chapter outlined the problem and theoretical context of the study, which is located in Gramscian Marxism. It also discussed the thesis' aims and objectives, the research questions, the scope and the methodology of the study. The rest of the thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 develops a conceptual framework of the study by discussing in detail Gramsci's theory of hegemony and how it informs the thesis' analytic framework to understand the role of civil society in the struggle for social change in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Chapter 3 discusses the political economy background of Zimbabwe, focusing in particular on the institutional context for hegemony and civil society's post-colonial struggles for social change from 1980 to 2000. Chapter 4 synthesises and discusses the empirical data of the study and in particular it discusses the dynamics of hegemonic contestation between 2000 and 2008. Chapter 5 is a case study, which attempts to deepen understanding and appreciation of the politics of hegemonic contestations discussed in previous chapters within the policy realm of elections. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by pulling together the two major objectives in order to discuss the implications of themes that emerged from the study for the understanding of Zimbabwean politics and the role of civil society in the struggle for social change, both in theory and practice.

CHAPTER 2

HEGEMONY, CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THEORY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the conceptual and analytical framework of the thesis. The central objectives of the thesis, also set out in chapter 1, are to examine the role played by civil society in Zimbabwe in the maintenance and transformation of hegemony in the context of the struggle for social change and to explore the material and organisational set up of civil society and how it influences its struggle for social change. The theoretical point of departure for this thesis is Gramsci's theory of hegemony, which is realised in and within civil society, but which is also combined with coercion in the state. The chapter therefore aims at assisting us with the objective of thinking in a Gramscian way (Morton, 2007) about the way hegemony was enforced and challenged by civil society in post-2000 Zimbabwe.

The chapter has three major sections. Section 2.2 outlines the conceptual framework of the thesis. It discusses the contested history of the concept of civil society and changing perceptions of the role of civil society in the struggle for social change. The discussion also flags up and discusses in depth Gramsci's theory of hegemony and his two dimensional civil society, the contemporary usages of the concept of civil society in the realm of democratic politics that derived from popular opposition politics in the former Communist world, and the contested import of the concept of civil society in post-colonial societies, with particular reference to sub-Saharan Africa. Section 2.3 discusses the analytical framework of the thesis and it grapples with the challenge of how to use Gramsci's political thoughts beyond the original context of Italy of 1919 to 1936 so that the theory of hegemony retains the explanatory power in understanding hegemonic contestations in post-2000 Zimbabwe. The 'Mortonian

approach' (Morton, 2007), which resonates with Gramsci's *absolute historicism* is adopted to guide analytical application of Gramscian dialectics in Zimbabwe. Section 2.4 concludes the chapter.

2.2 Contested histories of civil society

The idea of civil society is as old and contested as the historical traditions of Western political theory and social philosophy, which through time, sought to argue for an appropriate model of what ought and what should constitute good society. The hallmark of the debate in this historical theorisation of civil society has been about how to build a good society by balancing individual (private) interests with communal (public) interests, through practising justice, and how to prevent despotism by checking the power of the state, and by cultivating the republican virtues, which include among other things pluralism and voluntary associational life (Seligman, 1992:1-3; Baker, 2002:4; Edwards, 2004:6). The definition of civil society by the London School of Economics' Centre for Civil Society (CCS) is thus an amalgamation of the different approaches to civil society that epitomises the continuing contestability of how each generation seeks to deal with issues of the day. According to the CCS,

Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups (CCS, 2004:n.p).

The aim of this section, therefore, is to review the historical contours of the contested and changing interpretations of civil society that are captured in the above definition. This is done for two purposes: first, it is to provide the reader with a clear understanding of how Gramsci came to develop the theory of hegemony, central to this thesis, within the context of a rich and contested history of humanity's quest

for social change, roughly the 'good society'. Second, it is to show that present scholarship, i.e., post-Gramscian analysis, continues to be indebted to some pre-Gramscian philosophies in order to make sense of the contemporary world and also in formulating alternative philosophies for social change. As Keynes argues, '[...] practical men in authority who think themselves immune from theoretical influences are usually the slaves of some defunct economist' (quoted in Edwards, 2004:6). As shall also be demonstrated in the chapters to follow, the contest for hegemony in post-2000 Zimbabwe reflects different bits of varying historical philosophies about how to create a good Zimbabwean society by negotiating the complex boundaries between state, civil society and the market.

One of the ways to trace the origins of civil society is to demarcate the debate into three histories: the pre-modern (classical) history, the modern history and the post-modern history. In the pre-modern or classical age, philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Cicero theorised civil society in positive light as a realm of civilisation and justice. Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle made a distinction between membership in a civilised political community and membership in a barbarian community. In the civilised community individual private interests were suppressed for the common good of society, whilst disposition towards private gains in the barbarian community set society in the path of moral decay and injustice. A fundamental condition for the achievement of a civilised community was that citizens should participate in public debates and politics: that is, 'politics was the 'master science of the Good' (Ehrenberg, 1999:18). According to Plato, the absence of civil society, that is, the propensity for private gains at the expense of the common good of the city of Athens, allowed enemies to infiltrate, promote disharmony and thereby weaken it (Ehrenberg, 1999:6). The idea of civil society as strengthening the unity and fortifying the political power of the city against enemies provides one of the first instances of the theorisation of civil society in relation to the state, as one and the same thing. In other words, the state was 'the 'civil' form of society' (Bratton, 1994:53) where political power was

exercised for the benefit of the whole community. The unity of civil society and the state, and its goodness, meant that it was the only ideal realm of human social organisation.

Aristotle, a student of Plato, retained the unity and goodness of the state and civil society, but departed from the idea that it was the only sphere of moral organisation for the common good. For Aristotle, there was a hierarchy of realms of organisations in which the state (civil society) was the chief and higher ethical level of civic life, but existing alongside a multiplicity of subsidiary spheres of organisations constituted around the lesser ethical realms like the household (Ehrenberg, 1999:10). In the household, private gain for subsistence purposes was necessary to facilitate active citizenship in the higher ethical realm of civil society. Aristotle contended – against Plato’s position – that to subsume the household under the unity of the political community (state or civil society) would make the latter lose its essence and become ‘a worse polis’ (Ehrenberg, 1999:15). Thus, Aristotelian civil society ‘[...] was the politically constituted community that organised separate spheres of life in the state and, in the process, permitted them to express the full measure of their limited ethical potential’ (Ehrenberg, 1999:18).

The fall of the Greek empire and the simultaneous rise of the Romans ended the idea that good society or ethical life is achieved in the practice of politics and citizenship in the public realm. Instead, adherents of the Greek political thought – e.g., the Cynics, Epicureans and the Stoics – began to look for the source of moral life outside civil society and politics and found it in the self-sufficient, autonomous and politically disengaged self, i.e., in the private realm. However, the idea of political disengagement did not hold long, especially in the light of the Roman Empire’s troubled political life characterised by economic exploitations, rebellions, mutinies and the rise of political oligarchy (Ehrenberg, 1999). Responding to this crisis, Cicero reinforced Plato and Aristotle’s republican ideals of

the rational human being and the profanity of self-centred economic gains as important, but inadequate, for achieving the common good. Cicero therefore proposed a constitutional framework to safeguard the rich and the poor, to prevent abuse of state power and to prevent the mutation of economic interests and conflicts into political affairs. From a Christian point of view, classical theologians like St. Augustine and Aquinas reacted to the fracturing of the Greco-Roman political philosophies by contending that Godly intervention in the affairs of mankind was needed to augment human reason and institutions hence the idea of a 'Christian civil society' or 'Christian Commonwealth' (Ehrenberg, 1999:28-54).

However, by the end of the Middle Ages (in sixteenth century) the influence of religion was being challenged by scholars like Machiavelli and Hobbes who re-directed debate back to the important intervening role of man in the creation of a civil society, introducing the idea of social contract, the rule of law, and a higher political authority – i.e., Machiavelli's Prince or Hobbes's *Leviathan* – that organises and regulates civil society. Civil society according to these philosophers, '[...] was a society where individuals come together to make a social contract and the outcome of that contract is expressed in the rule of law and the existence of the state, which is also subject to the law. Juridical equality applied both to rulers and the ruled' (Kaldor, 2003:7). Civil society is still very much conceptualised as synonymous to the state: a society in peace with itself that is contrasted with 'despotic empires', the 'state of nature' and 'violent and 'rude' societies' (Kaldor, 2003:7). Machiavelli and Hobbes' philosophical thoughts roughly mark the end of the pre-modern historicisation of the concept of civil society.

The modern historical epoch, i.e., the era of the market is associated with writers such as John Locke, Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Antonio Gramsci. The first three of these modernist theorists pretty much continued with earlier traditions or ideas about

civil society contrasted with the state of nature and not with the state. But reflective of the influence of the market, Locke and the Scottish theorists (Ferguson, Smith and others) developed a market oriented civil society. For Locke, civil society was a condition of a likeable state where man disentangled himself from the idea of a life regulated by state of nature (natural law) (Dunn, 2001:57). Instead, Khilnani (2001:19) argues, conditions of 'a representative political order, a system of private property rights, and toleration of freedom of worship' were needed to secure a civilised society. The Scottish theorists concurred that these conditions were necessary to protect republican virtues that has held society in peace with itself, but were now being threatened by the surge of industrialism and the pursuit of individual wealth. According to Ferguson (1995), society's preoccupation with private wealth accumulation facilitated state despotism to the detriment of individual sovereignty (rights). This growing 'commercial society' (Baker, 2002:4), therefore, needed an effective law and political enforcement mechanism to permit the pursuit of private interests without necessarily negating the public good.

Hegel concurred with the Scottish and equated civil society with the market, i.e., the 'bourgeois society' (*Bürgerliche Gesellschaft*): 'a modern product of a long historical transformation by which a nascent bourgeoisie established a sphere of market relations by civil law' (Bratton, 1994:54). Importantly, however, Hegel posited the first dichotomy between civil society and the state. Civil society becomes the 'realm of difference, intermediate between the family and the state' (quoted in Kaldor, 2003:7). Moreover, this distinction is evoked not to portray civil society as a tranquil and humanely sphere but one imbued with chaotic thriving for selfish economic wants and passions. It negated the ethics of common interests that binds members of the family: 'In civil society each member is his own end, everything else is nothing to him' (quoted in Ehrenberg, 1999:125). Thus, if the realm of civil society was left unmonitored by a powerful authority such as the state it would advance private interests as opposed to the 'public good', hence it was the root cause of poverty and destitution. Thus, where earlier liberal philosophers saw the dearth of republican virtues in society as related to uncontrolled quest for

private wealth, which produced despotic politics that needed to be rid off by civil society, Hegel argues that the latter has no moral or ethical unity to be a positive agent of social change outside state control and moderation. Hegel argues that the umbilical cord of civil society, historically enjoined to capitalism, potentially defines it as a realm of chaos and inequality (Baker, 2002:5). The ethical unity of society therefore was guaranteed by the universal state, which aided by its 'universal class' (i.e., the civil servants) (Kaldor, 2003:7) exercised its rule and authority to guide civil society off its propensity for private interests.

Hegel's idea of the state as the highest form of ethical life was challenged by both Tocqueville and Marx. Tocqueville was influenced by Baron de Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Edmund Burke, among others. Montesquieu argued, for example, that the despotism of the French aristocracy was the 'best-known enemy of civil society' (Hall, 1995:7) because it made people to become '[...] a slave of the royal will and [...] ruled by fear and lawless coercion' (Ehrenberg, 1999:146). The solution lay in creating "a society of societies", a federation of intermediate bodies that can serve liberty by constraining both executive power and mob violence' (Ehrenberg, 1999:148). In reflecting on France's despotism, Tocqueville fused theoretical insights from the three scholars above but got real practical lessons from democratic America. The success of American democracy in improving the 'good life' for its citizens, Tocqueville argued, was because it was a polity characterised by a 'strong society, [but] weak state', whilst France's despotism, and therefore inequality in society, emanated from the fact that it had a 'strong state, [but] weak society' (quoted in Ehrenberg, 1999:161). The strength of American society lay in the freedom of its citizens to form and voluntarily belong to intermediate organisations that function as an 'independent eye of society'. Furthermore, Tocqueville concluded, a 'pluralist and self-organising civil society independent of the state is an indispensable condition of democracy' (Tocqueville, 1954:1999).

Marx's challenge of the Hegelian concept of civil society begins by agreeing with him that this realm is a 'system of needs' that is separate from the state. However, employing an historical materialist analysis Marx argued that the state could not be theorised independent of civil society as a neutral mediator of conflicts and exploitations occurring in civil society. Marx's civil society as '[...] a set of commodity production and exchange institutions that tilted contractual relations in favor of capitalist entrepreneurs' (Bratton, 1994:54) was an illusion of individual freedoms that disguises actual existing class exploitation (Hann, 1996:4). If civil society was the base representing the interests of the bourgeoisie, then the state (political society) as the superstructure also protected the interests of the dominant class in civil society. Marx rejected the argument that civil servants in the state bureaucracy were a 'universal class' always acting in the interest of the public. Instead, the powerful bourgeoisie actors of civil society influenced the structure of the state such that, 'In the bureaucracy [...] the identity of state interest and particular private aim is established in such a way that *the state interest* becomes a *particular private aim* over against other private aims' (quoted in Ehrenberg, 1999:133, italics in original). Therefore, if civil society was a realm of alienation and exploitation, both it and its twin 'partner in crime' – the state, had to be abolished by the proletariat revolution. In Marx, as Bratton (1994:54) correctly notes, the historical process of social change moves from state to society (proletariat led).

Marx's negative interpretation of civil society marked a lengthy scholarly disinterest in civil society until Antonio Gramsci's reinterpretation of the concept in the nineteenth century (Baker, 2002:5). In a nutshell, Gramsci opposed the location of civil society in the economic sphere, preferring instead to position it alongside the state in the superstructure. In the superstructure, as Adamson (1987:322) puts it, conflicts are largely political and aim to influence '[...] the political identification of the masses and the institutional nature and boundaries of civil society itself.' The identification of civil society with the superstructure marks the formulation of civil society as a site for contestation for hegemony. The

reinterpretation of civil society by Gramsci brings this discussion to the heart of this thesis' theoretical departure point and therefore merits an in-depth and separate discussion as below.

2.2.1 Antonio Gramsci

The key to understanding Gramsci's theory of hegemony and his conception of civil society lies in understanding the socio-political environment of Italy between 1919 and 1936. As Morton (2007:78) argues, '[...] one has to have some knowledge of and about a political theorist before attempting to think in a similar way about alternative social conditions'. Gramsci's political thoughts were initially shaped by his activism in workers movements between 1916 and 1919. His journalistic contributions in the *L'Ordine Nuovo* (the New Order) and his explicit political involvement with the Italian Communist Party shaped his earliest ideas about hegemony. The *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (Gramsci, 1971) is the site of Gramsci's comprehensively elaborated thoughts about hegemony compiled during his imprisonment. In his writings, Gramsci attempts to explain the enigma of social change in post-World War 1 Italy. The failure of a workers' led revolution, Gramsci argues, was an outcome of the interplay between international and national factors. The external social actors that represented capitalism in Italy teamed up with internal actors (trade unions and a bourgeois state) to oppress workers. This combined force of capitalists, trade unionists and a bourgeois state was so formidable that it withered away chances of a successful socialist revolution (Morton, 2007:82). Through a process of corporatism, the state absorbed major and powerful civil society actors (trade unions) and made it a configuration of political society and civil society: 'state = political society + civil society' (Gramsci, 1971:263).

To counterpoint the totalising regimes of his time, Gramsci argued that a consequential social change could best be achieved by a 'bottom-up' revolution led by Factory Council workers' movements as opposed to a 'top-down' revolution led by trade unions. Gramsci argues:

Objectively, the trade union is nothing other than a commercial company, of purely capitalist type, which aims to secure, in the interests of the proletariat, the maximum price for the commodity labour, and to establish monopoly over this commodity in the national and international fields (quoted in Morton, 2007:83, emphasis in original).

The revolutionary promise of the Factory Councils emanated from the perception that automatic membership by all workers rendered the Councils forceful and self-governing. As Morton (2007:83) puts it, '[t]hey constituted an alternative set of legitimacy-creating institutions and an embryonic form of political organisation.' The Factory Councils, Gramsci argued, were supposed to be complimented by a 'mass party rooted in everyday social reality' as opposed to Lenin's Russia's vanguard party that organised society in order to stall revolutionary change (Boggs, 1976:18, emphasis in original; also Cox, 1999:7). However, attempts to turn the Factory Councils' struggle for wages in the 1920s into a revolution for broader social change failed. A weak leadership and divisions in the Councils stalled the revolution. Furthermore, divisions in opposition political parties and their lack of organic linkages with the masses weakened their capacity to rally and unite different social forces to support the revolution. According to Morton (2007) the state also contributed to these divisions through divide-and-rule tactics. The divisions, both in opposition parties and the Councils and within the bourgeois state led to the rise of Benito Mussolini and his Fascist party (Morton, 2007). It was the Fascist state that imprisoned Antonio Gramsci and therein in prison, he spoke to this concrete historical context as he set out his theory of hegemony to explain why revolutions fail.

2.2.1.1 Hegemony

Femia (1981:24) defines hegemony as 'an order in which a common social-moral language is spoken, in which one concept of reality is dominant, informing with its spirit all modes of thought and behaviour.' In order to appreciate Gramsci's concept of hegemony, as defined by Femia above, there is also need to grapple with his [Gramsci's] definition of a state. Gramsci criticised the liberals' understanding of the state as 'an apparatus of government' that is separate from other social spheres as too narrow. According to Jacques Texier, this definition views the state as an autonomous social entity identifiable exclusively with politics of force and violence (Texier, 1979:51). Gramsci argues for an alternative definition of the state centred on the notion of 'the integral state.' Thus, a state according to Gramsci (1971:261) combines 'not only the apparatus of government, but also the 'private' apparatus of 'hegemony' or civil society'.

The Gramscian 'integral state', as Morton (2007:88) puts it, is 'identified with the struggle over hegemony in civil society.' In addition to opposing the liberals, Gramsci also turns Marx's historical materialism on its head. Marx's focus on the explanatory power of the economic base becomes subordinated to the explanatory power of superstructural moment. The integral state, which is a unity of the 'political society' (force) and 'civil society' (consent) is the major single constituent of the superstructure. The distinction often made between 'civil society' and 'political society', Gramsci (1971:160) argues, is not 'an organic one' but 'merely methodological.' The separation is realised in theory but in practice the state organises and centralises civil society in the advancement of its social world view (Femia, 1981:27). Thus, in Gramsci's work, as Texier (1979:51) argues, the practice of politics combines both coercion (force) and persuasion (consent). That is, societal control by force, on one hand, is a function of domination through state coercive machinery; and, on the other hand, it is a function of hegemony, in and through civil society.

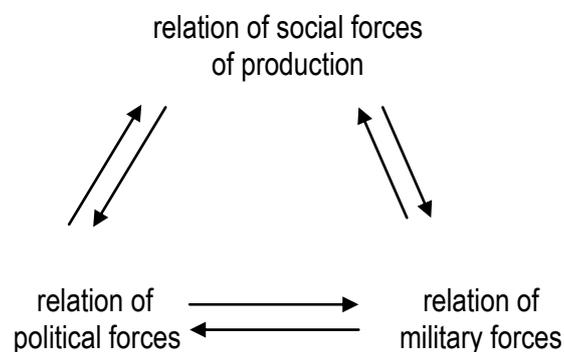
The construction of hegemonic ideologies 'as consensual instruments of intellectual and moral leadership' (Morton, 2007:91) is done by intellectuals within civil society. Intellectuals in Gramsci's 19th century Italy constructed and organised ideas about their conception of the world that they persuaded the rest of society to accept (Gramsci, 1971:10). Ideological hegemony is therefore, as Femia (1981:31) argues the most important face of power. A revolution, Gramsci (1971:235-39) argues, waged on competing hegemonic ideological worldviews (war of position) is more practically winnable than one that aims at frontal takeover of the state's coercive apparatus (war of maneuver). Civil society is the sphere where such intersubjective forms of consciousness are contested. In the context of a struggle for social change, Gramsci (1971:235) therefore compares civil society to 'the trench-systems of modern warfare.' Texier (1979:49) has described Gramsci as a 'theoretician of the superstructures.' The theory of the superstructure (hegemony) helps us to understand the unity between the infrastructure and the superstructure. This unity is realised in the second building block of the Gramscian dialectics known as the 'historical bloc'.

According to Morton (2007:96-97), the concept of a historic or historical bloc has two meanings. In the first instance, it enjoins the two spheres of economic base and the political superstructure. As Gramsci argues, '[s]tructures and superstructures form an 'historical bloc'. [...T]he complex, contradictory and discordant *ensemble* of the superstructures is the reflection of the *ensemble* of the social relations of production' (Gramsci, 1971:366, italics in original). However, commentators disagree on whether Gramsci prioritised the structure or the superstructure. According to Bobbio (1988:85), the basis of Gramsci's contradiction of Marx is the priority given the superstructure over the economic base. Texier (1979:58) however disagrees, and argues that Gramsci prioritised the economic base, otherwise he would not be a Marxist. The superstructure can subordinate the economic base, Texier (1979:59) argues, only when relations of production are abnormally irregular to trigger a 'social revolution'. A third way to look at this dialectic relationship is that, whichever is primatised, the superstructure retains some

'degree of independent autonomy' (Morton, 2007:96) in explaining, justifying and legitimising changes taking place in the economic sphere.

What is important for our purpose here is to understand that those doing the explaining, the justification and the legitimising function are linked to particular social classes in the spheres of commerce and politics. In this sense, Mouffe (1979:180) argues that Lenin's conception of hegemony which restricted it within the sphere of commerce was limited in that it restricted revolution only to antagonistic struggles between the proletariat and peasantry classes. For Gramsci however, the historical bloc as the enjoinment of the superstructure (politics) and base (commerce) permits composite relations of forces, beyond class antagonisms, to drive the revolution as illustrated below:

Figure 2.1: **The relations of force**



(**Source:** Morton, 2007:94)

The struggle over hegemony takes place in the realm of the relation of political forces. The ideologies employed in the struggle for hegemony reflect contradictions inherent on the terrain of the relation of social forces of production that needs transformation (Gramsci, 1971:181). Thus Gramsci further argues that '[...] though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic, [because of] the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity' (Gramsci, 1971:161). The relation of military forces is never out of the picture. Instead, as an important part of the

'apparatus of state coercive power' it stand ready to play a crucial role of enforcing '[...] discipline in those cases where 'spontaneous consent has failed' (Femia, 2001:140).

Gramsci's second usage of the concept of historical bloc aimed at explaining the schisms that characterised both the Left and Right in the struggle over hegemony in Italy (Morton, 2007:96-97). For the revolution to succeed, Gramsci argued, there was need to synchronise interests of groups with a similar agenda and the interests of groups pursuing different agendas. Thus, for example, one could talk of women's rights and election monitoring groups, political parties, labour unions, peasants movements, etc synchronising their dispersed interests within a united expansive bloc for social change. From the success of this alliance, each group inevitably realises its initially stated independent objectives. The effectiveness of this historical bloc is dependent on the strength each group brings to the alliance, *vis-à-vis*, leadership, finance, mobilisation skills etc. These characteristics are important organisational and material determinants of the struggle for social change. Thus, historical bloc in the second usage refers to a united force of either hegemonic actors or counter-hegemonic actors. According to Gramsci, the interests of the historical bloc are economically defined but the formation of the historical bloc itself is a political process. Hence, a historical bloc is realised when a hegemonic economic class '[...] becomes aware that [its] own corporate interest [...] transcend the corporate limits of purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups too' (Gramsci, 1971:181). The articulation of a hegemonic ideology is framed in the language that unites both the interests of fundamental and subaltern classes (Mouffe, 1979:193; Morton, 2007:94-95).

The two fundamental classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, provided leadership of the historical blocs in Gramsci's Italy. The bourgeoisie bloc with the state as the major actor could forge alliances with all lower classes, including some elements of the proletariat, to form a hegemonic bloc. The

proletariat bloc, with the workers as the major actors could forge alliances with the peasantry lower class, including some elements of petty bourgeoisie, to form a counter hegemonic bloc (Cox, 1999:15). The articulation of the hegemonic ideology in both these historical blocs is decisively political. The historical bloc therefore realises a dialectic relationship between the structure (base) and the superstructure and a dialectic relation between interests of a fundamental class and interests of subaltern classes. However, drawing from his experience of Italy of the day, Gramsci argued that emancipative politics was only realised in the counter-hegemonic bloc. Thus, the antithesis of hegemony by a hegemonic historical bloc is counter-hegemony by a counter-hegemonic historical bloc. The counter-hegemonic bloc also constructs and organises ideas for the purpose of proffering an alternative social order. Gramsci, however, criticised the Factory Councils in the counter-hegemonic bloc for employing tactics that were counter-revolutionary. Gramsci contrasted what he called a 'war of position' versus a 'war of movement'. The counter-hegemonic historic bloc needed to wage a struggle over diffusing ideas into society as opposed to a struggle that aims at taking over state power through confrontation tactics. The counter-hegemonic bloc needed to galvanise the 'collective will' of its constituencies so that, in the face of an onslaught by the hegemonic bloc, it does not scatter 'into infinity of individual wills' of 'separate and conflicting paths' (Gramsci, 1971:128-9; Morton, 2007:98).

Gramsci argued that for the revolution to be successful, counter-hegemony needed to transcend two levels of consciousness – corporative and class consciousness (Cox, 1999:15). In the first instance, the counter-hegemonic group needs to transcend corporative consciousness inherent in its various sub-groups. This consciousness, as Cox (1999:15) argues, is content with the *status quo* as long as the interests of its members are fulfilled. In the second instance, the counter-hegemonic bloc needs to transcend class based consciousness because it gives advantages to the bourgeoisie who use their vantage point in the social relations of production and state coercive machinery to incorporate subaltern classes. This process, which Gramsci referred to as *trasformismo* silenced vocal voices in the counter-

hegemonic bloc and thereby stalling the revolution. Gramsci therefore argued that what was needed was a higher level of consciousness based on hegemony (Cox, 1999:15). The very existence and eventual acceptance of a hegemonic social order and possible challenge to the existing social order is a function of intellectuals in civil society. The next section discusses Gramsci's conception of civil society.

2.2.1.2 Gramsci's civil society

I have argued above that Gramscian dialectics construct the struggle for social change in terms of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic contestations in the ideological superstructure and that this dialectical struggle for social change takes place in and within civil society. Contrary to a Marxian civil society that is located in the structure, Gramsci's civil society belongs to the superstructural sphere (Bobbio, 1988:82). Contrary to contemporary hegemonic liberal conception of civil society that is only counter-hegemonic, Gramsci's civil society is both a hegemonic and a counter-hegemonic force. As Katz (2006:335) puts it, Gramscian civil society '[...] is dialectically where the existing hegemonic social order is maintained but also the realm of social creativity, where a new social order can emerge.' The hegemonic civil society exists primarily to maintain the hegemonic social order, in the first and limited tier, of the fundamental class, and in the second and broader tier, of the entire hegemonic historical bloc. The second tier is crucial because it represents a compromise of the interests of the fundamental and subaltern classes or more generally of a unity of previously antagonistic groups. The hegemonic civil society becomes part of the hegemonic historical bloc through *trasformismo* (Gramsci, 1971:58). The process entails more than simply being part of the hegemonic historical bloc. *Trasformismo* also entails willingness to consent to political authority of the ruling class.

However, hegemonic civil society actors consent to political authority for various reasons. According to Femia (1981:38-44) consent results *either* from fear of punitive measures against non-conformity (coercion), out of an uninformed reluctance to change the familiar (unconscious consent), from conscious acceptance of the legitimacy of political authority and the nature that it exercises its power (willing consent), because an alternative is a danger to one's economic interests (pragmatic consent) *or* because the alternative is uninspiring (passive consent). It can be a combination of two or more of these reasons. As Femia further argues, these forms of consent exist in a continuum and 'absolute commitment and total rejection is intimately related to [one's] socio-economic conditions' (Femia, 1981:45). Once civil society consents to political authority and functions 'to secure acquiescence of the dominated classes and identification with the hegemonic world-order' (Katz, 2006:335) it can be said to be hegemonic.

According to Boggs (1976), the hegemonic civil society 'mystifie[s] power relations, public issues, and event[s]; it encourage[s] a sense of fatalism and passivity toward political action; and it justifie[s] every type of system-serving sacrifice and deprivation. [...H]egemony [...] induce[s] the oppressed to accept or 'consent' to their exploitation and daily misery.' Furthermore, it exhibits, as Gramsci (1971:97) argues, a 'paternalistic' attitude towards the ruling class and also thinks of itself as part of the leadership. It therefore stands ready to coerce those elements of society that do not conform or who rebel against the status quo. Because its maintenance of hegemony promotes 'consent to the current relations of force' (Katz, 2006:335) it conveniently promotes a 'passive revolution' (Gramsci, 1971:59). The outcome, Gramsci (1971:268) argues, is that people are general made to feel a sense of self-government, empowerment, sovereignty, and even democratic but in reality lacking all of these.

The antithesis of hegemony by a hegemonic historical bloc is counter-hegemony by a counter-hegemonic historical bloc. Logically therefore the antithesis of the hegemonic civil society is the counter-hegemonic civil society, which exists primarily to transform the social order of the hegemonic historical bloc. The processes in the hegemonic bloc are replicated in the counter-hegemonic bloc. A counter-hegemonic bloc must be created that consent to the 'commonsense' of a counter ideology (Katz, 2006:336). The role of the counter-hegemonic civil society therefore entails disarticulating the ideology or discourse of the hegemonic historical bloc and rearticulating it in accordance to its vision of a new social order (Mouffe, 1979:193). Katz (2006) theorises counter-hegemonic global civil society's transformative potential against the hegemonic historical bloc that promotes global governance and global economic models of neoliberalism. His caution and criticism of the counter-hegemonic civil society at the global level is also applicable for civil society at the national level. Katz argues that the counter-hegemonic historical bloc that this civil society speaks for needs to avoid undemocratic and intolerance often associated with the hegemonic historical bloc. Instead, Katz (2006:337) argues that counter-hegemonic civil society must 'not duplicate power disparities' that exist in the rival historical bloc, but must promote 'localism or nationalism', 'solidarity through networking.' These are some of the sociological determinants that are relevant to this thesis's second objective. The next section considers limitations of the Gramscian dialectics, in general, and for this thesis, in particular.

2.2.1.3 Limitations of Gramscian dialectics

The Gramscian dialectics is a theory of historical materialism because Gramsci was foremost a Marxist. His problematisation of the revolution in hegemonic terms reflected the primacy of fundamental classes that were linked to relations of production. The hegemonic struggle itself however took place in the realm of the superstructure. Morton (2003:123) argues that 'a theory of historical materialism should not aim to become a total or rigid doctrine beyond question.' Thus in a world that is globally changing, in

political and economic terms, the application of Gramscian dialectics in the 21st century needs not necessarily embrace all of the 19th century's determinant factors and categories. As Adamson (1980) argues, 'in today's world [...] the possibility that Marxism represents history's anointed successor to Calvinist Christianity appears extremely unlikely' (quoted in Nielsen, 1995:53). Therefore, one of the often cited limitations of Gramscian dialectics is its applicability beyond Italy's 19th century context.

German and Kenny (1998) are very critical about the appropriateness of Gramscian dialectics, particularly in International Relations (IR) studies. German and Kenny argue that the application of Gramsci in IR has not problematised well enough the conditions in which Gramsci's methods and concepts are applicable. There is an insinuation by these two scholars that Gramscian dialectics are applicable only in social conditions of post-war Italy. German and Kenny's second objection is that applying the concept on a global scale in relation to global civil society betrays the national focus inherent in the original application. Thus where Gramsci pits a hegemonic bloc (state-led) against a counter-hegemonic bloc (of subaltern groups) within a national context, German and Kenny argue, when this dialectic is applied at a global level, the state-led hegemonic bloc is not convincingly realised. Specifically they ask which state is driving the hegemonic neoliberal ideology. German and Kenny (1998:13) therefore argue that the application of Gramscian dialectics needs to be sensitive '[...] about the dangers of removing thinkers from their contexts and 'applying' their frameworks in ways that bear only partial resemblance to their original meanings.'

In an article, specifically written to respond to German and Kenny, Rupert (1998) objects to the attempt by these scholars to mummify Gramsci within the nation-state boundary. Rupert (1998:431) argues that 'the political significance of civil society and ideological contestation need not be circumscribed by the border of the state, for the state itself is being transformed as the new hegemony is being constructed

and new ways of organising social relations are being learned.’ Moreover, Rupert (1998:433) argues that ‘to delineate the terrain of political struggle within the territorial boundaries of the nation-state, or to insist that the notion of civil society has no meaning at a transnational scale because we are unable to identify a global counterpart to the ‘political’ state’ does not serve ‘the political purposes of the present’. Morton (2003:129) also argues, in response to German and Kenny, that most of the objections against the application of Gramsci today is ‘as a result of an attachment to liberal principles of political theory rather than developing a historical materialist critique of capitalism and a stress on political transformation.’ The framework of analysis for this thesis that is argued in section 2.3 below addresses this concern.

Cox (1999:11) also argues that although the nation-state context of hegemony is important we should not lose sight of the increasing dependence of nation-states on the global economy. As Gramsci (1971:350) himself argued, ‘hegemony’ [...] occurs not only within a nation [...] but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilisations.’ Cox therefore agrees with Rupert (1998) and Morton (2003) that the hegemonic force need not be a ‘formally legitimated coercive power’ (Cox, 1999:12). Instead, as Cox puts it,

There is something that could be called a nascent global historic bloc consisting of the most powerful corporate economic forces, their allies in government, and the variety of networks that evolve policy guidelines and propagate the ideology of globalisation. [...] The structure of power is sustained from outside the state through a global policy consensus and the influence of global finance over state policy, and from inside the state from those social forces that benefit from globalisation (the segment of society that is integrated into the world economy) (Cox, 1999:12).

This global hegemony in the form of global governance, Cox argues is given ‘commonsense’ status through propagation of neo-liberalism, in ways that influence the relationship between political society and civil society at both local and international levels. Furthermore, in countries where global

governance has not been embraced the global hegemonic historical bloc has covertly intervened militarily to force consent, as during the Gulf War (Cox, 1999:12).

Another problem with Gramscian dialectics in today's globalised economy is the theorisation of the revolution on the basis of the categories of fundamental classes. The first fundamental class, the bourgeoisie, collaborated with trade unions and also co-opted elements from subaltern groups to form a hegemonic historical bloc. The second, but antagonistic fundamental class was the proletariat (workers) that had the potential to offer emancipative or transformative leadership in a counter-hegemonic historical bloc that also includes peasants. Cox (1999:9) argues however that the Marxist (and Gramscian) classification of society has realised fundamental shake-up because of economic globalisation. As a result the fundamental dualistic model of class in terms of proletariat versus bourgeoisie needs to be reconceptualised. Cox proposes therefore a 'three-fold hierarchical structure' comprising, at the top, of an '*integrated*' highly skilled workforce that is immediately followed in the middle by the '*precarious*' workers and at the bottom by the '*excluded*' poor that are found in both developed and developing countries (Cox, 1999:9, emphasis in original).

The Coxian model of the contemporary structure of society is advantageous for the present thesis in that it 'rescues' us from a fundamental classes based analysis. In place of fundamental classes, we can talk of corporations and states, and in place of proletariat, petty bourgeoisie and peasants we can talk of popular forces of the *precarious* and *excluded* layers of society. The popular forces are civil society, positioned outside the market and the state. However Gramsci's theory still permits us to conceptualise the differentiated emancipative role of civil society in relation to the market and the state. Hence Cox argues that,

In a 'bottom-up' sense, civil society is the realm in which those who are disadvantaged by globalisation of the world economy can mount their protests and seek alternatives. [...]. In a 'top-down' sense, however, states and corporate interests influence the development of this current version of civil society towards making it an agency for stabilising the social and political *status quo*' (Cox, 1999:10 -11, emphasis in original).

In the 'bottom-up' sense, the struggle against globalisation by civil society is waged on a global plane through the idea of global civil society perceived as perhaps the "post-modern' collective Prince' (Cox, 1999:15). In the 'top-down' sense, the struggle is waged on the national plane and this is the focus of the present thesis.

In using the Gramscian dialectics to explore this struggle at the national level, the role of patron-client politics in arresting the revolutionary potential of civil society is seldom given attention by Gramsci because consent is achieved by a hegemonic or transformative ideology. This is an area that the post-colonial theorists of civil society can provide useful insights. In addition, in relation to post-2000 Zimbabwe, shifting analytical focus on the operation of power from the repressive apparatus of the state to 'cultural and leadership' (hegemony of purely ideological nature) might underestimate some of the challenges that militate against the emancipative role of civil society in Zimbabwe. Thus, this thesis remains alive to the repressive politics of post-2000 Zimbabwean state in addition to the ideological contestations. Furthermore, the faith that Gramsci placed in the guiding role of the Modern Prince, i.e. the Communist party, to give leadership direction to the united counter-hegemonic historical bloc may be difficult to realise in polities still characterised by ethnic, racial and religious cleavages.

2.2.2 Civil society and democratic politics

I have argued above that the contours of the development of civil society can be divided into three histories: (i) the pre-modern (classical) history with Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Machievelli and Hobbes as the chief theorists of the concept; (ii) the modern historicisation of civil society associated with philosophers such as John Locke, Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Antonio Gramsci; and (iii) the post-modern history associated with scholars such as Andrew Arato, Michael Edwards, Francis Fukuyana, Ernest Gellner, Robert D. Putnam, Mahmood Mamdani, Jean-Francois Bayart, just to mention a few. In the post-modern era (i.e., contemporary epoch) the concept of civil society is associated with the politics of democratisation. Section 2.2.2.1 seeks to demonstrate that classical liberal views of civil society (and certain insights from the historicists' version of civil society) continue to be a shadow on contemporary views of civil society, both in development theory and practice (Young, 1994:33). This is followed by a discussion of the criticism of the whole idea of civil society from a post-colonial perspective (section 2.2.2.2).

2.2.2.1 Contemporary conceptions of civil society

Mary Kaldor (2003) identifies three versions of the contemporary usage of civil society as (i) the 'activist' version, (ii) the 'neo-liberal' version and (iii) the 'post-modern' version. According to Kaldor (2003:10), the 'post-modern' version of civil society objects to the universalising tendencies or lack of relativism in the other two versions. I will therefore discuss it in the next sub-section, in the context of a critique of the idea of civil society in post-colonial societies. The 'activist' version of contemporary civil society is informed by the struggles against military regimes in Latin America and against authoritarian regimes of the former Soviet bloc, in the 1970s and 1980s respectively. Most recently it has been imported to sub-Saharan Africa in the quest for democracy. Whilst in Latin America, the theology of liberation and Gramsci influenced the politics against military dictatorships through civil society, in

Eastern Europe a Tocquevillean conception of a self-organising civil society, autonomous from the state was summoned to oppose authoritarian communist states (Baker, 2002; Kaldor, 2003).

The 'neo-liberal' version of civil society also draws from Tocqueville and the idea of a minimalist state. Civil society refers to all forms of associational life that is not controlled by the state and is also free from the whims of the market, but exist to ensure that both the state and the market accountable and responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens (Kaldor, 2003:7). In other words, civil society is the 'third sector' after the state and the market and it is the 'non-profit-sector' (Salomon and Anheier, 1999). In contrast to the state, this sector is endowed with the comparative advantages of efficiency (Hayes, 1996:24), flexibility and innovation (Edwards and Fowler, 2002:2), and cost effectiveness (Riddell *et al.*, 1995:37), especially in the area of service delivery. In the area of politics, it becomes the authentic 'vehicle of altruistic action and citizen participation' (Hayes, 1996:31-32).

Thus reflecting indebtedness to previous traditions of political thoughts and the post-modern conceptions of civil society (in its various versions), civil society is today generally understood as an 'arena where manifold social movements [...] and civic organisations from all classes [...] attempt to constitute themselves in an ensemble of arrangements so that they can express themselves and advance their interest' (Alfred Stepan, quoted in Bratton, 1989:417). Walzer (1995:7), on the other hand, defines civil society as 'the space of uncoerced human associations and also the set of relational networks – formed for the sake of family, faith, interest and ideology – that fill this space'. Keane (1988:14) defines civil society as 'an aggregate of institutions whose members are engaged primarily in a complex of non-state activities – economic and cultural production, voluntary associations and household life and who in this way preserve and transform their identity by exercising all sorts of pressures or controls upon the state institutions'. Two broad definitional strands that can be gleaned

from these definitions: First, civil society is a *behavioural space* between state and market where values and norms of 'collective purpose' are given precedence over those of the state and market (van Rooy, 1998; Ferguson, 1995). Second, civil society is the *organisational/associational action* that oppose hegemony by a single social system such as state and market or that seek to proffer alternatives in place of perceived weak institutions or processes (Gellner, 1991; van Rooy, 1998; Giddens, 1987). Both these strands do not neatly fit with the nature of civil society in Zimbabwe as I have alluded in chapter one and as the discussion below shows there are other several problems associated with the contemporary conceptions of civil society.

The first major problem arise from its reification 'as a collective, homogenised agent, combating a demonic state' (Hann, 1996:7). Why should it exist only in opposition to the state? I have argued in chapter 1 that in the context of Zimbabwe, this gave rise to a methodological problem of conceptualising civil society as only those entities aligned to the democratisation movement. Put differently, civil society is not always about the state and is not always political in that sense. The second major problem is that it has reversed the direction of the traditional flow of development aid away from the state to civil societies. The latter are strengthened because of the belief that 'vibrant societies, which mobilise groups and communities, facilitate political and social interaction, ensure participatory governance, help generate social capital and foster social cohesion' (Agere, 2000:10).

Several sub-problems emerge as a consequence: firstly, there are challenges of transcending uneven distribution of power and levelling the diversity of interests in civil society because 'organisations are [often] juxtaposed as though they operate on an even playing field, share similar values, seek common ideals' and this disguises the donors' 'politics of choice' about who to fund and why (Howell and Pearce, 2001:113). Moreover, donor funding can erode local legitimacy for civil society in the South

because of lack of autonomy from donor defined agendas. Secondly, whilst donors assist with the visibility of civil society, selective choice of who is funded potentially exclude constituencies represented by the under- or non-funded groups from participating in development processes. Conceptualised as the urban-rural civic divide phenomenon, Ake (2000:135) argues that organisations which represent rural masses and peasants are more often ignored in favour of elite and urban based civic groups. Ake argues that urban civic groups' lack of organic linkages to rural constituencies potentially misses a vital social base for democratisation. This insight is important for exploring the thesis' second objective about the sociological determinants of counter-hegemonic politics in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Finally, in polities lacking democracy, the above two challenges potentially set the state and civil society in collision as the latter become perceived as a threat to political elites (Brysk, 2000). Putzel (2004:10) and Hearn (2000:828) argue however that a state that stifles civil society is not only a threat to democracy, but it equally erodes its potential to be a 'quality state', i.e., a legitimate, stable and efficient state.

The third major problem is that civil society is evoked within the contemporary liberal perspective in apolitical terms, but it is expected to exert pressure on states to influence pro-poor policies. There are two sub-problems that emerge from this framing of civil society's function: firstly, if policy making is a complex and political process, contemporary framing of civil society is mute on how civil society actually influences this process. For instance, Hogwood and Gunn (1984:68) argue that the receptiveness of the state to civil society depends on the potential nature of the issues being demanded: Are the issues potential crisis creators? Does the state perceive the issues as having wider societal representation? Do the issues raised resonate with the state's strongly held ideologies? Are there moral grounds to address the issues? Bachrach and Baratz (1970) also remind us that one of the powerful tools of making a decision by policy makers is to ignore and/or avoid making decisions on fundamental issues. This silent articulation of decision can render irrelevant the efforts by civil society to influence policy.

Secondly, there is an erroneous underlying assumption that civil society actors are necessarily knowledgeable about the processes of policy making (Makumbe, 1998). The idea of an apolitical civil society means that its 'political capacity' to influence policy is inadequately problematised (Millstein *et al.*, 2003). According to Chandhoke (2001:3), therefore, the advent of liberal democracy that drives contemporary apolitical conceptions of civil society has ended revolutions and created de-revolutionised civil society.

What is to be done? The problems discussed above direct the present thesis to examine the strategies that civil society in Zimbabwe employed in engaging the intransigent ZANU-PF regime in order to influence social change; to examine how issues were constructed and transmitted in public discourse; and to explore whether civil society's underlying ideologies resonate with broad national sentiments. As Parsons (1995) argues, the manner in which issues are constructed is a function of subjectivity versus objectivity by those who want public policies to be designed to address a problem. Thus, an important question to ask is how different discourses or ideologies were articulated by Zimbabwean civil society to mobilise support and build alliances behind issues and interests of 'common good': generally the contest against state hegemony. The importance of discourse or ideology takes us back to Gramsci. Discourse, Brock *et al.*, (2001:4-6) argue, frames issues in ways that dictate the political action needed to solve the problem and the preferred outcome of the process of the struggle for social change. But most importantly, discourse as the 'hidden face of power' (Parsons, 1995) can be used as a political device to exclude and include other actors from policy processes.

The fourth major problem, but by no means the least, is that contemporary definitions of civil society are almost exclusively influenced by western philosophical thoughts. Civil society is separate from the household, the market, and the state. It has (or must enjoy) autonomy from state control and its

membership is voluntary depending on acceptance or recognition of the interests, wishes, values, ideology, and identity that defines a particular group (Carothers, 1999:1). The motifs of independence from state control and voluntary action are vital to the functioning of civil society as positive agents of social change. As agents for social change civil society limits state power and upholds pluralism (Osaghae, 1995:192). From a western and liberal perspective, the power limiting function of civil society is often unproblematic. According to Osaghae (1995) this is so because liberalisation in western polities occurred simultaneously with democratisation processes. In other words, civil society in the west historically developed simultaneously with state formation processes hence its role of consolidating democracy has a length history of being tolerated. As a result, when civil society in the west checks the authoritarian tendencies of the state (in the Tocquevillean sense) or when the state regulates the chaotic and egoistic civil society realm (in the Hegelian sense) the process is one of a 'balanced opposition' (Gramsci cited in Bayart, 1986:112). The absence of a culture of 'balanced opposition' and other factors, in postcolonial societies such as sub-Saharan Africa, forms the basis of the criticism of the value of the concept for democratic politics in these polities. The next section outlines this debate in detail.

2.2.2.2 Civil society and social change in post-colonial societies

The postcolonial theorists challenge the universalistic tendencies in western models of civil society. In this opposition, it is argued that a relativist application of the notion of civil society in non-western countries of the south and east is needed. The problem with western notions of civil society, Hann (1996:17) argues, is that it 'has a specific currency in the history of western ideas'. The effect of these ideas on the body politics of southern and eastern populations, Kaviraj and Khilnani (2001:5) argue has influenced '[...] nearly all societies of the Third World [to] speak, as far as politics is concerned, a Western language.' Furthermore, Kaviraj and Khilnani (2001:5) argue, this language '[...] expresses

political desires for the establishment of liberal, Communist or socialist political forms, and evaluates political systems in terms of democracy and dictatorship.' The hegemonic variant of liberal democracy as reflected in various institutional reforms and practices exported to developing countries (Osaghae, 1995:189) tends therefore to dictate, as Makumbe (1998:306) notes, that civil society in the south and east ought to 'develop along the same lines that civil societies in Western liberal democracies have developed.'

In relation to the nature of civil society in Africa in particular, Mamdani (1996) argues that the source of confusion and complexity in understanding its real nature arises mainly from ahistorical methodological approaches to African political realities in general. Claude Ake agrees and asserts that ahistorical approaches to democratisation in particular tend to project western political discourses in triumphalistic tones when applied in developing countries. The problem, however, Ake (2000:128) notes, is that this 'Western triumphalist entry' camouflages its imperfections and simultaneously distorts African realities. Therefore, a historicist approach different from the one that problematises civil society and social change within the context of capitalism is employed. This approach evokes the legacies of colonialism and post-colonial processes of nation-building in order to conceptualise civil society in Africa. The colonial political administrators, the argument is advanced, discouraged the formation of 'African civil society' in favour of 'White civil society'. The former were often criminalised and institutionalised out of the political space. The effect is that, as Bayart (1986:112) argues, African civil society was set against the state in its struggles against colonialism instead of developing 'in continual conflict' [i.e., 'balanced opposition'] with the state. At independence, single-party state systems were adopted as the epitome of socialist principles and representations of traditional forms of governance in the nation-building projects (Michael, 2004). The ruling parties, as Huntington (1968) argues, became 'the institutional mechanism for mobilising support and executing policy' and socialism the 'basis of legitimacy'.

The domineering ruling political party and the co-optation of civil society into party structures became an effective mechanism to contain society's differentiated demands. Mamdani (1996) argues therefore that in postcolonial Africa, civil society was robbed of its autonomy from the state right from the start. Thus, the relationship between the state and civil society became one of a dialectic nature and not diametric opposites. The implication for this development is that whilst in theory and Western conceptualisation, civil society is distinct from the state; in the African context this dividing line is thin. Other commentators have further argued that in Africa the state functions as 'the major avenue of upward mobility, status, power and wealth' (Callaghy, 1986:36). Thus, through the patron-clientele system linked to the state, civil society in Africa, as Osaghae (1995:194) argues, is perhaps more meaningful as a means of realising welfare interests than for consolidating democracy.

An important insight that can be gleaned from postcolonial problematisation of civil society, in particular with regard to Africa, is the role that can be played by patron-client politics and neopatrimonial politics in strengthening or weakening civil society (Mamdani, 1996). The pervasiveness of patronage and clientele politics, as Makumbe (1998) argues tends to influence civil society in Africa to replicate neopatrimonial and authoritarian tendencies of the state, in terms of both its organisational structures and operations. Thus Staffan Darnolf (1997) argues that '[...] not until the internal operations of civil society's various institutions are permeated by a democratic political culture can its members be patterned to also behave in a democratic fashion. [Thus, because of patronage and clientele politics,] the civil societies of many African countries are relatively underdeveloped' (quoted in Makumbe, 1998:311-312). But more crucially is that patronage and clientele politics can provide the material dimension for civil society to act the maintenance role, *vis-à-vis* state hegemony. This is an important insight that can further enrich our understanding of civil society and social change in Gramscian dialects.

Moreover, Makumbe (1998:316) argues that the historical dynamic nature through which civil society in Africa developed and the neopatrimonial political environment within which they operate combine to render civil society '[...] fairly weak and beset with constraints of a financial, organisational, operational and even environmental nature.' As a consequence, Makumbe (1998:317) further notes, 'Africa's civil society will continue to need the material, financial and moral support of those non-African donors that are better endowed with these resources.' The question of civil society's independence from donor influence is therefore crucial in analysing the structural (material) setup of civil society. This entails a critical problematisation of the efficacy and appropriateness of the equation '(civil society + donors) less state = democratic governance' in the south and east, which is taken for granted in the liberal perspective.

2.3 Gramsci's *absolute historicism*: the framework of analysis

The framework for analysis of the thesis is indebted to Adam David Morton's problematisation of how Gramsci's theory of hegemony can be historicised beyond the specific historical context that it was initially called upon to address (Morton, 2003; 2007). The framework is based on a contrast between *austere historicism* and *absolute historicism*. In *austere historicism*, ideas formed within specific historical contexts are said to have no capacity to ask questions and/or proffer answers to problems happening in the distant future. Because of these restrictions, some scholars argue that Gramsci has analytical power only within the confines of 19th century Italy (Bellamy 1990, cited in Morton, 2003:127-28). Morton argues however that *austere historicism* is restrictive and negates the potential of Gramsci's theory of hegemony to engage contemporary challenges and proffer alternatives.

As a Marxist, Gramsci problematised issues in dialectical terms. In this dialectic approach, *absolute historicism* recognises, as Morton (2003:130) argues, that 'old and new forms of thought combine within the social relations of a particular epoch so that within every historical period there could be a recurrence of previous questions alongside the need to consider new issues.' In other words, ideas can and do transcend their historical context, influencing the actions and belief systems of future generations. As Gramsci (1971:201) argues, if a theory cannot be applied beyond its original historical context 'it is a byzantine and scholastic abstraction, good only for phrase-mongers to toy with.' He therefore argued that for a theory to be generalised and considered universally applicable,

The proof of its universality consists precisely 1. in its becoming a stimulus to know better the concrete reality of a situation that is different from that in which it was discovered (this is the principal measure of its fecundity); 2. when it has stimulated and helped this better understanding of concrete reality, in its capacity to incorporate itself in that same reality as if it were originally an expression of it (Gramsci, 1971:201).

The first criterion in the above quotation demands a review of a theory, unpacking its building blocks, insights and limitations. This has been the major aim of this chapter. Consequently, Gramsci's concepts such as for example hegemony and counter-hegemony, historical blocs, *trasformismo*, war of position, war of manoeuvre, collective will, crisis of authority, intellectual leadership, force and consent were discussed above. The advantage of using these concepts, as (Moore, 2006:4) argues, is that 'If they are incorporated into an interrogation of a particular conjuncture in a national social formation's history the questions that will be asked of it will be far richer than those focusing on the bare and picked-over bones of 'civil society' on its own [...]'. In other words, Gramsci facilitates a richer discussion of the role of civil society in legitimating and resisting state hegemony within a broader political economy of a post-independent Zimbabwe state that shows composite relations of forces – e.g., relation of social forces of production, relation of political forces and relation of military forces – constantly influencing and being influenced by the other with different impact on Zimbabwean society and its politics.

In the second criterion, the researcher empirically tests the applicability of the theory in his or chosen study population, different from the original context the theory was conceived. Morton (2003:134) calls the second task the actualisation of the philosophy of praxis in the historicisation of history. The framework for analysis emphasises, as Morton (2003:134) argues, the process of 'thinking in a Gramscian way'. This entails using Gramscian dialectics not as problem-solver but a mere critical device to explore the origins of a prevailing social order, institutions and social and power relations (see also Cox, 2004:14). Thus, 'thinking in a Gramscian way' in order to discuss post-2000 Zimbabwe politics in this thesis allows a non-mechanistic application of the theory of hegemony (and its related concepts). In other words, there is no need in the analysis to match the specific historical context of Gramsci's 19th century Italy, with the historical context of post-2000 Zimbabwe. Instead, a three-pronged narrative approach that Gramsci used to problematise the politics of his environment is used simply to *signpost* the present study to the relevance and explanatory power of the concepts of hegemony in equally understanding post-2000 Zimbabwean society and its politics: hence Adam David Morton's idea of 'thinking in Gramscian way'.

Therefore, the analytical framework of this thesis also flows in three stages: *firstly*, it systematically identifies the relation of political forces, relation of social forces of production and the relation of military forces in post-independent Zimbabwe and examines how and why social actors within these realms were constituted into historical blocs. This helps to appreciate how, at independence, the ZANU-PF regime manipulated the discourses of nation building, reconciliation, development and nationalism to construct a hegemonic project that rode on both domestic and international political legitimacy and the systematic elimination of opponents, in particular PF-ZAPU, using military force. It also helps to appreciate how and why, in 2000, controlling the means of production, i.e., land, became important to ZANU-PF's goal of strengthening hegemony at a time when a popular and strong opposition party (the MDC) entered the country's political landscape. Through the concept of the 'crisis of authority' in the

state, the analytical framework directs the discussion to the development of the counter-hegemonic historical bloc, initially fragmented because of many small and weak opposition parties and poorly coordinated counter-hegemonic civil society's struggles for political space autonomous from ZANU-PF in the early 1990s. The discussion then turns to discuss how and why in the mid-1990s, the counter-hegemonic social forces coalesced around the labour movement and the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) to create, in 1999 and beyond, a formidable counter-historical bloc that united behind the strong and popular MDC opposition party and posed the first real political threat to ZANU-PF hegemony since 1980.

Secondly, the analytical narrative identifies conflicts and unity of interests (of political and economic nature) inherent in and between historical blocs, and explores how this might have influenced the continuous configurations and disfigurations of the historical blocs. In the case of Zimbabwe, identifying the conflicts of interests, especially as they relate to the slow pace of land redistribution and wealth accumulation by ZANU-PF elites helps in the appreciation of the context of the waning of the political legitimacy of ZANU-PF in the 1990s and beyond, and how therefore the post-2000 fast track land reform programme became crucial to the reconstitution and re-strengthening of the regime's hegemony. The analytical framework seeks to demonstrate the manner in which state hegemony was strengthened through the use of both force and 'intellectual leadership'. In the same vein, identifying conflicts and unity of interests in the counter-hegemonic bloc the analytical framework helps to explain swings in intra- and inter-relationships between the opposition parties and counter-hegemonic civil society and how and why these relationships strengthened and/or weakened the agentive role of the counter-hegemonic civil society in the struggle against state hegemony.

Thirdly, the analytical narrative identifies the interrelatedness of the material, organisational and ideological apparatus that binds social actors within historical blocs (Cox, 1999; 2004). In this thesis, this narrative answers the second major research question, i.e., the sociological determinants (organisational and material) of the struggle for social change by social actors in the counter-hegemonic historical bloc, in particular by the counter-hegemonic civil society.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the conceptual and analytic framework of the thesis. The major aim of the chapter was to contextualise civil society and social change in Gramscian dialectics. In order to appreciate the analytical utility of Gramsci for this thesis, insights from alternative theories of civil society were reviewed. In a nutshell, the liberal school separates civil society from the state (and market) and monolithically celebrates civil society as a positive agent of social change that checks the state. The historicist school conceptualises civil society in relation to capitalist bourgeoisies. Civil society is also monolithically viewed negatively as a realm of alienation, chaos and inequality. The postcolonial school challenges the universalising tendencies inherent in western theories of civil society. Postcolonial theorists therefore demand a relative application of the concept of civil society in non-Western countries for it to return positive emancipatory functions. Importantly, the chapter discussed the Gramscian dialectics and its implication for the organisational basis of civil society in the struggle for social change. The chapter demonstrated that Gramsci's civil society is dialectically a positive and a negative agent of social change. The dialectical hegemonic and counter-hegemonic role of civil society in the struggle for social change takes place in the realm of the political or ideological superstructure and not the economic structure.

The chapter also discussed the framework for analysis. The framework of analysis emphasises 'thinking in a Gramscian way' instead of applying Gramsci mechanically. This framework, it was argued, involves a systematic identification of political forces in a social context, examining how the forces historically formed historical blocs. The framework also identifies conflicts and unity of interests inherent in and between historical blocs, and explores how this might have influenced the continuous configurations and disfigurations of the historical blocs. Finally, the framework, it was argued, should identify the interrelatedness of the material, organisational and ideological apparatus that binds historical blocs. The dialectical role of civil society in either transforming or maintaining hegemony is played in and within the corresponding hegemonic and counter-hegemonic historical blocs. The deployment of Gramsci's language of hegemony to understand post-2000 Zimbabwe politics is in no way a claim that Gramsci provides an elixir to understanding all contemporary world problems. As I demonstrate below, bits of varying historical political philosophies about how to create a good Zimbabwean society permeate public discourse. The conflict and crisis resulting from this complex negotiation of the boundaries between state, civil society and the market, within the context of a struggle for hegemony, is the central focus of the remainder of the thesis. The next chapter discusses the Gramscian moments in the political economy background of Zimbabwe, in relation to the development of civil society.

CHAPTER 3

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF HEGEMONY, CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN ZIMBABWE

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the socio-economic and political context of hegemonic politics and civil society's struggle for social change in Zimbabwe. The chapter functions as background to the rest of the thesis. It is argued here that both international and national factors are critical in problematising the role of civil society in transforming or preserving hegemony in Zimbabwe. Although the thesis focuses on hegemonic contestation between 2000 and 2008, it is important first to outline the contours and dynamics of pre-2000 politics because it defines continuities and discontinuities in the composition of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic social forces, their discourses, advocacy issues and strategies of engagement. This exposition of the pre-2000 politics is traced from 1980 when Zimbabwe won independence from Britain.

Exclusive of this introduction, the chapter is divided into two major sections. Section 3.2 is sub-divided into two sections. Section 3.2.1 discusses the socio-economic context of hegemony and civil society politics for social change. It shows that state-civil society relations in Zimbabwe have shifted simultaneously with changes in macroeconomic policies. Section 3.2.2 discusses the political context of hegemonic construction and civic activism. It shows that hegemonic and counter-hegemonic politics in the 1980s and 1990s, cumulatively exploded in 2000 into what is now commonly referred to as the 'Zimbabwe crisis'. Its sub-section 3.2.2.1 argues that the crisis represents the consolidation of the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic historical blocs around the 'land question' and the 'governance question', respectively. Sub-section 3.2.2.2 discusses the nature of the counter-hegemonic historical

bloc in the light of fractures in opposition party politics. Finally, section 3.3 concludes the chapter by summarising the major argument.

3.2 The political economy of post-colonial Zimbabwe

3.2.1 Socio-economic context

Zimbabwe's socio-economic institutional situation since 1980 is critical in understanding the swings in state-society (and civil society) relations. Specifically, macroeconomic policies set the context in which hegemonic politics was and continues to be constructed by the Zimbabwean state. The economic situation also sets the context of shifts in civil society advocacy issues in response to both the hegemonic politics and the impact of macroeconomic policies on people's livelihoods. Many commentators agree that in 1980, the Zimbabwean state inherited a strong and diversified economy (Nhema, 2002:127). However, it should be pointed out that Zimbabwe, like many other newly independent African states, had local pressures to adopt a strong developmental policy framework to actualise political freedom and rights, growth and welfare for both the elites and the masses (Preston, 1996:159). A strong economy and relative stability in the first decade (1980-1990) permitted successful implementation of populist welfarist-socialist policies by the state, especially in education and health (Coudere and Marijse, 1991).

Improved standards of living made the state popular with the masses. Dorman (2001:60-61) argues that the state used this popularity and uncontested legitimacy to dominate the agenda of reconstruction and development, to legitimise hegemonic politics and to demobilise society. The ruling ZANU-PF party portrayed itself as a party of the people and encouraged participation in state initiated development projects such as co-operatives. These co-operatives, as Makumbe (1996) argues, were rhetorically promoted in the name of empowering the people to participate in decision-making processes. The

political structures of ZANU-PF were however tacitly tasked to oversee this participatory development within the context of a national decentralisation program. Commenting on the policy of decentralisation, Makumbe (1996:61) argues that instead of promoting participatory development, it worked as an instrument to mobilise and control voters. Alexander (1996:184) concurs and notes that,

Rather than establishing a dynamic and participatory local government system, the central government set about reconstructing development bureaucracies capable of excluding local bodies from policy-making roles. The government turned from mobilising people to managing them through bureaucratic control and local alliances.

It is also important to note that the Zimbabwean population was not critical of this state-led approach to economic management because, as many studies have shown, the private sector was still dominated by minority whites and international corporate interests. The state therefore provided the political power to facilitate the entry of blacks into white dominated private sectors such as commercial farming and mining enterprises. In terms of civic engagement, following from this uncritical acceptance of the regime, an 'entryist approach' (Raftopoulos, 2000:28-29) that avoided confrontational politics with the state was preferred by civil society. Any advocacy of civil and political rights and criticism of ZANU-PF's developmentalism, as Kagoro (2003:6) also notes, was labelled as anti-revolutionary and divisive.

In the second decade (1990-1999), the state shifted from welfarist-socialist economic policies to implement neoliberal market policies under the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). ESAP was implemented between 1990 and 1995. As many studies on Zimbabwe have shown, ESAP had negative economic growth and poverty outcomes. Bond and Manyanya (2002:31-32) argue, for instance, that the predicted 5 percent annual economic growth under ESAP failed to materialise as the country's GDP averaged just 1.2 percent for the period between 1991 and 1995. Furthermore, a budget deficit that had been pegged at 5 percent of GDP shot over 10 percent and inflation that had been forecasted at around 10 percent averaged above 30 percent between 1991 and 1995. A consequence

of this negative economic growth was an increase in unemployment levels and low wages that were not commensurate with the increasing prices of basic commodities and cost recovery fees on service sectors such as education and health. In terms of civil society activism, especially on the local scene, advocacy focused on criticising ESAP and lobbying for inclusive economic policy making processes.⁵ The criticism against ESAP was accompanied by demonstrations and coincided with the general germination of opposition politics against the regime. A 1997 Poverty Assessment Study Survey (PASS) estimated that 86 percent of the rural population and 50 percent of the urban population were in poverty at the time (Bowyer-Bower and Stoneman, 2000:87). On the international scene, civil society joined hundreds of civil society groups in the world that demonstrated against the World Bank and IMF's 50 years anniversary celebrations under the logo 'Fifty years is enough' (Kanyenze, 2006:18).

Thus, midway the second decade, ESAP was replaced by the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) in 1996⁶. In terms of policy thrust, ZIMPREST represented a continuation of neoliberalism rather than a complete rejection of it. However, in responding to increased societal discontent, ZIMPREST brought into the policy arena the themes of empowerment, indigenisation and land reform. In terms of economic growth the down slide continued and inflation induced prices rendered basic commodities a luxury for most households (Potts and Mutambirwa, 1998:62). The economy eventually took a plunge in 1997 following unbudgeted gratuity payouts to war veterans. In the subsequent years, other factors such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war, the chaotic land reform, uncontrollable inflation, price distortions, overvalued exchange rate, capital flight, absence of rule of law, lack of property rights, debt default and the lack of external funding unremittingly accelerated the decline (Coorey *et al.*, 2007:4; Bond, 2003:42). Because economic

⁵ As a consequence of this mobilisation against ESAP, in 1995 ZCTU published its study entitled 'Beyond ESAP: Framework for an Alternative Development Strategy in Zimbabwe'.

⁶ Although ZIMPREST was proposed in 1996, the actual implementation took place in 1998, two years late (Kanyenze, 2006).

liberalism is often simultaneously promoted alongside political liberalism, the mid- to late 1990s also witnessed an increase in governance and human rights civil society activism. In particular, as discussed in subsequent sections, civil society groups came together under the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and demanded a review of the country's governance system.

The third decade (2000-2008), witnessed the intensification of the economic crisis and the implementation of politically expedient policies. Critical factors in the economic crisis were the state condoned land invasions of 2000, the post-2000 fast-track land reform program, corruption and a generally 'radicalised state' (Moyo and Yeros, 2007) that strongly expressed anti-market and anti-imperial sentiments. UNDP (2005:42) estimates that between 1999 and 2007 Zimbabwe's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by over 35 percent and the average growth per annum recorded at -6 percent in 2005. The country's official annual inflation, which stood at 20 percent in 1997, was over 24, 059 percent in February 2008, the highest in the world. The economic crisis resulted in increased co-optation strategies by political elites and the rewarding of actors in agriculture, commerce, industry and mining with land, cheap fuel, subsidised bank loans, foreign exchange, contracts and concessions in order to retain power. It is this scenario that has led Hawkins (2006:5) to argue that post-2000 Zimbabwe virtually became a 'captured state'.

Furthermore, the post-2000 economic situation was marked by a severe decline in agricultural production, which negatively impacted the availability of staple food and export crop production which is critical for the country's foreign currency. The unproductive agriculture sector also affected the manufacturing sectors. In 2007, the International Crisis Group (ICG) reported for instance that since 2000, over 900 companies had closed and/or scaled down productivity resulting in an industrial output drop of over 30 percent (ICG, 2007:2). This negative industrial production was compounded by acute

shortages in energy supplies, foreign and local cash shortages. As a result, by mid-2008, most mainstream supermarkets had empty shelves with the informal sector supplying most basic commodities, albeit at exorbitant prices. With unemployment estimated at 95 percent as of January 2009, the informal sector has grown up especially in the areas of petty vending, cross-border trading, and exchange of foreign currency on the streets.

The general standard of living also deteriorated since 2000 to critical levels. For instance, life expectancy in Zimbabwe, which stood at 61 years in 1990, is now at 37 years. The Human Poverty Index, which measures multiple dimensions of poverty and deprivation stood at 33.1 percent in 2003, up from 23.9 percent in 1995. Rural poverty, which stood at 57 percent in 1995, had increased to 71 percent in 2003. Urban poverty, which stood at 44 percent in 1995 also increased to about 61 percent in 2003 (UNDP, 2005:5). In 2005, over 1.6 million Zimbabweans under the age of 50 were estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS, with over 761 000 children who had lost one or both parents to the epidemic (UNDP, 2005). The health infrastructure has also deteriorated, marked especially by shortage of drugs and the exodus of qualified medical personnel to other countries. In addition to the general low quality of service delivery in both rural and urban centres, the country experienced a cholera outbreak in 2009, which killed over thousand people. The economic crisis and the masses' general concern with day to day survival strategies, as discussed below, has implications for the ability of civil society to mobilise masses for public action against state hegemony.

The economic crisis resulted in an upsurge in emigration levels in Zimbabwe. Heath *et al.* (2004) argue, for instance, that the number of applications for asylum in the United Kingdom increased from 230 in 1999 to about 7,655 in 2002 (cited in International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2005:11). In 1998, the Government of South Africa estimated that about 75 000 Zimbabweans had not returned home

following the expiry of their visitors' visas (IOM, 2005:10), and as of 2004, the Associated Press estimated that 1.2 million Zimbabweans live in South Africa (cited in IOM, 2005:10). To date, the exact number of diaspora Zimbabweans is not known, but on the basis of the above immigration trends, conservative estimates put the figure at around 4 million. By and large the most popular country destinations are South Africa, UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Botswana and New Zealand. The majority of documented Zimbabweans in the diaspora have either naturalised this citizenship of host countries, are holders of student visas, working visas and/or have been granted indefinite leave to remain after successfully applying for asylum status (IOM, 2005:6). There are also thousands of undocumented Zimbabweans resident abroad, without legal resident permits.

The high emigration level represents a serious brain-drain that has deprived the country of qualified and experienced professionals such as teachers, nurses, doctors, engineers, bankers, administrators, lawyers and even politicians. The civil society sector, as shall be discussed below, has also not been spared this brain-drain. This has had implications on the structural and organisational characteristics of Zimbabwean civil society and its ability to fight the hegemonic state, which the thesis discusses below. A positive development to come out of these high emigration trends, however, has been the growing body of diaspora civil society organisations in the form of pressure groups and on-line news web, radio stations, and research institutions. However, because the majority of diaspora organisations were established by individuals or groups whose members either ran away from political persecution or are mere economic refugees, there is a discernable pattern of anti-ZANU-PF approach to activism. As Lush and Khupe (2005:10) argue, diaspora organisations are predictably 'anti-ZANU-PF soapboxes'. It is important therefore to critically appraise the linkages, if any, that exist between these diaspora groups and local groups in the struggle against hegemony in Zimbabwe.

In summary, the socio-economic institutional context, particularly in post-2000, influenced the regime to heighten its hegemonic politics against opposition parties and perceived anti-ZANU-PF civil society organisations. But equally important is that the economic crisis also strengthened the counter-hegemonic forces, especially civil society to continue with the struggle for change. The next section discusses in-depth the political institutional context of this hegemonic politics and civil society politics for social change. As with the socio-economic institutional context, the discussion starts from 1980, in order again, to broadly contextualise continuities and discontinuities in post-2000 hegemonic and counter-hegemonic politics in Zimbabwe.

3.2.2 The political context

Generally, the postcolonial Zimbabwe state has governed through both force and consent, thus realising varying Gramscian moments of hegemony in different periods. The period 1980 to 1987 was characterised by *trasformismo* (i.e., politics of inclusion) that aimed to ensure peace, order, stability and the security of ZANU-PF (Dorman, 2001:43-49). The early- to mid-1990s, experienced relative moments of *glasnost* as a result of the neoliberal agenda, although ZANU-PF's hegemonic politics remained intact. It was not until 1999 that a consolidation of the counter-hegemonic bloc around the MDC-civil society alliance threatened ZANU-PF's dominance of Zimbabwe's politics. This political threat and ZANU-PF's reaction to it, exploded in 2000, into the 'Zimbabwe crisis.' The crisis marks for the first time in post-independent Zimbabwe, clearly consolidated hegemonic and counter-hegemonic blocs contesting the primacy of either the 'land question' or the 'governance question'.

Trasformismo

A key manifestation of *trasformismo*, as Gramsci argues, is 'the parliamentary expression of [the] political, moral and political hegemony' of a ruling class and to the process of 'gradual but continuous

absorption achieved by methods which varied in their effectiveness of the active elements produced by allied groups – even of those which came from antagonistic groups and seemed irreconcilably hostile’ (Gramsci, 1971:58-59). In 1980, parliamentary democracy was chosen as the cornerstone of the new independent Zimbabwe postcolonial state. There was optimism that Zimbabwe would shy away from the all too familiar African political template of one-party states and executive presidentialism. As Taylor and Bauer argue, Zimbabwe became a ‘model of post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation’ (2005:169) and ‘an example of pragmatic development and a donor favourite’ (Doig, 2006:71). However, optimism over the new postcolonial administration camouflaged its authoritarian nature. The ZANU-PF regime established its moral and political hegemony over the different antagonistic nationalist movements and civil society groups. It encouraged all societal groups to come under its political ambit and suppressed political competition.

Dorman (2001) argues that ZANU-PF shrewdly achieved hegemony over Zimbabwean society through both the discourse of nation-building and the demobilisation of society and criminalisation of autonomous political activism. The demobilisation of society, however, was not matched by the demilitarisation of the way the state relates to its citizens (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003). The hegemonic discourse of nation-building, Dorman (2001:50) argues, was built on three interconnected themes of reconciliation and unity, development and nationalism. Rival nationalist movements and white political groups were invited to join a government of national unity led by ZANU-PF in the name of reconciliation and unity. In the same spirit of nation building, ZIPRA and ZANLA soldiers, aligned to rival nationalist movements, PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF respectively, and the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) were demobilised and a programme to integrate them into a single national army was implemented. While the nation building policy was a pragmatic one to implement given that the country was coming out of war, Dorman (2001:51) notes that it became an excuse for authoritarian politics, for abusing state power, and limiting human rights and freedoms.

One of the ways in which ZANU-PF's hegemonic project was constructed in the context of nation-building was the asymmetrical demobilisation and integration of former freedom fighters into the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). In particular, ZIPRA and RSF soldiers were mostly demobilised whilst the majority of ZANLA fighters were either integrated into ZNA or were enlisted into what were called 'new politically correct units' such as the Korean trained Presidential Guards, the Artillery Regiment, the Fifth Brigade and the People's Militia, all of which were parallel units to the ZNA and therefore not under ZNA's chain command, but directly answerable to Robert Mugabe, then Prime Minister (Mazarire and Rupiya, 2000; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002). This failure to integrate former freedom fighters in the national army to reflect ethnic diversities in the state and alleged favouritism in military rank promotions led to resignations by some former ZIPRA cadres and some became rebels (i.e., the so-called 'dissidents') that operated in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces between 1983 and 1987 (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002:22). This promoted the deployment of the Fifth Brigade in these provinces, which not only aimed to end the dissidents' insurrection but to simultaneously use this military force or violence to silence dissent by the Ndebele speech communities that were perceived to be against ZANU-PF.⁷

There are other external factors that drove the use of the military to construct ZANU-PF's hegemonic politics. As several studies have shown, the civil war in Mozambique involving Dlakama's Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) rebels and the FRELIMO government posed a threat to the Beira oil pipeline that was the backbone of Zimbabwe's prospering economy. A destruction of the oil

⁷ Commentators have noted that because ZIPRA and ZANLA, the military wings of PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF respectively often clashed with each other during the war and also during the demobilisation exercises of 1980, there was mutual suspicion that the loser of the 1980 elections would attempt a coup or rebel against the winner. Thus, despite PF-ZAPU having accepted ZANU-PF's invitation to join the government of national unity the latter remained skeptical of the former's sincerity. As a result, in 1982 senior PF-ZAPU leaders were expelled from government, arrested, tortured and some killed for allegedly plotting to unseat ZANU-PF from power. An estimated 20 000 supporters of PF-ZAPU, mainly from the Ndebele speech community were massacred as ZANU-PF fought disgruntled former ZIPRA dissidents who had rearmed and returned to the bush (For a detailed report on the atrocities committed by the army see CCJP/LRF, 1997).

infrastructure could possibly have slowed Zimbabwe's economic performance and the developmental gains that the ZANU-PF government realised in the 1980s. Societal discontentment was therefore the last thing the regime wished for. Furthermore, there was the possibility of South Africa's apartheid administration destabilising Zimbabwe's nascent democracy and peace. These security threats therefore compelled the state to retain the repressive laws and institutions previously used by the colonial administration. For example, the 1965 state of emergency was maintained under the guise that the country's sovereignty and national security was under threat from Mozambique's civil war, South Africa's apartheid administration and the 'PF-ZAPU dissidents'. Furthermore, as Mukonoweshuro (1992:190) notes, the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA), which gave state security agents powers to arrest perceived enemies of the state and to prohibit public gatherings perceived to be a threat to national security was retained. The general repressive legislative environment rendered politics legitimate only when practiced in the realm of 'political society', synonymous with the ZANU-PF party-state. As Mukonoweshuro (1992:187) further argues, the issue of national security was merged to the security and political survival of ZANU-PF. This became an effective strategy to ensure the regime's dominance and hegemony over opposition parties and civil society.

Loyalty, support and participation in ZANU-PF party politics was enforced and achieved, on one hand, through threats and violence orchestrated mainly by party para-military organs such as the youths brigades. On the other hand, civil society voluntarily submitted and supported ZANU-PF, in part, in order to operate 'freely' in the political space and in part because of material benefits that the regime rewarded those loyal to it. Commentators note, with regards to business associations for instance that they subordinated themselves under ZANU-PF for political patronage in the form of access to the scarce foreign exchange, credit programmes and the bypassing of stringent permission and licenses when setting up new businesses (Jackson, 1997:28-29; Taylor, 1999). Bratton (1994) also notes similar willingness by black farmers associations to subordinate under ZANU-PF, either for easier entry into

whites dominated commercial agriculture or, in the case of its leadership, political appointments to state controlled agricultural marketing boards. Taylor (1999:260) therefore concludes with regards to state driven creation of a black capitalist bourgeoisie in Zimbabwe that it became 'a neopatrimonial game that reward[ed] inefficiency and deprese[d] productivity.' As a result the perception of the state as a means to wealth accumulation was entrenched in society (Stoneman and Cliffe, 1989:89).

By the late 1980s, ZANU-PF had succeeded, in the words of Gramsci (1971:128), '[...] in methodologically absorbing into its own ambit the entire political personnel thrown up by various, originally subversive, mass movements.' The 1987 unity agreement between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU, as many studies have shown, represented a step towards possible establishment of a one-party state by ZANU-PF and the end of multi-party politics. Other commentators have noted however that the unity agreement distilled the cloud of fear and silence that had defined Zimbabwe's polity since 1980. Laakso (2002:341) argues, for instance, that the agreement provided an opportunity for critics to openly criticise the regime without fear of being labelled supporters or sympathisers of a 'subversive' PF-ZAPU. The criticism, which focused on ZANU-PF's overtones of a one-party state and corruption, arguably marked the germination of opposition politics led mainly by the student movement (Cheater, 1991) and the labour movement (Raftopolous, 2001). This counter-hegemonic politics went a gear up within the context of the neoliberal agenda of the early 1990s. The next section elaborates on this politics, which marked the first explicit disengagement of civil society from the postcolonial Zimbabwe state.

Neoliberalism and counter-hegemonic politics

1990 marks a turning point in ZANU-PF's absolute hegemonic hold of Zimbabwe's body politics and the start of militant civil society politics for social change. Both external and internal factors were critical in shaping civil society activism during this period. Internally, as argued above, the neoliberal economic

policies increased poverty levels, especially in the mid to late 1990s, which civil society and opposition parties used to mobilise against the regime. Externally, the democratic processes that took place in the former Soviet Union bloc and Eastern Europe gave civil society in sub-Saharan Africa the impetus to initiate similar struggles for social change. As Howell and Pearce (2001:183) argue, civil society in sub-Saharan African countries such as Mali, Benin, Gabon, Zambia, Mozambique and Namibia 'challenged the authority of one-party, one-man, military governments, leading to regime transition and the introduction of competitive party elections.' In neighbouring South Africa, the apartheid regime and African liberation movements made concessions for a democratic new order, which culminated in the end of apartheid in 1994.

This tide of political changes, as Nhema (2002:133) argues, left the ZANU-PF regime with no plausible defence for repressive politics under the guise of national order and security. More so, liberalising the political space was (still is) a major condition for borrowing countries to receiving aid under the neoliberal economic package. Thus, the twin economic and political neoliberal policies triggered political pluralism and relative tolerance for divergent political views in Zimbabwe. A number of commentators note, for instance, marked improvements in the efficiency, transparency and accountability of bureaucratic administration as a result of some of the neoliberal policies. Brett (2005:92) argues for example that decision making processes became generally driven by 'policy theory rather than pure clientelism.' Doig (2006:71) also argues that between 1990 and 1998, corruption cases heard by the courts estimated at 900 per annum, and concludes that this pointed to the existence of 'institutions, laws and procedures that any self-respecting liberal democracy would (and usually does) have.' Despite these modest reform successes ZANU-PF still maintained its hegemonic apparatuses. ZANU-PF's continuing authoritarianism led to a sharp rise in externally donor funded civil society organisations such as the Forum for Democratic Reform Trust (FORUM), Zimbabwe Human Rights (ZIMRIGHTS), and the NCA, which advocated for good governance and human rights,

constitutional reforms, electoral reforms, corruption, etc (Makumbe and Moyo, 2000a; Nhema 2002; Taylor and Bauer, 2005; Moyo and Murisa, 2008).

However, civil society during this period remained fragmented such that one cannot talk of a consolidated counter-hegemonic historical bloc, at least until about 1999 when different societal groups, with contradicting class affinities and ideologies, coalesced around the NCA-MDC alliance. The fragmentation and structural problems of civil society in the 1990s led Moyo (1993:4) to argue that 'most of the mushrooming NGOs and voluntary associations are in fact a danger to the prospects of a viable society which enshrines democracy and human rights because they have shown a tendency towards a type of particularism, fundamentalism and ethno-nationalism based on an intolerance of other social groups'. The ZCTU was the most vocal group as it led demonstrations and strikes in protest against deteriorating standards of living. The 1993 food riots, subsequent job stay-aways and demonstrations against the state and against the neoliberal policies epitomise the engagement strategies and advocacy issues of civil society during this period. The state responded to the social upheaval by introducing the Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) Act in 1995, which set to control civil society through stringent registration provisions.

The fragmentation of the counter-hegemonic forces (opposition parties included) – sometimes deliberately produced and encouraged by ZANU-PF but sometimes an outcome of internal squabbles and differences over power, leadership styles, resources and ideological thrust of organisations – contributed to ZANU-PF's continued hegemonic politics. Despite the formation of a plethora of opposition parties, most were too weak to threaten ZANU-PF's hold on power. Furthermore, and despite the proliferation of private media print publications in the 1990s such as *The Daily Gazette*, *The Financial Gazette*, *The Independent*, *The Standard*, and *The Daily Mirror*, to name just a few, which

tried hard to deconstruct the contradictions, exclusionary and authoritarian tendencies of ZANU-PF's politics, the operating environment of journalists remained largely characterised by harassment, intimidation and sometimes arrest (Article 19, 2000). Moreover, the electoral process was and remained heavily skewed in favour of ZANU-PF. This mismatch of multi-party electoral democracy with the democratic transitions in the early 1990s (and after) is a common phenomenon in other sub-Saharan African countries (see Cowen and Laakso, 2002). Writing on how neo-patrimonial politics plays a counter force to a smooth democratic change in Malawi, Englund (2002:184) also argues that multi-party elections more often are used as paraphernalia to befriend international donors to give aid. Indeed, the ZANU-PF regime has always used the frequency holding of multi-party elections in the country as a barometer of its democratic credentials. Yet a glance of Zimbabwe's electoral law, as Sylvester (1991:87) argues, demonstrates that ZANU-PF always has the state machinery and resources at its disposal to undemocratically outdo its rivals.

The uneven electoral ground meant that although ZANU-PF always won elections since 1980, it simultaneously lost its legitimacy, especially amongst the urbanites, labour and middle class elites who make up the leadership and membership of most urban based civil society organisations. In the Gramscian language, ZANU-PF's waning political legitimacy and increased opposition politics cumulatively led to a 'crisis of authority' in the state. To counter this threat to its power in post-2000 Zimbabwe, ZANU-PF, Moyo and Murisa (2008) argue, '[...] became radicalised in terms of [its] nationalist and anti-imperialist ideology and rhetoric'. The next section discusses the dynamics of the crisis of authority, which started in the late 1990s and exploded in 2000.

3.2.2.1 Crisis of authority

The thrust of the neoliberal policy framework in the 1990s was its emphasis on fiscal prudence and anti-state control mechanisms. Brett (2005) argues that one of the positives to come out of this policy framework was ZANU-PF's diminished capacity to dispense patronage to its political supporters. In addition to weak economic performance and a rise in poverty, these factors fermented political disgruntlement towards ZANU-PF. ZANU-PF's political legitimacy and monopoly of power developed fractures, both within its cadres and outside. Within its cadres, Makumbe and Moyo (2000a:18-20) argue that ZANU-PF's parliamentary backbenchers openly challenged party-government legislations and objected the imposition of electoral candidates by the leadership. Outside ZANU-PF, Dorman (2001:90-93) notes that demonstrations against corruption and protests, strikes and job stay-aways by workers in all sectors increased. The crisis of authority forced the regime into a defensive political mood and to implement series of populist policies and hence the implosion of the 'Zimbabwe crisis' of 2000-2008. These issues are discussed at length in the sub-sections below.

3.2.2.1.1 *The 'land question' and the hegemonic bloc*

The struggle for land redistribution is one of the central factors upon which struggles for independence were waged across most sub-Saharan African countries. Despite relative positive strides that have been made towards land redistribution, colonial legacies of inequitable land ownership remain unsolved and therefore constitute one of the many national questions of post-colonial states in most sub-Saharan African countries. The land question is thus critical to understanding the post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis and Zimbabwean politics in general. After independence, Zimbabweans expected an expeditious land redistribution programme. However, as many commentators argue, several factors militated against this. Firstly, the 'willing-buyer, willing-seller' policy that was agreed at the Lancaster House Agreement to address the land issue was an obstacle for the new government to quickly designate white owned

farms for redistribution. Secondly, it has also been argued that the funds pledged by donors and Western governments, in particular the USA and UK, to fund the land reform were never disbursed (Taylor, 1999:182). Thirdly, it has also been posited that the demobilisation of land advocacy groups by the ZANU-PF regime in the 1980s, in order to be the major player responsible for addressing the land question on behalf of the people, within a broad state-centrist developmental framework, meant that there was no formidable counter pressure on government from civil society to make land reform urgent (Moyo, 2001:2).

Thus it can be argued that in the first decade of independence the regime's public discourse on land redistribution was mere political rhetoric in order to retain power by appeasing voters. This point is validated by the fact that even after the expiry of the Lancaster provisions on land acquisition in 1990, the regime did little to quicken the processes of land acquisition, redistribution or resettlement (Taylor, 1999:182). The 1992 Land Acquisition Act (LAA) that was enacted to pave the way for the fast compulsory acquisition of white-owned commercial farms for redistribution had inherent obstacles that were not facilitative of voluntary sell off farms by white farmers. Taylor (1999) argues for instance that the regime designed the LAA in such a way that the process would take up to ten years to complete buying a farm, with an instalment payment scheme of up to five years. Taylor argues therefore that the delayed compensation arrangement caused lots of anxieties among white farmers because once one's farm had been designated his or her creditworthiness plummeted. As a result, Moyo (2001) argues, one of the major drawbacks of the land reform in the early 1990s became the successful litigations made by white farmers against the LAA. Furthermore, as several studies have shown, ordinary landless peasants including war veterans did not benefit as hoped from the 1990s land reform. The land reform exercise was highly corrupted and generally skewed in favour of ZANU-PF elites such as ministers who leased most of the designated farms in order to maintain the large scale commercial farming thrust of the land reform scheme. Most tellingly, the regime targeted '*black*-owned commercial farms, whose

owners happened to be political adversaries of the President and ruling party' (Taylor, 1999:183, emphasis in original).

The consequences of the slow pace of land reform in the early- to mid-1990s is that war veterans started demonstrations against the ruling elites' capitalist lifestyles, which contrasted sharply to the socialist rhetoric that the regime constantly preached to the people (Nyathi, 2004). When a further corruption scandal involving the looting of the war veterans fund by senior government officials emerged, war veterans intensified their demonstrations against ZANU-PF leadership. War veterans called for the acquisition of 5 million hectares of land (Moyo and Yeros, 2007) and a compensation payment for the role they played in the liberation struggle.⁸ The payment of gratuities to war veterans succeeded in keeping them under ZANU-PF control. The ZANU-PF - war veterans' alliance marked the remobilisation of different sections of society by the regime and the consolidation of a hegemonic historical bloc led by a 'radicalised state' (Moyo and Yeros, 2007). As Laakso (2003) argues, after the pacification of war veterans through patronage payments, the state easily mobilised them to confront other civil society organisations, in particular the labour movement that was calling nationwide jobs stay-aways as the economic crisis deepened.

To further consolidate the hegemonic bloc, ZANU-PF launched the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme (LRRP2)⁹ in 1998. About 1, 503 commercial farms were identified for compulsory redistribution (Bauer and Taylor, 2005:178). It seems the launch of LRRP2 was also a preemptive

⁸ Following a series of public humiliation and denunciation, which also involved interrupting Mugabe's speech at the National Heroes Acre, the government paid war veterans close to ZW\$2.5 billion unbudgeted gratuities (one-off ZW\$50,000 payments and monthly stipends of ZW\$2,000).

⁹ The Land Reform and Resettlement Programme (LRRP1) was implemented between 1980 and 1996. It had two programmes, the intensive resettlement programme in the 1980s and the accelerated resettlement programme in the early 1990s (see Mbaya, 2001:6).

strategy by the regime ahead of the International Donors Conference on Land in September 1998.¹⁰ During the conference the government's LRRP2 was criticised by various stakeholders, with genuine fears that the compulsory acquisition of land could negatively affect the economy. Thus, through both local and international pressure the regime agreed to pursue a market-value based land reform. According to Waeterloos and Rutherford (2004:539), the regime promised to compensate farmers for the 5 million hectares of land it planned to acquire in order to settle 150,000 families at the cost of \$1.9 billion, under the Inception Phase Framework Plan (IPFP) that was agreed at the conference.

Donors also agreed in principle to fund the land reform on condition the regime upheld the rule of law and that the process itself would be transparent. Barely two months after the conference, the regime's political will to pursue a market-value based land reform diminished as it announced the compulsory acquisition of an additional 841 farms without compensation. According to the ICG (2004a:62), the shift in policy was triggered by the November 1998 ZCTU-led strike, which the regime opined had been instigated by whites in order to deliberately sabotage the economy. There had also been disagreements over the mechanism to adopt in evaluating the amount of compensation to be paid to farmers and the under-funding of institutions responsible for implementing IPFP (ICG, 2004a:65-66). Furthermore, the World Bank (2004:5) also argues that donors failed to fulfil their pledged financial support and white farmers were reluctant to sell their farms because of skepticism over the regime's commitment to pay full and timely compensation.

The failure to address the land question further radicalised the regime, which fast tracked a constitutional amendment in parliament in April 1999 to facilitate radical compulsory land acquisition. Furthermore, the amendment stated that the UK government was politically and morally obligated, as

¹⁰ The purpose of the conference was to assist the regime to implement an orderly and market-value based land reform process (ICG, 2004a:61).

the former coloniser, to compensate white farmers and not the people of Zimbabwe. The regime was further incensed by the 2000 constitutional referendum defeat led by civil society and the opposition MDC. Moyo *et al.* (2000:183) argue that the rejection of the draft constitution, which had a clause on compulsory acquisition of land, was perceived by war veterans and ZANU-PF as resistance against equitable land redistribution. As a result the regime initiated the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP). Moyo (2004a:9) notes that FTLRP was implemented through farm occupations by war veterans, rural peasants, youth militias, traditional leaders, and the urban working class (aligned those ZANU-PF). This alliance represented political realignments around ZANU-PF's ruling elites and the organising theme was the land question.

The land question as a material and social base would prove, as Gramsci (1971) argues, critical to the ZANU-PF led hegemonic bloc in asserting its authoritarian politics over Zimbabwean society. In other words, post-2000 saw a deliberate strengthening of ZANU-PF's hegemonic power by taking control of the means of production, i.e., land. State condoned violence was employed to force compliance to the hegemonic bloc's land reform policy. War veterans and ZANU-PF youth militia invaded 1, 250 white-owned farms, beating farmers and their workers. By August 2002, war veterans' orchestrated political violence had claimed the lives of nine white commercial farmers. And between February and June 2000, about 37 people, mostly MDC supporter were killed by war veterans and youth militias allegedly for supporting commercial farmers and working to reverse the gains of independence (Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum (ZHRF), 2001:4).

Concurrently with the use of violence, 'intellectual leadership' was used to maintain the dominant bloc's hegemony. As Gramsci (1971:182) argues, 'intellectuals' are crucial for 'bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions

around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a universal plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental group over a series of subordinate groups.’ Thus, a powerful message by ZANU-PF’s intellectuals tasked to mobilise for the June 2000 parliamentary elections was that ‘Land is the economy and the economy is land.’ Beyond this rhetoric by the regime, there appeared to be miscalculation of how really important land was to the Zimbabwe economy and how this rhetoric can be put into practice beyond simply squatting on prime agricultural land without credit facilities to invest by would-be ‘new farmers’. Nonetheless, the rhetoric that ‘land is the economy and the economy is land’ resonated well with the interests of the land occupation movement, whose composition include among others, rural landless peasants and war veterans, whose livelihoods depend largely on farming. ZANU-PF’s ruling elites successfully convinced hegemonic civil society elements like the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), the Zimbabwe Liberation War Collaborators (ZILIWACO), the Zimbabwe Political Detainees and Restricttees Association (ZIPDRA), the ZANU-PF youths brigade and general rural peasants that the struggle for land was ultimately the key to their own economic empowerment (see Appendix 8). Thus since 2000, the land question has dominated the national political discourse and ZANU-PF’s election manifestos.

Although a sizeable number of poor families has benefited from the fast track redistribution exercise, there are allegations that a clique of the regime’s senior officials and family members corruptly benefited with more than two farms. But more critical is that the agricultural sector has been in freefall since 2000 (Nyarota, 2004). . This heightened social discontent and simultaneously escalated the entrenchment of authoritarianism and hegemonic politics in post-2000 Zimbabwe. The more repressive the hegemonic bloc responded to this societal discontentment, the more it lost its legitimacy, both on the local and international arena. On the local scene, the militancy and resilience of the counter-hegemonic bloc that consolidated under the MDC-civil society alliance was critical in contesting the regime’s hegemony and the primacy it places on the land question. The counter-hegemonic social

forces argued that it was the 'governance question' that needed urgent redress in order to progressively transform both Zimbabwe's inherited enclave economy and politics. The next section discusses this and other issues.

3.2.2.1.2 *The 'governance question' and the counter-hegemonic bloc*

The governance question – in as far as it relates to the themes of human rights, constitutional reforms, rule of law and democracy – epitomises the drive for an alternative social order by the counter-hegemonic social forces in Zimbabwe. The counter-hegemonic bloc is comprised, among others, of human rights and pro-democracy groups, the labour movement, students, youth groups, women's groups, diaspora groups and opposition parties (see Appendix 8 for examples). In 1997, as already noted above, these groups coalesced around the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and later around the MDC opposition party in 1999. Unlike the ZANU-PF-led hegemonic bloc, which blames colonial legacies of unequal relations of production and neo-colonialism for the crisis in Zimbabwe, the counter-hegemonic bloc, while recognising these factors, nonetheless, argues that bad governance by ZANU-PF is at the heart of Zimbabwe's multi-faceted crisis. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2002:101) argues that the counter-hegemonic bloc strongly criticises ZANU-PF's nationalist paradigm for being bankrupt and for promoting 'unproductive patronage, cronyism, violence and lawlessness as a survival strategy.' The alternative paradigm by the counter-hegemonic bloc was summed up in 2000, by the then united MDC party president Morgan Tsvangirai as follows:

[in] many ways we are moving from the nationalist paradigm to politics grounded in civil society and social movements. MDC politics are not nationalist inspired, because they focus on empowerment and participation of the people. ZANU's thinking has always been top-down, centralized, always trapped in a time warp. Nationalism was an end itself instead of a means to an end. One of ZANU's constant claims is that everyone in Zimbabwe owes the nationalist movement our freedom. Its therefore also become a nationalism based on patronage and cronyism (quoted in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002:125).

Therefore, within the MDC-civil society bloc, an inclusive and people-driven constitution was (still is) advocated as the solution to the governance question and Zimbabwe's other multifaceted crisis. Despite repeated calls for a new constitution, in February 2000, the NCA-MDC alliance led a 'No vote' campaign against a government sponsored constitution draft produced by the Constitutional Commission (CC). The CC had been set up by the regime to counter the popularity of the NCA (Dorman, 2001:208). The counter-hegemonic social forces contested the independence of the CC from political interference by the Executive. But more crucially the CC was accused of ignoring the views of the people in its final constitution draft, hence the 'No vote' campaign. The disagreement centred on the term of office for the president, the separation of Executive powers and a range of Rights, which civil society strongly felt had not been captured in the draft constitution. These concerns clearly focused on addressing the governance question as opposed to the land question.¹¹

The 'No vote' victory was of symbolic importance to the counter-hegemonic bloc. The victory was perceived, as has been noted by many commentators, as heralding the inevitable defeat of ZANU-PF in the June 2000 Parliamentary elections. But more critically, as Dorman (2001:228) argues, it sought to legitimise civil society activism outside the hegemonic sphere of the state. In addition to the constitution issue, civil society activism further increased in the areas of human rights, democracy and rule of law between 2000 and 2008. This was prompted by the regime's repressive response to popular discontent and the crack down on civil liberties of perceived opponents of the regime. An attempt by the regime to outlaw civil society advocacy on governance, democracy and human rights issues through an NGO Bill in 2004 was thwarted by the combined pressure of the counter-hegemonic bloc (Ncube, 2005). The counter-hegemonic bloc has also been active in advocating for electoral reforms, which as noted

¹¹ It is important to keep in mind the fact that the counter-hegemonic bloc is not necessarily anti-'land question' just as the hegemonic bloc is not anti-'governance question'. The difference is on the priority that each bloc places *vis-à-vis* the two questions. The two questions, arguably inform the primary mobilizing discourses of the two contesting historical blocs, and taken separately each discourse has its own merits and demerits as the discussion will show.

above, are eschewed in favour of ZANU-PF. The crisis of authority and legitimacy that the ZANU-PF regime has struggled to reverse since 2000 is partly a result of the disputed free and fairness of elections in Zimbabwe. Reforming the country's electoral landscape in order to permit free, fair and democratic elections has therefore been one of the topical advocacy issues by the counter-hegemonic bloc.

Therefore, a critical question that needs to be asked, and certainly one that is important for the present study, is how civil society has attempted to bridge together the 'land question' and the 'governance question' in its struggle for social change. The *nationalist paradigm* – with its emphasis on the 'land question', sovereignty, state security and Zimbabwe's territorial integrity – and the *post-nationalist paradigm* – with its focus on the 'governance question' especially the liberal democratic ideals such as human rights and the rule of law – has had the negative effect of polarising Zimbabwean society generally and civil society. Thus, the crisis of authority discussed above, in many ways therefore, represents a clash of competing hegemonic ideologies. This polarised institutional context, as shall be shown in chapter 4, is critical in any problematisation of the role of civil society in the maintenance and transformation of hegemony in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2008. The longevity of the contest for hegemony, and perhaps its success or unsuccessfulness, has been arguably compounded by inherent weaknesses in opposition party politics, which tends to fracture the counter-hegemonic historical bloc. Therefore, there is need to also explore the relationship between civil society and opposition parties in the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe. The next section outlines the context within which civil society-political parties relations will be explored in the thesis.

3.2.2.2 Disunities in the counter-hegemonic bloc

The discussion in this section focuses on the fractures in the counter-hegemonic historical bloc, which came about as a result of the 2005 split of the MDC opposition party into two factions. The entry of the MDC into Zimbabwe's political landscape in 1999 was against the backdrop of previous failed attempts by opposition parties to challenge ZANU-PF's power. Raftopoulos (2006) attributes the failure of pre-1999 opposition politics to the inability by opposition parties to construct inclusive national constituencies and/or present voters with sound alternative policies beyond ethnic, regional and class interests. Nhema (2002:131) argues that, notwithstanding the weaknesses of opposition parties, they also helped to catalyse the rise of a counter-hegemonic civil society in the 1990s. Gumbo (2002) argues however that this galvanised civil society lacked ideological homogeneity despite successfully uniting previously dissipated demands for 'decentralised' political power and rights.

As already argued above, in 1997 civil society articulated the demands for civil and political rights within the NCA coalition. It is upon the bedrock of civil society that coalesced under NCA that the MDC was founded. Inevitably therefore, the authoritarian and hegemonic situation poses challenges for civil society to live up to the mantra of being 'non-aligned', 'apolitical' and 'non-partisan'. Thus, any schism in the MDC is likely to be replicated in civil society, with implications for the unity of the counter-hegemonic historical bloc. The counter-hegemonic historical bloc that coalesced around the MDC, as already argued above, is made up of different societal interests that include workers, students, professionals, business, churches, and NGOs. The first major political score by this bloc was the February 2000 constitutional referendum victory against ZANU-PF.

Since 2000, the MDC and its civil society allies have set about defining their struggle for social change as peaceful, democratic and inclusive. As Raftopoulos (2006) argues, opposition party politics was

framed as different from ZANU-PF's partisan politics that rewards uncritical loyalty to the leadership's authoritarianism and cronyism. However, fractures emerged within the counter-historical bloc following the MDC's October 2005 split. The split was a result of the failure by the party's top leadership to agree on whether to participate in the 2005 senate elections for reasons that will be explained below. What is important to note however, as several commentators point out, is that the 2005 schism over the senate elections was inevitable and a cumulative outcome of other factors within and without the party. In terms of factors outside the party, the opposition party and indeed the broader counter-hegemonic historical bloc, had been a victim of both the electoral system that favoured the ruling party and state sponsored violence and repressive legislations. In combination, these factors have destroyed the counter-hegemonic bloc's capacity to mobilise voters and sell its alternative policies to the electorate, especially in rural areas traditionally considered ZANU-PF stronghold. Since 2000, the hegemonic bloc declared some parts of the country 'no go areas' for the MDC and some civil society organisations, especially during elections.

The counter-hegemonic bloc has also struggled to lure external political and moral support, especially from African political leaders that revere ZANU-PF's liberation legacy, who support the moral argument for land reform and regard Mugabe in high esteem as a defender of pan-Africanism and African sovereignty. Thus, as Bush and Szeftel (2002:11) argue, African leaders have tended to defend Mugabe's regime rather than support the counter-hegemonic bloc's struggle against repression. Thus, the opposition has struggled to shrug-off the puppet tag that comes with challenging a ruling party that is revered by key actors in the African continent as a hero-kind of institution that fights against imperial forces, implicitly on behalf of the majority of populations in Africa, whose governments face similar developmental challenges.

In terms of factors inside the MDC, its structural and ideological cohesion between its different constituency coalitions has come under considerable scrutiny and criticism. While the MDC held together its different ideologically aligned groups in the first three or so years of its formation, by 2003 this bloc began to slowly dissipate under systematic state violence and repression. Raftopolous (2006) argues however that a year after its formation in 2000, the counter-hegemonic project led by the MDC already showed signs of inefficient leadership and coordination. As Raftopolous further argues, an internal inquiry that was conducted in 2000 reported lack of accountability, indiscipline, poor communication between party departments and between the party's leadership structures. Ideologically, Raftopoulos (2006) also argues that sharp differences emerged between a camp of 'professionals' led by Professor Welshman Ncube, the party's Secretary General, and a camp of 'quasi-professionals' led by Morgan Tsvangirai, the party's President. Ncube's camp, Raftopolous argues, preferred moderate strategies for confronting the regime such as participation in elections in order to remain relevant and to preserve the democratic gains made in the June 2000 Parliamentary elections. Tsvangirai's camp, on the other hand, preferred radical populist strategies such as electoral boycotts, which would make the regime illegitimate.

In 2004, the ICG (2004b:9) warned of a paralysis of strategy in the MDC and argued that 'the number of approaches that it has pursued leads to questions about its focus, strategy and effectiveness. [...]the party is stretched thin and is vulnerable to internal divisions and external challenges.' The differences in strategy inevitably split the party in 2005. There are now two MDCs – the MDC-T led by founder President Morgan Tsvangirai, and the MDC-M, which is led by Professor Arthur Mutambara.¹² Several

¹² Zimbabwean politics is acutely tribal or ethnic in character. There is always an explicit policy to balance ethnic composition between the majority Shona and minority Ndebele speech communities in almost all organization. Without this ethnic balancing act, an institution is unlikely to command broad national appeal. In political parties, however, the tendency has been to have a Shona leading and an Ndebele deputizing. Because the Shonas are a majority, the other way round is certain to cost the concerned party broad national acceptance. The only exception was PF-ZAPU led by Dr Joshua Nkomo before 1980. Thus, when the MDC split, the Professor Ncube faction (himself a Ndebele) invited Professor Mutambara (a Shona) to lead the smaller faction of the MDC. Similarly in the larger MDC, Mr Morgan

attempts to reunite the party since 2005 have been unsuccessful. In 2008, attempts to reunite the party ahead of the March 29 Harmonised Elections collapsed, as the two factions failed to agree an equitable system to share constituency seats among its aspiring candidates to compete against ZANU-PF. In the run up to the 2008 elections, similar internal schisms occurred within ZANU-PF. Dr Simba Makoni (a former Finance Minister) and Dr Dumiso Dabengwa (a former Home Affairs Minister), rebelled against ZANU-PF and formed the Mavambo Movement (the New Dawn Movement) and Simba Makoni was nominated the movement's presidential candidate.

In a clear sign that the reunification process of the two MDCs had totally collapsed, the Mutambara MDC withdrew its presidential candidature and supported Simba Makoni. Further attempts to unite all three opposition parties (Mavambo Movement, MDC-M and MDC-T) failed as the Tsvangirai group accused Makoni's group of being used by ZANU-PF to deliberately dilute MDC's popularity, especially in urban centers. Tsvangirai was also not ready to concede the presidency to Makoni who was touted as the likely leader of a united opposition because of his technocratic and youthful appeal. The failure by opposition parties to form a united bloc, especially during the 2008 Harmonised Elections weakened its potency to dislodge ZANU-PF from power. But more importantly for the present thesis, the schism in opposition political parties, in particular the MDC, divided civil society organisations, as the next chapter shows. Civil society has either aligned with the MDC-Tsvangirai or the MDC-Mutambara. An important question that needs to be explored, therefore, is how political party politics shape civil society positioning along the hegemony – counter-hegemony continuum and the implications this has on the potency of civil society to mount a strong and effective struggle for a democratic social change.

Tsvangirai elevated Ms Thokozani Khupe (a Ndebele) to deputize him in a clear tribal political balancing act following the defection of the founder deputy president Mr Gibson Sibanda (a Ndebele) to the smaller MDC.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the socio-economic and political institutional context of hegemonic politics and civil society politics for social change in Zimbabwe. Although the thesis focuses on hegemonic contestation between 2000 and 2008, the contours and dynamics of pre-2000 politics that date back to 1980, were also discussed because they define continuities and discontinuities in the politics of Zimbabwe. The chapter shows that state hegemonic politics and counter-hegemonic politics by civil society in Zimbabwe has always shifted in tandem with changes in macroeconomic policies. In the first decade (1980-1990), a nationalist developmental policy framework anchored on a welfarist-socialist ideology and a nation-building project whose key pillars were racial reconciliation and national unity provided the context for legitimating state hegemonic politics and for demobilising civic political activism. The second decade (1990-1999) experienced relative moments of civic *glasnost* because of the neoliberal agenda. ZANU-PF's hegemonic politics however remained intact and unthreatened because of the fragmented nature of opposition politics and civil society activism. However in 1999, the counter-hegemonic forces consolidated their unity around the MDC-NCA alliance and posed the first real threat to ZANU-PF's hegemonic dominance.

The threat to ZANU-PF power during the third decade (2000-2008), radicalised the state in terms of its anti-opposition politics, anti-governance and human rights civic advocacy work, anti-market and anti-imperial sentiments. Violence, intimidation and repressive laws were condoned and instituted by the state in order to silence its critics and to narrow the democratic space for a civil society led transformative politics. As a result of politically expedient policies by the state, the economy took a plunge in 2000. Opposition parties and civil society responded to the economic crisis, authoritarianism and ZANU-PF's hegemonic politics by intensifying the struggle for a democratic social change. The potency of the counter-hegemonic forces however has been affected by internal schisms that

emanated from the 2005 MDC split. A major point of discussion is that the hegemonic bloc's *nationalist paradigm* – that emphasises the 'land question', sovereignty, state security and Zimbabwe's territorial integrity – and the counter-hegemonic bloc's *post-nationalist paradigm* – that focuses on the 'governance question', especially the liberal democratic ideals of human rights and the rule of law – polarised the Zimbabwean society. In chapter 6, I will return to this point in order to critique the limitations of interpreting the discourses of nationalism and democracy as associated with the hegemonic and the counter-hegemonic blocs, respectively and the risk of an uncritical application of Gramsci's concepts of 'historical blocs', 'hegemonic civil society' and 'counter-hegemonic civil society' to understand Zimbabwe's politics. It should suffice for now to simply note that the institutional context of political polarisation and the dynamics of the economic crisis discussed above are critical in examining the role played by civil society in the maintenance and transformation of hegemony in the struggle for social change. The institutional context has also implications on the material and organisational make up of Zimbabwean civil society and influence in the struggle for social change. These and other issues are taken up in the next chapter, which presents and analyses the empirical data in order to answer the research questions of the thesis.

CHAPTER 4

CIVIL SOCIETY, THE STATE AND HEGEMONY IN POST-2000 ZIMBABWE

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the politics of post-2000 Zimbabwe with a particular focus on the role of civil society in the maintenance and transformation of hegemony. It also explores how the contentious politics of post-2000 shaped the material and organisational makeup of civil society, and within that context, how the organisational metamorphosis strengthened and/or weakened the agentive role of civil society in the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe. Post-2000 Zimbabwe is visibly characterised by a political template that mixes both coercion (force) and persuasion (consent). As noted above, this political landscape was influenced by the head-on collision between the imperative for democratisation (the 'governance question') and the imperative for social justice through equitable land redistribution (the 'economic question'). Beyond these two discourses emerged several other contentious sub-issues, namely: human rights violations; absence of the rule of law; political repression; the repressive legislative and regulatory political environment; strategies to engage an authoritarian state; racism; the role of donors and western governments in determining the nature of Zimbabwe's politics; the apolitical nature of civil society; and the capacity of civil society to influence policy processes. These and other contentious issues form the discussion of this chapter. The discussion draws from both extensive textual analysis and interviews carried in 2008.

The chapter is divided into four major sections, including this Introduction. Broadly section 4.2 examines the dialectic role of civil society in the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe. In the context of the head-on collision between democratic and nationalist politics, two forms of civil society – the

hegemony legitimising civil society and the hegemony resisting civil society – sharply emerged. In section 4.3, the discussion focuses on the sociological determinants of counter-hegemonic politics and particularly civil society's relations with various actors such as the political parties, rural based civics and donors. The section also examines the politics of civic coalitions and networks in context of struggling to democratise Zimbabwe politics. Finally, section 4.4 summarises the chapter and introduces the next one, which will further contextualise the contentious politics being examined under this chapter within a case study on the role of civil society in the electoral politics of Zimbabwe.

4.2 Civil society legitimation and resistance

4.2.1 Hegemonic civil society and the 'passive revolution'

This section aims to demonstrate how a hegemonic civil society went about legitimising state hegemony by encouraging 'a sense of fatalism and passivity toward political action' (Boggs, 1975) in post-2000 Zimbabwe. This was achieved through various ways, namely, mystifying power relations and public issues. Force (or violence) was used in order to force society to 'consent' to ZANU-PF's nationalist sentiments and its rule. The economic crisis was projected as a regime change strategy by western countries working in cohorts with internal enemies of the state, namely the opposition and human rights or governance civil society organisations. Through state controlled media, society was bombarded with political messages that urged patience and acceptance of the misery of the economic crisis as a passing phase once the land reform begins to bear fruits and the enemies of the state are shamed. Furthermore, as Gramsci (1971:97) argues, the hegemonic civil society exhibited a 'paternalistic' attitude towards the [ZANU-PF] ruling class and [began to think] of itself as part of the leadership'. The case of Zimbabwe demonstrates, as Katz (2006:335) argues, that the maintenance of hegemony by a hegemonic civil society promotes 'consent to the current relations of force' and

conveniently promotes a 'passive revolution' (also Gramsci, 1971:59). As already noted in chapter 1, the analysis of the hegemonic civil society in this section is based on secondary sources.

4.2.1.1 Discourse and tools of legitimation

4.2.1.1.1 *Authoritarian nationalism*

Zimbabwe's development conundrums, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues, need to be conceptualised within the 'broader debates on the African crisis in general' and the deeper struggle between two ideologies – nationalism and neo-liberalism – which are both fundamentalist in their truth claims and annihilatory in their rejection of each other (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006:4,6). Within this framework, the contours of the role of civil society in legitimising state hegemony in post-2000 Zimbabwe need also to be conceptualised. African scholarship is rich in its analysis of the head on collision between the nationalist project and the neo-liberal project, and how the latter's triumph undermines Africa's development trajectories long after the euphoria of independences. In Zimbabwe, the collision between the vision of a nation-state built upon the values of nationalism and the factors that drove the war of liberation, and an alternative vision of a nation-state founded upon a neo-liberal development paradigm was negotiated in 1979 at the Lancaster House Conference between the nationalist liberation movements and the settler regime. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2006:8) points out, '[...] the Lancaster House Agreement was a neo-liberal power transfer document and the Lancaster House Constitution was a neo-liberal constitution.' In practice this ensured that the economic privileges of white settler elites, especially with regards to land ownership, were constitutionally protected and a transfer of political power to African nationalist elites was seamlessly and peacefully achieved (Mandaza, 1986).

More fundamentally, it is important to note that despite the fact that the British government facilitated the Lancaster House negotiations, in 1980, Zimbabwe was not a typical or ordinary 'post-colonial state' in the sense that it had effectively been separated from the 'mother colony' (Britain) in the 1960s through the Unilateral Declaration of Independence. With economic sanctions imposed upon the Rhodesian government, the country effectively ran a 'war economy' that was without external colonial markets or inputs. This inward developmental strategy was facilitative of extensive domestic infrastructural investments and industrial growth and it became the foundation upon which the often celebrated economic boom of the first two to three years of independent Zimbabwe is premised. However, amid this celebrated boom there was (is) an often overlooked 'enclave dual economy' that was inherited by the post-colonial Zimbabwean state. This enclave dual economy consisted of the formal sector that was juxtaposed to the non-formal sector (the urban and rural informal economies) (see *Alternatives to Neo-Liberalism in Southern Africa*, 2007:13). It had been developed and sustained on the basis of the superiority of minority white settlers, and furthermore, it was 'developed on the basis of the ruthless dispossession of the source of livelihood of the majority of the people, and in particular access to land [...]' (Kanyenze, 2006:3).

Thus, in a context where 70 percent of Zimbabwe's population live in the country side (rural areas) and rely on agricultural or farming activities of different kinds for access to and utilisation of food (Wiggins, 2004:16), land redistribution would ideally constitute a progressive 'social revolution' (see Moyo and Yeros, 2007). However, because of the Lancaster House Agreement provision that protected white commercial farmers from having their farms involuntarily acquired by the state for redistribution for ten years between 1980 and 1990, and the role of the International Financial Institutions (i.e., the World Bank and IMF) in pressuring government to adopt market-friendly economic policies, the postcolonial state, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2006:7) argues, was '[...] devoid of any capacity to chart an autonomous development trajectory.' Consequently, as shall be noted below, the issue of access to land remained

an outstanding and emotive economic and political policy issue, in particular with the veterans of war of liberation who became the centre of the post-2000 violent politics for hegemony.

Both internal and external actors, as discussed above, influenced the postcolonial government to replace the pre-1980 nationalist discourse that had advocated for radical redistribution of resources, especially land, with a more conservative nationalist politics that emphasised continuity rather than a radical transformation of the colonial regime's land policies. This was true with regards to the postcolonial government's continued support of large-scale commercial farming that was dominated by whites, even as it simultaneously implemented policies aimed at increasing agricultural output by small-scale producers, mostly rural peasant farmers. As many scholars have argued, this approach of '[...] achieving a balance between support for the white commercial farmers [...], and nurturing the peasant farmers' resulted in the international celebration of Zimbabwe's progressive agricultural policies and hence its status as the 'bread basket' for Southern Africa (Kanyenze, 2006:10). The downside of this agricultural 'success story', as Mumbengegwi (1987) argues, is that it pushed to the backstage the imperative and urgency for land redistribution because the efficiency of the agricultural policies took precedence over the issues of land equity (cited in Kanyenze, 2006:11). This was further compounded, as already discussed in Chapter 3, by the fact that civil society either avoided confrontational politics with the government or rarely participated in the formulation and implementation of developmental policies. Kanyenze (2006:12) therefore notes that for the better part of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the land question only came into the fore of public discourse through politicians seeking to be voted into public or political offices.

However, in the late 1990s, as the strong and popular opposition MDC party emerged to challenge the ruling ZANU-PF party, the need to balance between the efficient use of land and land equity was less

prioritised. Instead, between 2000 and 2003, the issue of land equity was prioritised, but in a chaotic and violent manner, within the broad context of a radicalisation of nationalist politics towards authoritarianism. The essence of the 'Third *Chimurenga*', as this politics came to be referred to, was that the independence constitutional dispensation and the neo-liberal economic and development paradigms were not amenable to a complete decolonisation of not only Zimbabwe, but Africa at large. Therefore, ZANU-PF and the hegemonic civil society actors such as the Zimbabwe National War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) argued that the contradictions on the terrain of the relations of social forces of production, especially as they relate to land ownership inherited at independence needed urgent radical transformation. In the discursive articulations by the hegemonic bloc, the post-2000 land redistribution processes were a progress towards a genuine and final realisation of economic emancipation of the masses. However, in the discursive deconstruction by the counter-hegemonic bloc, as will be discussed in section 4.2.2 below, land reform, despite its emancipative imperative, was used by ZANU-PF to regain its fading political legitimacy. An argument is made in this discussion that ZANU-PF used the land issue to achieve both.

The role of the hegemonic civil society, in particular the ZNLWVA, in supporting and therefore legitimising state hegemony in Zimbabwe needs to be understood in the above context of an emergent radical nationalism and the trade-off that the hegemonic bloc as a whole made between the land redistribution and economic emancipation. Put simply, the discourses of nationalism, land reform and economic empowerment were used to legitimate the hegemonic politics of the state. These discourses configured – through violence, ideological articulation and institutional paralysis – the relations of political forces in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Violence was used mainly by the ZNLWVA and ZANU-PF's Youth Brigades. The articulation of ZANU-PF's hegemonic discourse was popularised through state controlled media by intellectuals (i.e., academics, church clergies, editors, politicians etc). Similarly a state of institutional paralysis, especially of law enforcement agents such as the police and other

institutional arms of government such as the judiciary, was deliberately created by the regime to advance its hegemonic hold over Zimbabwean society. The combination of these factors created in the name of one respondent 'an unwilling state' (Interview 19, 2008).

It is important to note, however, that the identity of ZNLWVA as a civil society organisation is contested within Zimbabwe, especially by the mainstream governance or human rights civic groups. Erin McCandless argues that the ZNLWVA rarely conceives of itself as a civil society organisation. Part of the war veterans' self-understanding, McCandless argues, is to do with the general anti-civil society discourse by the state and the fact that a majority of war veterans do not actively participate in urban-based civic association, perhaps out of choice fed by state misinformation about the idea of civil society (McCandless, 2005:313). In 2008 the South African based Zimbabwe Institute produced a report entitled *'The State of Civics in Zimbabwe'* and it also excludes ZNLWVA in its categorisation of civil society in sub-sectors of governance, human rights, civic education, media, faith based organisations, women's organisations, labour unions, professional associations, residents' associations, student and youth organisations.

In 1980, a majority of war veterans were demobilised. However, lacking adequate education and skills because of many years spent in the war, they found themselves at the margins of the dual enclave economy still dominated by white settler elites, a few black elites and international capital. As a result, agricultural farming activities became the main source of livelihoods for war veterans, as was (is) also the case with the estimated 70 percent of Zimbabwe's population that live in the country side. Thus, since 1980, the war veterans advocated for land redistribution, sometimes within structures of the ruling ZANU-PF party and sometimes outside. In the mid-1990s and onwards, there was an increase in urban and peri-urban farming activities as workers in cities sought to vary their sources of livelihoods. By

2000, when the land reform invasions started over 80 percent rural and urban households relied on farming as a livelihood strategy (Moyo, 2005a:4). The 2000 land invasions therefore took place against the background of increased pressure on the state, by both landless rural peasants and urbanites, to speed the process of land redistribution, which Mbaya (2001) argues was crucial for poverty reduction, economic growth and stability.

Despite this clear economic justification for land reform, a body of civil society led by war veterans and ZANU-PF youths emerged in 2000 to convolute the issues of land reform and empowerment with supporting ZANU-PF's struggle to return power. However, the sometimes youthful composition of war veterans during the farm invasions, led critics to question who was a true war veteran. One respondent had the following to say in this regard: 'The war veterans is a phenomenon which comes at a particular time and I think there is a lot of opportunism by some of these people because they see resources which they can tap, although temporarily, but there is an opportunity to make something' (Interview 2, 2008). The most visible tool of hegemonic legitimation of the state by the war veterans was the use of violence. Meredith (2002:167) explains: 'Their immediate task [when they invaded white-owned farms] was to peg out plots of land. But the wider purpose of their deployment was to crush support for the opposition in rural areas in the run-up to the election.' War veterans are reported to have been paid Z\$20 million (about £330,000) to campaign for ZANU-PF with a squatter earning about Z\$50 (80 pence) per day (Norman, 2004:118). The war veterans therefore went about the country drumming up support for ZANU-PF in the run up to elections, declaring themselves 'a reserve army' with 'the right to use the arms to defend the government of ZANU-PF' (Meredith, 2002:170). War veterans were mobilised around the land issue, unemployed youths were mobilised into a compulsory National Youth Service scheme. Both war veterans and the youths defended the regime and promoted the regime's 'patriotic history'. Many commentators have criticised the shallowness, authoritarian and racist nature of the regime's re-awakened nationalism (Ranger, 2004).

The purpose of violence was to preserve a particular type of 'civility', which it was argued, could only be preserved by a generation of liberation leaders. It is this context that in 2000, Isaac MacKenzie, a ZANU-PF Parliamentary candidate, threatened white businesses at Kariba: 'Let me assure you whites here that once you support MDC, ZANU-PF is not going to treat you as business people, but as politicians. Then if you are treated as politicians, it is like signing your own death warrants. The political storm will not spare you. Let you be informed that our reserve force, the war veterans, will be set on you' (quoted in Meredith, 2002:181). Throughout the country, villagers were force marched to attend political rallies where they were forced to sing ZANU-PF war songs and slogans, to denounce the MDC and western countries. In 2000, war veterans set up roadblocks preventing people from reaching polling stations and confiscated their identity cards and ejected independent monitors from polling stations, thereby raising fears of electoral rigging. Violence was justified on reason that the forces or means of production had to be reclaimed. The war veterans justified the ongoing violence as normal in a situation of a revolution: 'All revolutions require violence. No one can stop the revolution we have started' and further claiming 'like in any revolution, the path is always bloody, and that is to be expected and hence no-one should raise eyebrows over the death of four white farmers' (quoted in Meredith, 2002:169,177).

ZANU-PF's re-awakened authoritarian nationalism in post-2000 should be understood in the context of the failure of developmental nationalism that ZANU-PF adopted in 1980. In 2000, authoritarian nationalism on its own however would have represented hegemony by coercion. There was therefore need, as Gramsci (1971) argues, to balance coercion with consent. In this regard, cultural nationalism was also reawakened to compensate not only for state failure (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 2009) but also to lend ideological support to the state-led fast track land reform programme and to legitimise the use of violence against the perceived 'enemies of the state' (i.e. white commercial farmers, opposition and civil society).

4.2.1.1.2 *Cultural nationalism*

Media and Hegemony

Hutchinson (1994:123) defines cultural nationalism as ‘[...] a movement of moral regeneration which seeks to re-unite the different aspects of the nation – the traditional and modern, agriculture and industry, science and religion – by returning to the creative life-principle of the nation’. In the case of Zimbabwe, cultural nationalism aimed at maintaining the structural dominance of ZANU-PF over society. This consensual instrumental role and moral leadership imagining (Morton, 2007:91) was actively performed by ‘intellectuals’ within the hegemonic civil society or broadly within the hegemonic bloc. The media was the vehicle through which subjective forms of consciousness and social reality were constructed and contested. Focus in this section is on the articulation of cultural nationalism in state controlled media. In dominating the communicative space, ZANU-PF fixed the premises of broad political discourse on both the nation’s past and future, by deciding, directing and stage managing what citizens should see (on television), read (in newspapers), hear (on radio) and by managing public opinion through propaganda.

It is important here to briefly summarise Zimbabwe’s media landscape. In 1980, ZANU-PF maintained the media monopoly structures of the colonial administration. The state controlled Zimbabwe Newspapers (Zimpapers) consortium runs the following print titles: *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Kwayedza* (printed in Harare), *The Manica Post* (printed in Mutare), *The Chronicle*, *The Sunday News*, and *Umthunywa* (printed in Bulawayo). The period between 1990 and 2008, however saw private media (print) players coming into the scene: e.g. *The Financial Gazette*, *The Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Standard*, *The Zimbabwean* and a few others like *The Daily News* and *The Mirror* that have either since collapsed or banned. The private media has played an important role in providing a platform for the expression of alternative voices. Alongside the MDC opposition and human rights civil society, the private media amplified anti-government sentiments and a strong criticism of the fast-track land reform

in 2000. This led to the tightening and control of media space by the ZANU-PF regime, especially after the 2000 referendum defeat and ahead of the 2002 presidential elections. This represented a radical policy shift from the regime's early to late 1990s commitment to liberalise the communicative space, which had allowed few private print media players to operate.

In terms of broadcasting, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's (ZBC) is the sole national television broadcaster. In the late 1990s, the regime had seemed prepared to allow other broadcasting players to compete with ZBC in the same manner that it had licensed private print media houses. For instance, Bornwell Chakaodza, then Director of Information in the Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, argued in 1997 that ZBC's monopoly was anti-democratic: 'Citizens have a right to be informed, to seek information, to communicate and associate on the basis of that freedom. The ZBC monopoly denies that right in so far as it does not offer them the opportunity to enjoy the advantages of a wider net of programmes' (quoted in Moyo, 2004b:20). However, in a post-2000 context of a perceived internal and external threat to Zimbabwe's national and cultural identity the regime reneged on its political commitment not only to liberalise the broadcasting arena but also to permit independent print media players to operate without undue pressures to demonstrate political loyalty towards the regime. That shift on policy was well articulated by Professor Jonathan Moyo, then Minister of Information and Publicity in the President's Office who argued in April of 2002 that:

We want to see a vibrant national public broadcaster that expresses not only our cultural identity and diversity but also expresses our national point of view. And we will ensure that ZBC does this without any apologies to anyone and without fearing or favouring anyone.[...] Its very important and the recent experiences in terms of how our sovereignty, our values, our history have been attacked through the media must be a lesson to all of us (quoted in Gandhi and Jambaya, 2003:1).

Again in April 2004, Jonathan Moyo justified the regime's decision to expel perceived anti-government international media such as the United States of America's Cable News Network (CNN) and the United

Kingdom's British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) among a host of other foreign media houses from operating in Zimbabwe by arguing that:

We believe that information is a strategic issue which is critical in maintaining a country's sovereignty and you cannot claim to be sovereign if you do not own the means of disseminating information [...] This is why we removed CNN from ZBC when we came in, in the year 2000 and we will never have it again as long as we are still around. We want to use the media to put across our national views and not those of the United States or Britain or the Voice of America. We wish to put across our views as the Voice of Zimbabwe' (quoted in Gandhi and Jambaya, 2003:23).

Thus since 1980, there has been continuity in the role of state controlled media, *vis-à-vis* playing the 'partisan gate-keeping process' in the struggle for hegemony (Zaffiro, 1986:128). In order to control the dissemination of information and to promote its hegemonic discourses the regime passed four legislations ahead of the 2002 Presidential elections. These laws were the Broadcasting Services Act of April 2001 (BSA); the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (Commercialisation) Act of 2001; the Public Order and Security Act of January 2002 (POSA); and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act of March 2002 (AIPPA). The context of the promulgation of BSA was a High Court ruling in 2000, in favour of Capital Radio (PVT) Ltd, that the then Broadcasting Act [Chapter 12:01] unconstitutionally guaranteed ZBC's monopoly of the airwaves. There had also been criticism by local, regional and international election observers during the June 2000 parliamentary elections that ZBC stifled out alternative voices which created unfair advantage for the ruling ZANU-PF party. According to MISA-Zimbabwe (2002:1) the High Court ruling however created 'a lacuna in the law' in the sense that whilst ZBC's monopoly of the communicative space was positively ruled unconstitutional there was still no regulatory framework to formalise the entry of private players into broadcasting.

Thus when Capital Radio proceeded to broadcast without a licence on the basis of the High Court's ruling the regime swiftly responded by declaring the station a 'pirate station' and ordered the police to

raid its offices and seize its broadcasting equipment in October 2000. Capital Radio rushed back to the courts to seek a legal protection. Judge Chatikombo ruled in favour of the radio station and ordered the police to stop interfering with Capital Radio's broadcasting activities. However the police ignored the court ruling and the Minister for Information and Publicity, Jonathan Moyo went on to describe Judge Chatikombo as a 'night judge' dispensing 'night justice' in a 'night court' (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2002). In order to create an impression that Capital Radio had been irresponsible by broadcasting without a licence, instead of waiting for the government to formalise the establishment of a regulatory framework for licensing private broadcasters, the regime issued the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Broadcasting Regulations in a Government Gazette Extraordinary Supplement on the 4th of October 2000. These broadcasting Regulations formed the bulk of the contents of the BSA that was passed in April 2001.

The Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) was welcomed, albeit with scepticism, as a positive direction towards reforming Zimbabwe's media space so that it is accommodative of alternative voices other than of the ruling party. Dumisani Moyo (2004b:23) argues, 'At face value, the Broadcasting Services Act, 2001 is an excellent document that opens up the broadcasting sector to competition [...].' The BSA paved the way for the establishment of the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) mandated to receive, evaluate and consider applications for broadcasting licences to new players. However the Minister of Information and Publicity was empowered to be the ultimate licensing authority and to cancel the licence in the event he deemed the broadcaster was a threat to national security. This move drew strong objections from civic organisations, opposition parties and even from within ZANU-PF (Moyo, 2004b). Schedule Sixth, Section 11(3) of BSA is worth quoting at length because it was central to ZANU-PF's construction of cultural hegemony through its continued monopoly of the media. According to BSA all broadcasters in Zimbabwe should meet the following criteria:

- 3 (a) 70 *per centum* of its drama programming consists of Zimbabwean drama;
 - (b) 80 *per centum* of its current affairs programming consists of Zimbabwean current affairs;
 - (c) 70 *per centum* of its social documentary programming consists of Zimbabwean social documentary programming;
 - (d) 70 *per centum* of its informal knowledge building programming consists of Zimbabwean informal knowledge building programming;
 - (e) 80 *per centum* of its educational programming consists of Zimbabwean educational programming;
 - (f) 80 *per centum* of its children's programming consists of Zimbabwean educational programming.
- [...] Conditions for radio broadcasting licenses:
- 5 (a) 75 *per centum* of the music broadcast consists of Zimbabwean music
 - (b) 10 *per centum* of the music broadcast consists of music from Africa (BSA Act, 2001, emphasis in original).

Whilst commentators were agreed that the provisions for local content quotas were not unique to Zimbabwe, it was nonetheless observed, as Moyo argues that 'the drive to establish communicative sovereignty is coloured by the self-interest of the ruling party whose desire is to perpetuate its stay in power' (Moyo, 2004b:27). With BAZ and the Minister unlikely to license new broadcasters ahead of the June 2002 Presidential elections, the provisions for local content were clearly meant to give legal (and political) justification, as shall be discussed below, for ZBC to flood its broadcasting schedules with programmes on land reform, war of liberation, pan-Africanism and 'national culture and identity'. In anticipation of future players coming into the media arena, The ZBC (Commercialisation) Act restructured ZBC so 'that broadcasting and signal transmission services be run on a commercial basis not only to enable ZBC to compete effectively and efficiently but also to comply with the new law and the new broadcasting environment' (ZBC [Commercialisation] Act, 2001). In order to achieve this competitiveness 'successor companies to take over the functions, assets, liabilities and staff of ZBC' were to be formed. Crucially for the advancement of the regime's hegemonic project, 'In the performance of their functions, the successor companies shall give priority to serving the needs of the State, to the extent that it is compatible with sound business practice to do so' (ZBC [Commercialisation] Act, 2001, subsection 4[3]). In 2002, this provision was criticised by legal experts

as effectively amounting to establishing a 'State broadcaster' as opposed to a 'public broadcaster' (quoted in Moyo, 2004b:26).

AIPPA, which was passed in 2002, requires all media houses and journalists to register with the 'politically compromised' Media and Information Commission (MIC) (Hondora, 2002:13). The Chairman of MIC, Dr Tafataona Mahoso is a well known supporter of ZANU-PF and has a weekly column in *The Herald* and sometimes in the *Sunday Mail*, where he criticises the opposition and civil society for advancing a regime change agenda. Furthermore only Zimbabwean citizens can own and register media houses in the country and foreign journalists can be accredited to work in the country only for short periods. On the occasion of the passing of the AIPPA Bill in Parliament, the Minister of Information and Publicity, Jonathan Moyo justified the legislation as 'payback time against 'White Rhodesians' dominating world's media': 'Even the national broadcaster in South Africa is dominated by Rhodesian journalists, while a good number of those in charge in Britain and Australia are either Rhodesian, or sympathetic. A whole white global network and front has thus been formed against the land of blacks and their struggles here' (quoted in Blair and Thorncroft, 2002:n.p).

In May 2004, Jonathan Moyo further labelled such media as the enemy of the state '[...] who use the pen to lie about this country. [Adding] such reporters are terrorists and the position on how to deal with terrorists is to subject them to the laws of Zimbabwe. [...] we have enough prison room for them' (quoted in Nyathi, 2004:n.p). The effect of AIPPA, POSA and frequent outbursts, not only by Jonathan Moyo, but also by other government and ZANU-PF party officials was a crack down on foreign and local journalists accused either of writing falsehoods detrimental to state security or simply critical of government developmental policies especially as they relate to the land reform. A report by MISA-Zimbabwe shows that three hundred and sixty five journalists were arrested between 2000 and 2006:

thirty one in 2001; forty one in 2002; one hundred and twenty five in 2003; twenty five in 2004; sixty five in 2005 and seventy eight in 2006 (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2007:21-26). *The Daily News*, an independent newspaper that was instrumental in disseminating views, policies and discourses of the counter-hegemonic bloc actors, was banned after its management, in the words of Hondora (2002:2), committed 'commercial suicide' by refusing to register the paper as required under AIPPA.

In the run up to the 2002 Presidential elections, the *Daily News* had been banned in most rural areas, especially in ZANU-PF dominated constituencies. War veterans and youth militia set to prevent its distribution and civil servants were banned from reading all critical independent print media. Whilst the regime was arresting journalists, refusing to issue a licence to the banned *Daily News*, and banning international media houses such as BBC and CNN from operating in Zimbabwe, it was ironically expanding its 'Africa for Africans' philosophical discourse to the SADC regional bloc. This was done by rallying SADC 'liberation governments' against what it termed 'colonial media institutions' that were serving neo-colonial interests. Thus in 2004, the state controlled Zimpapers teamed up with the Government of Namibia's controlled New Era Newspapers to launch a regional newspaper, *The Southern Times*. At the launch ceremony in Namibia, a Zimpapers official argued, 'Colonial media institutions can never be and should never be relied upon to report on Africa' (quoted in *Zimbabwesituation.com*, 2004).

Hegemony and Afro-radicalism

The broader aim of the media reforms at home and the regional expansion, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2006:12) argues, was to promote through television, newspapers and the radio '[a] broad nativist vision of Zimbabwe [...] involving the [...] appropriation of history, traditions, liberation songs, departed heroes, pan-Africanism, ideas of African authenticity, and music.' ZBC's 'Vision 30', which was launched in

November of 2001, played a crucial role in realising the implementation of BSA's provision for the local content quota. 'Vision 30' had three components: (i) the definition of the Zimbabwe nation and its 'true' citizens, (ii) definition and interpretation of Zimbabwe's history, and (iii) the definition of national identity and national values (Gandhi and Jambaya, 2003). The essence of these nativist themes and the regime's overall domination of media space was to author and disseminate what Gramsci calls 'common sense' that anchored the defence of the controversial land reforms and justified the 'necessity of a violent revolution' against perceived internal functionaries of neo-liberal, neo-colonial and racist forces. The role of this function, as Gramsci argues, fell upon a coterie of so-called 'patriotic intellectuals' and 'patriotic musicians'. The 'patriotic intellectuals' – e.g. Dr Dr Tafataona Mahoso, Dr Vimbai Chivaura, Dr Claude Mararike, Professor Sheunesu Mpepereki, among others, appeared on programmes such as *National Ethos*, *Nhaka Yedu* ('Our Heritage'), *Living Traditions*, *Talking Farming*. The last programme (*Talking Farming*) had its Ndebele and Shona languages equivalents, *Umlimi Wanamhla* (Today's Farmer) and *Murimi Wanhasi* (Today's Farmer), respectively.

Anchoring the defence of ZANU-PF's hegemony the intellectuals resorted to Marxist and nationalist categories in order to develop, firstly, what Achile Mbembe calls 'Afro-radicalism' – i.e. '[...] an imaginaire of culture and politics in which a manipulation of the rhetoric of autonomy, resistance, and emancipation serves as the sole criterion for determining the legitimacy of an authentic African discourse' (Mbembe, 2002:240-241). The authentic African discourse, the 'patriotic intellectuals' argued, had been distorted by Europeans for their benefits. According to Professor Mpepereki, 'we [Africans] cannot find our history in books that were written by Whites. What we need to do is to research and write and narrate our own history.' This was important, Dr Chivaura added, because African history was 'capable of being understood as the history of the world [...] because Africa is the cradle of civilisation. Whites did not have a history. By the time we had civilisations Whites were still in caves [...]'. (Both quoted in Gandhi and Jambaya, 2003:7).

The ZANU-PF aligned 'intellectuals', therefore, set forth to reclaim African cultural civilisations that were stolen by Europeans: it was argued that Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Beethoven, St. Peter, St. Paul, Jesus and Buddha were all Blacks; that Blacks pioneered medicine and that the roots of Christianity are in Africa. The 'patriotic intellectuals' concluded that much of the history that is celebrated as European is in actual fact an African history (Gandhi and Jambaya, 2003). In their analysis of the interpretation of history by 'patriotic intellectuals', Gandhi and Jambaya (2003:8) conclude: 'While the panellists for these programmes appeared to provide a superficial element of intellectual debate, these absurd and fanciful lies simply exposed the participants as narcissistic propagandists cynically attempting to convince ZBC's audiences of Black Africa's inherent superiority'. This justified the state-sponsored violence against white commercial farmers, the pro-western opposition and its civil society allies.

Hegemony and the nativist discourse

Secondly, 'patriotic intellectuals' espoused what Achille Mbembe calls a 'nativism' discourse: '[A] discourse of rehabilitation. It is a defence of the humanity of Africans that is almost always accompanied by the claim that their race, traditions, and customs confer to them a peculiar self irreducible to that of any other human group. So, it's a discourse that does not challenge the fiction of race, but rather espouses it wholly' (Mbembe, 2002:5). Thus the intellectuals argued that Zimbabwe, and Africa at large, has a unique national identity and values that are anchored on the membership of the black race. Emphasis was put on explaining to the nation how slavery, colonialism and apartheid degraded and alienated Africans from their cultural identities and how the histories of Africans were violently falsified thus setting forth the processes of illegal expropriation of natural resources (Mbembe, 2002:241). In order to respond, Africans are expected to vigorously unravel the falsehoods of 'Western definitions of Africa and Africans', to lay bare the negative consequences of Western development prescriptions, and finally open space for Africans to narrate their own fables (Mbembe, 2002:244).

Nativism, according to Mbembe (2002:245) often starts with making a distinction 'between the native and the nonnative Other'. Mbembe argues however that this is 'the mad dream of a world without Others'. In the case of Zimbabwe, this thesis of difference was considered natural to justify 'the redemptive function of violence' (Mbembe, 2002:251) against those who opposed ZANU-PF.

The MDC and its civil society partners were considered part of a wider western political conspiracy to 'prevent the blooming of African uniqueness' (Mbembe, 2002:243). Through this reasoning, the authorship of the 'Zimbabwe crisis' lay in No. 10 Downing Street (London) and in the White House (Washington). Underlying this argument, therefore, is that Africa is better left alone to solve its multifaceted crises. Yet in the age of globalisation Mbembe argues the nativism discourse is often caught in a dilemma: 'Discourse on African identity has been caught in a dilemma from which it is struggling to free itself: Does African identity partake in the generic human identity?' (Mbembe, 2002:253). The 'patriotic intellectuals' had the answer. In the words of Dr Chivaura, speaking on the programme *National Ethos* in March 2003, '[...] the value system of the Europeans, of the White man, of the Rhodesian in Zimbabwe is exclusive, it is racist, it does not have any place for us [...] We should come up with this kind of ethos; Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans, Africa for Africans, Europe for Europeans. That is the starting point because that's what they do' (quoted in Gandhi and Jambaya, 2003:8). Chivaura's separatist discourse reinforced President Robert Mugabe's words, which he uttered at the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa: 'So Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe' (quoted in *Guardian* [UK], 2002).

According to Mbembe however, Africa's cry for recognition as human beings is laden with contradictions. It reinforces, Mbembe asserts, the fiction of race created from the other side in that during this struggle for self-rehabilitation and validation it claims its race, traditions and customs have a

specific character different from the 'white race'. In post-2000 Zimbabwe politics, this discourse aimed to rally blacks against whites, whether they were farmers or not. In fact, according to the regime, British colonial settlers defined themselves as commercial farmers, hence the *Third Chimurenga's* 'freedom fighters' were still fighting the same enemies that freedom fighters of the *First* and *Second Chimurenga* fought against.

The African race identity was supposed to serve as moral basis for political solidarity for all blacks, both living in mainland Africa and those in the diaspora because of slavery. Dr Tafatona Mahoso argued for example: 'There is a nation and there are also nations within nations. One of the nations that we normally forget is the African nation, which is spread all over the world, which is called the African Diaspora. And this is an important nation because the building of Zimbabwe was not by Zimbabweans only. It was a contribution of the scattered Africans all over the world' (quoted in Gandhi and Jambaya, 2003). The black race therefore should not stand idle when one of theirs is being attacked by Europeans. The call for African solidarity became part of the ideological impetus behind former South African President Thabo Mbeki's 'quiet diplomacy' as SADC's appointed chief negotiator between ZANU-PF and the MDC, whose mediation created the Government of National Unity in 2009.

It is important to point out, as Mbembe argues that ZANU-PF's awakened cultural nationalism was overtly racist. According to Mbembe (2002), there is a shift in the way race is viewed when the discourses of nativism and Afro-radicalism are invoked. He argues that in the struggle against colonialism, race was an immoral subject but in the contemporary struggle for the African Self, race is a moral subject. Between 2000 and 2008, the immoralisation of race in Zimbabwe was achieved by broadcasting gory images of whites' inhuman treatment of black slaves in American plantations and the massacre of innocent civilians by Rhodesian soldiers during the war of liberation. The moralisation of

race was achieved by downplaying the gory images that war veterans, youth militia and ZANU-PF supporters meted against commercial farmers and the opposition. The use of media images to construct meaning about political and social issues, Gamson *et al.* (1992:374) argue, is a special genius system that 'make the whole process seem [so] normal and natural that the very art of social construction is invisible'. Mbembe summarises the political aim behind this social construction:

Racial and territorial authenticity are conflated, and Africa becomes the land of black people. Since the racial interpretation is at the foundation of a restricted civic relatedness, everything that is not black is out of place, and thus cannot claim any sort of Africanity. The spatial body, the racial body, and the civic body are thenceforth one, each testifying to an autochthonous communal origin by virtue of which everyone born of the soil or sharing the same color or ancestors is a brother or a sister (Mbembe, 2002:256).

The struggle to make Africa unique required conquest of political power and Mugabe was portrayed as the embodiment of that power. The legitimacy of Mugabe's leadership was granted eternal 'common sense'; first, because of his war of liberation credentials and second, because he was 'sent' by the 'nation's ancestral spirits' (often reduced to two Shona religious-cum-political figures, Nehanda and Kaguvi). Thus Dr Chivaura, prompted Zimbabweans during the programme *Nhaka Yedu*, to ask themselves '[...] *Watarudza kuti ndiwe wotitungamira: tatungamirwa nani kumutarudza? Iye atungamirwa nani mumazano ake?*' (Who has inspired us to choose the leader we have elected to lead us? And where does the leader himself get his wisdom and ideas?). According to the 'patriotic intellectuals' who also included an official from Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA), Robert Mugabe's Presidential candidature was endorsed by *mhondoro dzematunhu* (provincial spirits), whilst Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC Presidential candidate was sent by the Americans and the British (Gandhi and Jambaya, 2003:10).

These distortions resulted in strong public exchanges amongst Zimbabwean intellectuals who aligned either with the politics of the hegemonic movement (i.e., 'patriotic intellectuals') or that of the counter-

hegemonic movement (i.e., 'critical public intellectuals') (see Tendi, 2008). In 2002, the late Professor Masipula Sithole, writing in his weekly column called 'Public Eye', which appeared in *The Financial Gazette*, chided intellectuals in the hegemonic bloc for being irresponsible by lying about the true state of affairs in the country: 'I wish I could be called a patriotic intellectual and lie about the state of affairs in our country. But I cannot. I simply cannot. For to do so would be irresponsible, very irresponsible indeed' (quoted in Tendi, 2008:385). Sithole's outburst got an immediate response from Professor Jonathan Moyo who accused '[...] people like Sithole and his MDC and NCA friends' for supporting whites 'to use their economic power to regain political hegemony control with British support under the convenient flag of democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law' (quoted in Tendi, 2008:386). In his study on the role of intellectuals in the contest for hegemony and power, Tendi contends that Sithole's death in April 2003 robbed the counter-hegemonic bloc of a prolific writer who copiously sought to unravel ZANU-PF's biased and distorted patriotic history.

An important point to make is that much of this spirited fight against ZANU-PF's patriotic history by Sithole (and others) was confined to a limited readership because the few independent print media are generally expensive, as if tailored for the middle and upper classes. Its distribution catchments are major cities such as Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Mutare and so on. Moreover, an oppressive media landscape and the imperatives to minimise confrontations with the state saw it 'not teeming with serious reinterpretations of the nationalist public intellectuals' (Tendi, 2008:385) views on patriotic history. Another criticism against the independent press in Zimbabwe is that it has struggled to shrug off its historical labelling as 'minority whites papers' and/or as 'newspapers for capitalists' that are aloof to critical public issues that concern a majority. As a result, the communicative space that private media gave to the counter-hegemonic bloc after 2000, – to articulate the constitutional discourse, to deconstruct the controversial fast-track land reform, to 'bold print' human rights violations and unfair electoral practices, and to amplify the illegitimacy of the ZANU-PF led government and its failure to

address the economic crisis – was perceived to be driven by minority whites' vendetta for the loss of farms.

Having been squeezed out of the public media, alternative interpretations of Zimbabwean politics came to be popularised through the few surviving independent print media and a plethora of internet based news outlets that mushroomed outside the country and run by Zimbabwean journalists in exile. Intellectuals sympathetic to the politics of the counter-hegemonic bloc also seemed content with simply countering ZANU-PF's hegemony through submissions in academic journals and books. Brian Raftopoulos is unapologetic:

[The] advantage is that we have written in journals and books, and ZANU-PF intellectuals have not. They did not write in journals therefore their work is not recorded. They only wrote in newspapers because they knew their work did not stand up to intellectual scrutiny. We are recorded and it will be talked about in future. Our work will always come back, their work will not (quoted in Tendi, 2008:394).

The discussion above however clearly demonstrates that ZANU-PF's domination of media and the work of its intellectuals had a much more important political goal, i.e., that of retaining power, to achieve than to be concerned with standing up to 'intellectual scrutiny'. Moreover, it also served to cement the articulation and practice of politics through the 'them' versus 'us' construct, which legitimated the use of violence against all those perceived to be anti-ZANU-PF.

Chimurenga music and hegemony

In line with the local content quota in media, the regime, through the Ministry of Information and Publicity, also commissioned and sponsored music albums, musical jingles and videos, which dominated both radio and television. This role of music as a mobilising tool fitted well with the broad

theme of cultural nationalism that ZBC's 'Vision 30' sought to promote. It is important to note that the genesis of Zimbabwean music as a component of cultural nationalism, which is simultaneously buttressed to political nationalism dates back to the colonial era when musicians such as Solomon Skuza, Thomas Mapfumo, and Comrade Chinx, among others, sung *Ingoma zeNkululeko/Chimurenga Songs* (Liberation War Songs). During the war songs were sung to mobilise Zimbabweans to join the armed struggle and to motivate the combatants. The revival of cultural nationalism in post-2000, thus also took the form of the commissioning of the *Chimurenga* genre of music. A number of government ministers and both the old and new generations of musicians were brought under the stable of the Ministry of Information and Publicity to release songs or albums under the *Third Chimurenga Series* theme.

The songs were derogatory, racist and discriminatory towards the opposition, civil society, white commercial farmers and the west. Some of the dancing was near to obscenity. Despite the Censorship and Entertainments Control Act (amended in 1981 and 1997) that censors forms of entertainment that are lewd, obscene and defamatory (Eyre, 2005:22), this music occupied prime time programming on television and radio. The music celebrated and promoted land reform (e.g. Chinx Chingaira's *Hondo Yeminda*); it scoffed at 'alien' whites' luxurious lives earned at the expense of true black Zimbabweans (e.g. Chinx Chingaira, the Police Band & Marko Sibanda's *Umhlabathi*); it venerated President Robert Mugabe as a courageous leader (e.g. Elliot Manyika's *Zvinoda Wakashinga*); it rallied citizens to persevere in the face of economic hardships (e.g. the musical jingle *Rambai Makashinga*); it rallied citizens to jealously guard their hard won independence and sovereignty (e.g. Air Force of Zimbabwe Band's *Nhaka Yedu*); it invoked the Pan-Africanism discourse (e.g. Professor Jonathan Moyo's *PaxAfro*); and finally it endorsed the contested legitimacy of Robert Mugabe's Presidency and chided the British Prime Minister Tony Blair as a 'Blair toilet' (e.g. Tambaoga's *Agirimente*). Several other musical jingles such as *Chave Chimurenga* (Now its War), *Sisonke* (We are Together), *Our Future*,

Siyalima (We are Farming), *Mombe Mbiri Nemadhongi Mashanu* (Two Cows and Five Donkeys) and *Uya Uone Kutapira Kunoita Kurima* (Come and Witness the Joy of Farming) were played almost exclusively on television and radio. In 2003, the *Rambai Makashinga* jingle, for instance, was being played approximately two hundred and eighty eight times a day on all four radio stations and seventy two times on television a day (Sibanda, 2004).

Songs that were perceived to be critical of the regime were blacklisted and banned from being broadcast. Journalists were instructed to play songs that only promoted ZANU-PF, Robert Mugabe and land reform, often against the choices of listeners and viewers. Maxwell Sibanda explains:

But in having cabinet ministers sing, the ruling Zanu PF was killing two birds with one stone. The first being to instil fear among state controlled radio and television station's DJs and producers. These had to be patriotic as well and could not be seen promoting hostile and politically hard hitting compositions rebuking the Presidium. And the second: by using ministers who happen to be civil servants, all production costs would be paid by the ordinary taxpayer (Sibanda, 2008).

As a result a number of senior journalists, who had worked at ZBC for many years, were either forced to retire, dismissed or retrenched because they resisted instructions from ZANU-PF politicians to play the *Chimurenga* music. Eric Knight, a Radio 2 DJ and presenter of the popular television musical programme *Ezongido/ Mutinhinimira Wemimhazhi*, fled the country in 2003, and on arrival in the United Kingdom he wrote an opinion piece to the now banned *Daily News* paper and argued: 'My only sin was refusing to be a yes man. I and my colleagues who also left ZBC were labelled opposition Movement for Democratic Change political party supporters. I personally refused to play the album *Hondo Yeminda* on air. There was lots of 'rubbish' that we were required to broadcast but I resisted' (quoted in Sibanda, 2004). Eric Knight's colleagues who include Ezra Sibanda, Brenda Moyo, Violet Gonda, Mduduzi Mathuthu, among others, also sought exile outside the country, whereupon they set up radio stations and internet based newspapers in order to provide alternative uncensored information to

Zimbabweans and to critically interrogate the contradictions inherent in the *Third Chimurenga* revolution. ZANU-PF responded to this influx of alternative voices from outside by labelling diaspora radio stations 'pirate stations'.

In addition to using a state owned broadcaster as a platform to popularise ruling party policies through *Chimurenga* music, the regime also revived *pungwes* (night vigils) that were formerly enforced by guerrilla liberation fighters as educational platforms to rally masses against the colonial regime and to publicly humiliate and punish those accused of being 'sell-outs'. The post-2000 *pungwes* were held on national days such as Independence Day, Heroes Day and Unity Day. In addition, there were *pungwes* to celebrate Robert Mugabe's birth day and *pungwes* in memory of Zimbabwe's two late vice-presidents, Joshua Nkomo – the *Umdala Wethu* [Our Father] Gala and Simon Muzenda – the Mzee Mbira Gala. The two leaders were posthumously honoured with titles 'Father Zimbabwe' and 'Soul of the Nation', respectively, suggesting that Robert Mugabe awaits a much bigger honorary title. During the *galas/pungwes*, the 'patriotic musicians' of the *Third Chimurenga* performed alongside a host of young, mostly urban oriented musicians. The 'urban groove' (the genre of music by these young musicians) were also sponsored by the Ministry of Information and Publicity to sing in local languages as a way of providing resources for the local content quota provisions. A majority of these young singers sang in the Shona language, a situation that generated muttered complaints from the Matabeleland region that young Ndebele singers were being sidelined in order to promote Shona cultural music and language.

The 'urban groove' music was not political in content but just an 'indigenised' version of popular US musicians who sing rhythm and blues (RnB), soul and hip hop. The music had a large appeal amongst young people, who flooded the *pungwes*. In this way the regime was able to kill two birds with one

stone: people voluntarily attended national events manipulated for political ends and were bombarded with both *Chimurenga* and 'urban groove' music. The galas were also 'broadcast live on television for twelve straight hours, 6pm to 6am, the longest uninterrupted live televised musical show ever seen in Zimbabwe' (Sibanda, 2008). These galas were not without controversy. In the Matabeleland region, some leaders complained that ZANU-PF was abusing the late Joshua Nkomo's legacy for its political mileage through the so-called *Umdala Wethu Gala* when in the 1980s it had humiliated him by accusing him of wanting to topple the government (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 2009:962-963). In the Masvingo region, the venue for the 2001 Unity Gala, traditional leaders complained that political musical festivals desecrated the sacred Great Zimbabwe shrine where public access is not routinely granted without adhering to strict religious ritual protocols and practices. Chief Murinye complained thus:

How could the government allow a gala to be held at the Great Zimbabwe monument? You can't organise a function at a sacred place and have drunken youths and promiscuous elders coming to engage in sexual activities and to defecate [in] the shrine. Has anything like that happened in our history? They even allowed musicians to come and play their guitars. These instruments have not been played at the shrine since the monuments were constructed (quoted in Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 2009:961).

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems (2009), the regime deflated this criticism by arguing that there was no need to seek permission from local Chiefs to stage a national event, at a national monument. This defence seemed to contradict the regime's rhetoric of the need to promote traditional culture because it disempowered traditional institutions and their leadership that are the embodiment of that imagined culture. The abrogation of the autonomy and powers of traditional leadership to score political goals was also replicated in the realm of modern state institutions, about which more is discussed below.

4.2.1.1.3 *Institutional paralysis*

Gramsci's concept of hegemony is realised in two ways, which relates to the symbiotic relationship between agents and structures. The first aspect relates to the role of civil society as social agents in the actual praxis of hegemony. In the context of Zimbabwe, and within the hegemonic bloc for instance, this function was carried out by the war veterans and 'patriotic intellectuals'. The second aspect relates to the role of institutional structures as the apparatus of hegemony of the ruling classes that lends support and stabilises the hegemonic project (Gramsci, 1971:258-9). This section discusses the second aspect. The function of institutional structures in the struggle for hegemony takes place in the realm of 'political society', but in ways that appears to shift power from 'political society' (i.e., state) to 'civil society' by a deliberate creation of a situation of institutional paralysis. The institutional structures that are discussed here are the state security institutions (e.g. the police, the army and secret intelligence), the judiciary and to some extent the pliant role of civil servants at both local tier and central tier government. In the face of criticism from local and external social actors against the fast-track land reform programme and pressure for democratisation, the state opted to prioritise what analysts call 'high politics' (i.e., state security) at the expense of 'low politics' (i.e., human security) (Doig, 2000:22; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003:100). In other words, the regime became focused on its political survival at the expense of human rights and the rule of law.

The purging of the judiciary

The first process towards creating institutional paralysis involved undermining the independence of the judiciary. At the onset of the farm invasions by war veterans, the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) sought legal protection from the High Court by submitting an application to have the farm invasions declared illegal. On March 17, 2000, Justice Paddington Garwe ruled in favour of the CFU and ordered war veterans and other squatters to vacate farms within twenty four hours of his ruling. The police, through the Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri, were ordered to enforce the court order. However,

the police appealed against the High Court order on the basis that they had inadequate resources to enforce it and that the land issue was a political issue that needed politicians to solve it (Raath, 2000; *BBC News Africa*, 2000a). The government, through the then Attorney General Patrick Chinamasa, also challenged the High Court ruling on the basis that the situation was volatile and posed security threats were the police to intervene (*BBC News Africa*, 2000b). On April 10, 2000, Justice Moses Chinhengo dismissed the Police Commissioner's appeal and upheld Garwe's earlier ruling.

Further police inaction led the CFU to take the case to the Supreme Court (the final court of appeal), which also ruled on two occasions (November 10, 2000 and December 21, 2000) that the farm invasions were unconstitutional and violated property rights provisions as enshrined in the Constitution. Minister of Justice Patrick Chinamasa accused judges of behaving like 'unguided missiles' (quoted in *Zimbabwesituation.com*, 2004) and Minister of Information and Publicity Professor Jonathan Moyo criticised High Court judges and charged that they applied the laws made by the parliament of an independent Zimbabwe as if they were written by a Rhodesian legislature. Robert Mugabe weighed in and attacked the two black judges for having '[...] drank tea with whites' (*The Herald*, 2001a) and hence the ruling that protected the interests of 'white racist commercial farmers' (Martin, 2006:384). Furthermore Robert Mugabe attacked the courts for issuing orders 'to the government like confetti' and for vainly trying to solve a political issue (land) through laws of trespass (Mugabe, 2000:110; Norman, 2004:121).

However, responding to these attacks the International Bar Association (IBA) argued that if land was a political issue then the correct political method to solve it was to enact laws (IBA, 2001:44). The IBA further argued: 'The notion that the laws and judgements of the courts of an independent Zimbabwe can be ignored because of the injustices of pre-independence days is dangerous and misguided' (IBA,

2001:2). The outbursts against judges by the President and his ministers led to the restructuring of the judiciary in order to bring it under the direct control of the regime. In his justification of the political purging of the judiciary, especially of White judges, Minister of Justice Patrick Chinamasa argued that their continued presence gave a false impression that Zimbabwe was 'an European and not an African country' (*The Herald*, 2001b). Furthermore, Chinamasa rhetorically asked: '[How] can personnel so high up in the pecking order of a regime grounded in a racist grundnorm faithfully serve a democratic state?' (quoted in IBA, 2001:55). The political process of reshuffling the judiciary was 'formally' implemented when the ZANU-PF dominated Parliament passed a vote of no confidence in the Supreme Court judges and a majority were either forced into early retirement or resigned following threats to their lives¹³. Officers of the lower courts such as the magistrates and prosecutors were also put under pressure to toe the regime's political line. In smaller towns, there were several reports of court officials being attacked and threatened by war veterans, politicians and ZANU-PF supporters. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2006:15) argues that the purging of the judiciary by the regime was part of the 'indigenisation of institutions' in line with the discourse of nativism and afro-radicalism.

Partisan policing

Crucially the regime ordered the police to ignore the High Court orders requiring it to evict war veterans and other landless peasants from farms. President Robert Mugabe argued: 'I know there is an expectation that I will say to the war veterans "Get off the land". I will not say or do that. There is no policeman who is going there. We have said "no". If the British have their own police they must send them there. Ours are not going to go there' (quoted in Meredith, 2002:172). Through this utterance, Robert Mugabe was directly overruling his then Minister of Home Affairs Dumiso Dabengwa who had

¹³ Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay was forced to resign in March 2001; Justice Michael Gillespie went into exile following threats to his life. Justice Ismael Chatikobo who had ruled in favour of Capital Radio, which challenged the monopoly of ZBC retired; Justice Sandra Mungwira fled into exile after acquitting MDC activists charged for murder; Justice Michael Mujuru fled into exile and resigned by fax after ruling in favour of the banned *Daily News*; Justice Ahmed Ibrahim, James Devittie and Nick McNally also fled the country after accusing the government of undermining the judiciary (Human Rights Watch, 2008).

issued a directive that the police should remove war veterans from the farms (Norman, 2004:118). Thus from 2000, the police were literally disempowered from acting against war veterans and ZANU-PF supporters in general. In cases where the police acted professionally and arrested war veterans or ZANU-PF supporters, the officers concerned were either subjected to beatings by war veterans (Norman, 2004:120) or were demoted and/or transferred to other work stations (IBA, 2007:12).

In order to avoid political prosecutions, junior police officers religiously conducted policing duties in a partisan way. Several human rights reports chronicle the partisan nature of the conduct of Zimbabwe's police force (see IBA, 2007). In some of the reports by human rights organisations, the police and even the army are implicated in human rights violations and abuses directed at opposition supporters and civil society activists. In 2002, an ICG report lamented what it called a systematic politicisation and de-professionalisation of state security institutions by ZANU-PF to the extent that '[...] it would take time and courage for more independent elements with integrity to reassert themselves' (ICG, 2002:8). The regime weakened state institutions in so far as they were expected to deal with the lawless activities of war veterans, but strengthened the same institutions in so far they were expected to lend support and stabilise the regime's hegemonic project.

Corruption and the patronising of policy spaces

One of the consequences of the regime's deliberate promotion of institutional paralysis in post-2000 Zimbabwe is the patronisation of policy space within the state and in particular around the person-head of Robert Mugabe. It became hard for non-state actors that were perceived to be anti-government to easily access policy spaces. The public's trust of public institutions fell dramatically (Doig, 2006). Through the land reform programme, party loyalists were rewarded with farms and those who worked in support of the state's sponsored constitution draft in 2000 and later in defence of the party were

rewarded with ministerial and lucrative civil servant positions. This patron-client relationship was manifested in the drumming up of political support and idolisation of Mugabe as a pan-Africanist par excellence. In eulogising the ZANU-PF's revolutionary credentials and commandist management of the economy, the status quo for personal aggrandizement was zealously defended by party loyalists (see Lemarchand and Legg, 2000:35; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997). Williams argues;

Politicians learn to build support among followers by tending to their specific and partial needs. They rise in party hierarchies by building networks, exchanging favours, lending and withholding support, rewarding supporters and punishing enemies, and by manoeuvring for tactical advantage over political opponents and rivals. They acquire disciples, food soldiers, and fair-weather friends and they learn that party loyalty and cohesion takes precedence over ideological purity and personal integrity. The rules of politics are neither identical with nor necessarily consistent with the ethical standards and codes of conduct which emanate from anti-corruption commissions (Williams, 2000:145).

From 2000, ZANU-PF loyalists defended the regime by beating, torturing, and killing opposition and civic activists. The situation was further compounded by what Goredema (2000) calls the 'legislated context of corruption' in Zimbabwe. Goredema argues that Zimbabwe's anti-corruption laws (and other laws discussed above) are for purposes of political expediency and nepotism annulled and undermined by the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act that gives Mugabe overreaching powers to 'rule by decree to the exclusion of parliament' (Goredema, 2000:2). Through the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act, the regime's supporters and war veterans who embarked on political motivated violence and looted property were pardoned and acquitted. Patronising policy spaces in order to suppress voices of dissent has proved an antithesis to ZANU (PF)'s revolution to build a sovereign and patriotic nation.

The case of Zimbabwe clearly demonstrates a revolution that fails to embrace the governance and human rights agenda (see Mamdani, 1990:364). Most civil society respondents decried the

patronisation of policy space in post-2000 arguing it squeezed out and lessened civil society's influence on policies. According to one respondent 'There has to be a depoliticisation of the political process and maybe a decriminalisation of politics [because] politics does not need to be dirty or dangerous. It should not be criminal that one has decided to be political. If we could get to that stage of political development maybe that would make the work of NGOs to influence policy much easier' (Interview 6, 2008). Another respondent argued, 'What is most important is to democratise the political space. Political space needs to be democratised and to reduce the suspicions and tensions between the state and civil society' (Interview 11, 2008). The remainder of the chapter discusses how counter-hegemonic civil society attempted to depoliticise and decriminalise the practice of politics in post-2000 Zimbabwe.

4.2.2 Counter-hegemonic civil society and discursive disarticulation

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate how a militant counter-hegemonic civil society including organisations such as the NCA, CCZ, ZCTU, ZESN, NANGO, among others emerged primarily to transform the hegemonic social order of the state by rearticulating it in accordance to its vision of a new social order (Mouffe, 1979:193). This resistance to state hegemony and its view of a ZANU-PF monolithic social order took many forms: there was a creation of a counter-historic bloc around the opposition MDC and governance and human rights civil society that sought to compel society to consent to the 'common sense' of a counter ideology (i.e., liberal democracy) that is rooted in 'a people-driven constitution', respect for property rights, human rights and the rule of law. Furthermore, the process of rearticulation sought to demystify the discourse of ZANU-PF nationalism as a type of an 'exhausted nationalism' (Bond and Manyanya, 1997). The land reform exercise was criticised, not because of its unimportance, but that in the face of ZANU-PF's increased unpopularity it became a political tool to retain power. There was also a strategy to delegitimise the state through campaigning and supporting sanctions against key figures of the regime, embarking on demonstrations and job 'stay

aways', and exposing human rights abuses by the state to the international community. Some of these strategies were not unproblematic. Street demonstrations for instance were ruthlessly quashed by the police, further straining state-civil society relations and even dividing civil society over their appropriateness as strategies to engage the state. Likewise the process of discourse disarticulation, especially of land reform, as section 4.3 below shows, has raised questions about the disconnect that exists between urban based civil society groups and rural based civil society groups or social movements and therefore one of the challenges of organising the 'collective will' to resist state hegemony.

4.2.2.1 Discourse and forms of resistance

4.2.2.1.1 *Constitutional discourse*

The post-2000 era in Zimbabwe, is marked by intense 'struggle over law' (Hunt, 1990:316), pitting counter-hegemonic social forces against the state. The constitutional discourse as a counter-hegemonic strategy in Zimbabwe started in the mid-1990s and culminated in a referendum in February, 2000. It then raged on during the course of the Zimbabwe crisis, and is now at the centre of the political reform processes under the coalition government that came into effect in 2009. The discourse on a 'people-driven' constitution in Zimbabwe is informed by the classical debate on whether law left at the whims of the state (ruling elites) is promotive or inhibitive of a democratic society. The 'struggle over law', Hunt argues, aims to make 'subordinate classes to become "legislators" by achieving authoritative, norm-creating capacity' (Hunt, 1990:316). Within the Zimbabwe discourse, especially among civil society, the term 'people-driven constitution' has become the differentiating principle between those, on the one hand, who seek to legitimate the continuation of the hegemonic status quo and those who seek to democratically transform the status quo, on the other hand.

In his response to the classical debate on the place of law, Gramsci located the law, just as he did with hegemony, at the intersection of state and civil society. Hunt argues this intermediate place of law in the following way:

Law combines coercion and consent or persuasion. Law is closely tied to the processes of securing an equilibrium between 'state' and 'civil society'; on the one hand, law lends authoritative legitimations to the norms and projects through which the state seeks to govern civil society; but, on the other hand, law has a degree of responsiveness to civil society where state law provides a facilitative framework for private transactions and those dimensions of public law which provide mechanisms of public accountability and surveillance (Hunt, 1990:316).

Beginning in the 1990s – spurred on by the end of the Cold War and the end of the racist apartheid regime in South Africa in 1994 – the constitutional discourse counter-hegemonic strategy was promoted for purposes of reforming or creating new institutions (economic and political) in sub-Saharan Africa that are responsive and conducive for economic development and democratisation. Capturing this thinking, John Mbaku argued 'These institutions will form the basis for the social arrangements within which Africans will operate' (Mbaku, 1996:40). According to Mbaku a well grounded constitutional discourse was to be the prerequisite for this newly found impetus for democratisation: 'Although elections appear to be heralded as an indication of a successful effort at democratisation, it should be emphasised that a critical factor in any effective transition to democracy is constitutional discourse and the design of an efficient and self-enforcing constitution' (Mbaku, 1996:41).

The constitutional discourse encompasses broad antecedent issues within its articulated realm. These issues include, *inter alia* constitutionalism, rule of law, human rights, electoral politics and participatory politics. Within the counter-hegemonic bloc the constitutional discourse therefore typifies the long and contestable nature of Zimbabwe's governance question. Beginning from the colonial era through the 1980s and 1990s, the writing of the constitution of Zimbabwe has always been dominated by elites

within the state prism. As Lloyd Sachikonye argues, the independence constitution negotiated at the Lancaster House in 1979 that ended the protracted war of liberation was a product of 'a colonial power and representatives of the colonised peoples' (Sachikonye, 2004a:175). In other words, as discussed in section 4.2.1.1 above, the postcolonial constitutional dispensation reflected class compromises – of an economic and political nature – between the white settler- and African nationalist elites (see Mandaza, 1986). In 1980, whites had their economic privileges – in particular ownership of means of production such as land – constitutionally entrenched whilst African nationalist elites had power peacefully transferred to them. The structural setup created the 'enclave dual economy' that was discussed above, which one respondent argued was the basis of ZANU-PF's post- 2000's radicalised *Chimurenga* politics:

The current crisis is emanating from the failure by the government to address the enclave of the dual economy that we inherited at independence. So [our solution template must begin] by acknowledging that we have a structural challenge to deal with. [...O]ur policies [must] deal with the structural distortions [...of] a small sector that was favoured, the formal sector, at the expense of the people in the non-formal sector, about 80% of population at independence that were not included in the development process (Interview 11, 2008).

The relevance of the above historical trajectory for this discussion is that the stability of that enclave dual economy and the peaceful transfer of power to a ZANU-PF-led government was the cornerstone upon which the project of nation-building and the discourses of peace and reconciliation were promulgated. However, the failure of this enclave economy to address issues of justice and equity pertaining, but not limited, to land redistribution and the simultaneous state rhetoric on human rights, truth, justice and reconciliation pertaining, but not limited, to the post independence disturbances in Matabeleland, increased state hegemony and the repressive responses to workers' industrial actions. Yet in the framing of the constitutional discourse in post-2000, the counter-hegemonic social forces focused on the governance symptoms that off shoot from the disintegration of the enclave dual economy. Kagoro (2004a:236) argues that the constitutional discourse arose from a belief by civil

society that Zimbabwe's crisis of governance was rooted in the inequitable constitutional settlement of 1979. Thus, the constitutional movement that emerged in 1997, being led by the NCA and the resultant constitutional referendum in 2000, aimed at revisiting the issues of national reconciliation, truth and justice that were overlooked in 1980. Furthermore, the movement aimed to address the '[...] flawed constitution that does not make government account for its actions to the majority of the citizens' (Interview 16, 2008).

The NCA was formed on a non partisan political principle although its top leadership, as Kagoro (2004a) argues, believed a mutation of the movement into an alternative opposition political party to wrestle state power from ZANU-PF would realistically pave way for a fuller address of the governance conundrum. It is clear therefore that the birth of the constitutional movement as a counter-hegemonic strategy was also linked to a 'new' thinking about the possibilities of changing the ZANU-PF regime. Thus the discussion of the constitutional counter-hegemonic strategy should of necessity lead us to unpack the concept of 'regime change'. In present day Zimbabwe, regime change has two pronged meanings that are reflective of the polarisation between the contesting social forces. The first strand,

[...] sees the issue of regime change as simply meaning changing or replacement of ZANU-PF by a different political group with a complete different set of [ideological] orientations. In this case the MDC. So the government, by virtue of enjoying monopoly of the media, use that to communicate to the ordinary people that the MDC is an agent of regime change and they don't want to see ZANU-PF and Mugabe. These people have been portrayed as symbols of independence, symbols of total empowerment and sovereignty. And therefore any force that will come and tell them how to conduct the business of governance will automatically be construed as an enemy, not an opponent but an enemy (Interview 16, 2008).

The second strand is that,

The idea is not to bring about regime change in the sense of removing government but to see to it that the government improves the way it governs. That's what we mean by regime change. Regime is simply a set of rules of how to conduct business. To say this is our regime is to say this is our way of doing business. It's not a person, neither is it an institution. But here it has

been constructed for propaganda purposes as an institution and a person and, in this case, Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF. [Within the counter-hegemonic bloc, a set of rules] are what is called regime. This is why the opposition says *Chinja Maitiro* (change how you do things). They are not saying *Chinja vanhu vanoita* (change the people) or *Chinja* institution *inoita* (change the institution). No. Its *maitiro*, how you do things¹⁴ (Interview 16, 2008).

Counter-hegemonic civil society uses both strands of the meaning of 'regime change' to frame the discourse around constitutional reforms in Zimbabwe. This double usage of the constitutional discourse in the framing of counter-hegemonic strategy reflects the uneasiness and difficulties faced by civil society to ride the line of an 'apolitical civil society' within both the dictates of the neo-liberal framework that promotes civil society in the country and the realities of the conflictual and polarised nature of the way Zimbabweans articulate and practice politics. The constitutional discursive strategy as a demand for a set of rules that governs the democratic practice of politics in Zimbabwe, i.e. the second strand of regime change, is well articulated in the civil society People's Charter document of February 2008. The People's Charter is a document produced by at least forty civil society organisations, who met at the People's Convention on the 9th of February 2008, to frame a roadmap 'that demonstrates the way in which the people of Zimbabwe would want to be governed' (Dube, 2008:2). The Charter has seven themes, namely, the political environment, elections, constitutional reform, national economy and social welfare, national value system, gender and youth. According to the People's Charter,

[...] a new constitution of Zimbabwe must be produced by a people-driven, participatory process and must in it guarantee:-

- a) That the Republic of Zimbabwe shall be a democracy, with separation of powers, a justiciable Bill of Rights that recognises civil, political, social, economic, cultural and environmental rights;
- b) Devolution of government authority to provinces and to local government level;
- c) A multi-party system of democratic government based on universal suffrage and regular free and fair elections and the right to recall public officials;
- d) The right to citizenship for any person born in Zimbabwe. Birth certificates, national identity documents and passports shall be easily available for all citizens;

¹⁴ This definition of "regime change" however needs further qualification, especially when applied to competition for political power and the offices of power by political parties. The opposition parties are in direct competition with the ruling party for the structures of power in their totality. That is, they seek to change both the actors and the organising institutions that put the incumbent actors in control of power.

- e) A credible and fair election management body and process;
- f) An independent, impartial and competent judiciary;
- g) The protection of labour rights and the right to informal trade;
- h) The protection and promotion of the rights of people living with disabilities;
- i) Independent and impartial commissions which deal with gender equality, land, elections, human rights and social justice;
- j) An impartial state security apparatus (People's Charter, 2008).

As already discussed above, a number, if not all, of these sets of rules have been negated by the regime in a context of a radicalised nationalism, nativist cultural nationalism and a systemic paralysis of institutions in ways that strengthened the regime's continued hold on power. Since 2000, there has been four amendments to the constitution all of which, in one way or the other, favour the policy positions and structural powers of ZANU-PF against those of the opposition. Constitutional Amendment Act (No.16) of April 2000 removed guarantees for compensation to white commercial farmers whose farms had been compulsorily acquired. Constitutional Amendment Act (No.17) of September 2005 vested the ownership of acquired agricultural land in the state. It also barred the courts from entertaining litigation cases against acquired farms. It also reintroduced the Senate, which led to the split of the MDC into two factions after the leadership disagreed over whether to participate or not in the Senatorial elections. Constitutional Amendment Act (No.19) of 2009 facilitated the formation of a coalition government after the controversial and violent 2008 elections.

Amendments No.16 and No.17 were roundly criticised by civil society for violating '[...] Zimbabwe's international law obligations, most immediately through its membership of the African Union. [For abrogating...] constitutionalism and elevat[ing] the fiat of the executive and legislature over the entrenched core provisions of the Constitution [and for certifying] the existence of a totalitarian state' (unnamed report cited in Gubbay, 2009). Constitutional Amendment Act (No. 18) was passed in September 2007. It was unanimously endorsed by both the MDC and ZANU-PF parliamentarians. It

formalised the harmonisation of Parliamentary and Presidential elections, later to be held in 2008. Additionally, it provided for the loosening of repressive laws in accordance with acceptable democratic norms. To the chagrin of the counter-hegemonic civil society organisations such as for example the NCA, NANGO, CCZ and the ZCTU, Amendment No.18 called for the rewriting of a new 'people-driven' constitution, only after the harmonised elections. On this occasion, civil society criticised both ZANU-PF and the two MDC factions. ZANU-PF was criticised for entrenching its hegemonic project, and the MDCs were accused 'of opportunism' (Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), 2008) and betraying the struggle for a democratic social change. Amendment No.18 was also criticised for not addressing the '[...] substantive issues of democratising the structures and institutions needed to govern the country' (Ruhanya, 2008:14).

The Amendment (No.18) however opened fractures between social forces in the counter-hegemonic bloc. Several leaders of civil society organisations announced that they were either 'severing ties with MDC over going to bed with ZANU-PF' (Lovemore Madhuku cited in IWPR, 2007) or that 'it will be difficult to work with them [MDC] in the future' (Arnold Tsunga cited in IWPR, 2007). Professor Welshman Ncube, the Secretary General of the MDC, however objected to the accusations by civil society and accused civil society of running the risk of being constitutional fundamentalists. Ncube argued that the principles against unilateral and piecemeal amendments of the constitution '[...] were conceptualised, conceived and adopted [at the formation of NCA], not to be verses in the Bible...I despair today when I read and hear the attempt to translate these principles into some fundamentalist decrees which, we are told, are to be regarded as completely sacrosanct' (*Newzimbabwe.com*, 2007a). Whilst MDC and ZANU-PF Parliamentarians exchanged rare 'conciliatory' signals in Parliament, Mugabe was telling the world that the MDC and civil society were still surrogate forces who were 'placing [themselves] in the role of the Zimbabwean people in whose collective will democracy places the right to define and change regimes' (*Newzimbabwe.com*, 2007b).

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that on the deployment of the constitutional discourse as a counter-hegemonic strategy to effect regime change (of the second strand), civil society are prepared to be antagonistic to their opposition allies. During the interviews, a respondent with the NCA further lamented what he called MDC's betrayal of its civil society friends: 'But let me quickly point out that we have not always received good news from the MDC. The issue of Amendment No.18 I think points to a scenario in which the MDC engaged in an inconsistent approach towards constitutionalism. The fact that they went ahead to co-sponsor the Constitutional Amendment No. 18 with ZANU-PF points to the betrayal of the principles that drives the NCA' (Interview 14, 2008). The opposition party defended Constitutional Amendment No.18 as a 'confidence building measure' in the context of the political parties' dialogue that was being mediated by former South African President, Thabo Mbeki (*Newzimbabwe.com*, 2007).

The constitutional discourse as a counter-hegemonic strategy that seeks to change not only the leadership within ZANU-PF, but also to remove ZANU-PF from power all together, has its natural correlation from the historical fact that the MDC opposition party was born out of civic struggles for social change (Sithole, 2001:165). As one respondent argued, 'A democratic movement [i.e. the constitutional movement] should give birth to other movements [i.e. the MDC party] that should champion for democracy' (Interview 14, 2008). Thus since 2000, civil society positions on several governance issues, including the rhetoric demands for a 'people-driven' constitution, has been in convergence with that of the opposition. Although the MDC's support of Constitutional Amendment No.18 angered its civil society allies, during the interviews a civil society activist respondent argued that 'the MDC is a better devil' (Interview 14, 2008). On the role of civil society during Zimbabwe's electoral politics, as chapter 5 shows, civil society has also shown a bias towards the MDC, and sometimes explicitly campaigns or mobilises the electorate on behalf of the opposition. For instance, in the run up

to the 2008 Harmonised Elections, the NCA urged its 'members to go and vote for the Presidential candidature of the MDC' (Interview 14, 2008).

In 2000, when the ZANU-PF regime agreed to a constitutional referendum, civil society and the MDC united in their campaign for the rejection of the government sponsored constitution draft, under the 'No Vote' campaign. ZANU-PF and the land movement campaigned for the 'Yes Vote' campaign and lost the referendum. Civil society rejected the draft constitution after objecting to the constitutional commission's composition, which it viewed as unrepresentative of all stakeholders¹⁵ (Sachikonye 2004a). Sara Rich Dorman (2003) argues however that civil society and opposition politicians were represented and that the outreach programme itself was inclusive and participative. Another reason for the rejection of the draft constitution was that it still entrenched ZANU-PF's hold on power. The people's views that were omitted are those that have a subtext to effect 'regime change' of the first strand defined above. In particular the commission's draft constitution retained the arbitrary powers bestowed upon the executive arm of government in general and on the person of Robert Mugabe in the specific. Sachikonye (2004a) argues that Mugabe's arbitrary leadership gives him powers to manipulate the electoral system, the constitution and public institutions to hang on to power, at the expense of democracy and stability. During the interviews, a civil society activist respondent argued: '[...] our argument as a country is that we are always saying we are a young democracy. But we are saying twenty eight years what young are we talking about? So it is the protection of either an individual or a political party and in terms of policy formulation this is where we have gone wrong as a country' (Interview 3, 2008).

¹⁵ On the issue of the representativeness and inclusiveness of the government sponsored Constitutional Commission, other commentators have argued that civil society have double standards because when the constitutional movement started in the mid-1990s it was not inclusive as it excluded the ruling party in the agenda setting processes for a new constitution (on this point see Hatchard, 2001:210).

ZANU-PF's reaction has predictably overemphasised the first usage of the constitutional discursive strategy by civil society, i.e. the one that has an element of removing, from power, the leadership of ZANU-PF and the party itself. It is important to note that, in a normal democracy, this first strand of the constitutional discursive counter-hegemonic strategy is not necessarily illegal. Civil society seeks to ensure that its opposition ally, the MDC, achieve this through fair and free elections, hence the advocacy for constitutional reforms that level the electoral playing field. An underlying civil society assumption, as argued above, is that the nationalist paradigm of development that ZANU-PF espouses has exhausted its emancipative relevance in today Zimbabwe. Stripped of its coercive apparatuses, ZANU-PF, the assumption goes, stands little chance of defeating the opposition. However, as a tool for propaganda against the MDC and civil society, ZANU-PF talks about the 'illegal' regime change agenda and belittles demands for a 'people-driven constitution' by civil society as coming from 'a small grouping of individuals sitting under a tree thinking they can come up with a constitution for Zimbabwe' (Eddison Zvobgo quoted in Sithole, 2001:163).

During the interviews an academic respondent but also working with a civil society organisation dismissed ZANU-PF's propagandistic interpretation of the notion of 'regime change' in the following way: 'It [regime change] is not imagined. It is real except that I don't understand why regime change in itself is supposed to be sinister. There is nothing wrong with regime change. ZANU PF itself is within the regime change agenda. The SADC negotiations that started in March last year [2007] there are for a regime change. There is regime change that is internal to the present regime itself. Changing the constitution embodies regime change. As long as you agree to deal with the issues of constitution or election you have agreed with the terms of regime change. The issue of illegal regime change needs to be dismissed as rhetoric' (Interview 17, 2008). The upshot of the contestation over constitutional reforms, as Sara Rich Dorman argues, is political polarisation:

After the referendum, Zimbabwe was deeply polarised ...From the politics of inclusion, Zimbabwe moved to a politics of exclusion. Coercion, backed up by the distribution of incentives to select groups, dominated the rules of the game. Those who were willing to be mobilised in defence of the regime were rewarded with land, contracts and employment. Individuals and groups that did not prove loyalty were excluded socially, politically and through violent attacks on their homes and work places (Dorman, 2003:863).

The post-2000 constitutional politics demonstrates the different priorities of actors in the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic blocs. For example, before the 2000 draft was put to a referendum, Mugabe described civil society's position on land as unintelligent and went on to use the presidential powers to force in the clause that paved the way for the compulsory acquisition of land without compensation (Hatchard, 2001:213). Thus from the perspective of the hegemonic social forces, constitutional reforms are necessary as a tool to transform the colonial inherited enclave dual economy. The counter-hegemonic social forces on the other hand have used the constitutional discourse to challenge state hegemony through exposing the fallacy inherent in the nationalist developmental paradigm. Through the constitutional discourse, civil society is unpacking on behalf of ordinary citizens, how state hegemony is maintained through institutions and laws that govern their daily lives. A civil society activist respondent argued for instance during the interviews that the idea of the constitutional discourse and linking it to human rights, democracy and governance was an attempt '[...] to influence policy decisions in terms of what would an ordinary person in Zimbabwe want, in terms of how they are governed and not necessarily how they are ruled and also their participation in a democratic society' (Interview 3, 2008).

The constitutional discourse counter-hegemonic strategy is not without shortcomings. The first problem is that it takes place within the context of a highly polarised political conflict between ZANU-PF and the MDC, which makes consensus difficult. Second, civil society has – since the 'No Vote' success – developed a strong Hegelian understanding of itself as standing in opposition to the state rather than

collaborating with the state in order to transform it (Gabriel, 2003:14). These fears were expressed by the state during the 2000 referendum when it accused civil society for confusing 'changing the government with changing the constitution' (Constitutional Commission's advert quoted in Dorman, 2003:855). Third, and this is a criticism also applicable to the human rights discourse (see below), the constitutional debate is dominated by urban elites and has a tendency to sidestep the social, economic and cultural aspirations of rural constituencies. In 2006, the Churches of Zimbabwe published *The Zimbabwe We Want* document as part of an initiative to bring antagonistic social forces to a negotiating table to chart a consensus on a national vision for the nation. In the document, the Churches also noted the glaring low status that is given to social, economic and cultural rights as compared to the high status of civil and political rights: 'The provisions of the constitution focus on justiciable rights i.e., political and civil rights and make no reference at all to social, economic and cultural rights which are currently non-justiciable. This is a weakness.' (Churches of Zimbabwe, 2006:26). The weakness of the overemphasis on civil and political rights in the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe, as pointed out by the Churches of Zimbabwe, is expressible in the canonisation of the human rights discourse as a counter-hegemonic strategy, which is discussed in the next section.

4.2.2.1.2 *The human rights discourse*

Closely related to the constitutional discourse (i.e., the 'struggle over law') as a site of counter-hegemonic contestation, is the deployment of rights based strategies in the struggle for social change in post-2000 Zimbabwe. This section outlines the contours of the human rights discourse as a counter-hegemonic strategy in post-2000 Zimbabwe, and also critically reflects on whether the 'old ground' from which this discourse is rooted has reformed enough to render the rights strategy facilitative of a social transformation that is of consequence to the peoples of the South. It is on the last argument, that the counter-hegemonic bloc led by the opposition MDC has had some of the sternest opposition from the

hegemonic historical bloc led by ZANU-PF. It was argued above (see chapter 2) that the success of the counter-hegemonic movement requires the construction of '[...] a new intellectual and moral order, and hence the need to develop more universal concepts and more refined and decisive ideological weapons' (Gramsci, 1971:388). In Zimbabwe, as is the case worldwide, the counter-hegemonic rights strategies exist as already constructed, refined in some form of a higher and universal moral order. The norms, values, processes and institutions that anchor the counter-hegemonic rights strategies have, as the immediate ancestry documents, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCPR), and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The counter-hegemonic forces in Zimbabwe have had only to import universally defined norms and values and moralise the extent to which these norms and values have been negated by an intransigent state. It is in this sense that Alan Hunt reminds us that '*all struggles commence on old ground*' (Hunt, 1990:324, emphasis in original). Individual countries voluntarily ratify and become signatories to the above mentioned treaties. In combination this variegated body of international and domestic law proscribe upon the state certain acceptable, supposedly universal, codes of conduct and practices of political power towards citizens. Makau wa Mutua summarises this prescriptive code of conduct for the state: 'The 'good' state controls its demonic proclivities by cleansing itself with, and internalising, human rights. The 'evil' state, on the other hand, expresses itself through an illiberal, anti-democratic, or other authoritarian culture. The redemption or salvation of the state is solely dependent on its submission to human rights norms. The state is the guarantor of human rights; it is also the target and *raison d'être* of human rights law' (Mutua, 2001:203; also 1997:67-68).

In Zimbabwe, the human rights movement and, along-side it, the constitutional movement became well organised and militant in the late-1990s onwards. This development of the human rights movement on the local body politics of Zimbabwe reflected an already ascending international phenomenon, which Louis Henkin acknowledged in the following terms: 'Ours is the age of rights. Human rights is the idea of our time, the only political moral idea that has received universal acceptance' (quoted in Steiner, 1991:917). It is upon the argument that the rights discourse carries universal acceptable norms and values that are facilitative of progressive social change that it is zealously promoted and championed (Mutau, 1997:68). Therefore, the price of the failure of the state to respect and guarantee the 'universal' human rights norms is local and international condemnation, often following massive production of human rights reports, which Mutua argues, albeit resentfully, as:

[...] a catalogue of abuses committed by the state against liberal values. It criticizes the state for departing from the civil and political obligations provided for in the major instruments. Its purpose is to shame the Third World state by pointing out the gulf between the state's conduct and internationally sanctioned civilised behaviour. This departure from good behaviour is stigmatised and used to paint the state either as a pariah or out-of-step with the rest of the civilised world (Mutua, 2001:224-225).

The deployment of the human rights counter-hegemonic strategy in Zimbabwe needs to be understood and appreciated in the context of the counter-historical forces' deconstruction (re-articulation) of the land reform as a political tool used by ZANU-PF to gain lost legitimacy and retain political power. The deconstruction of the state-led land redistribution programme within the counter-hegemonic historic bloc has two strands to it. The first strand, according to Lloyd Sachikonye, downgrades the significance of historical colonial past wrongs in favour of 'the sanctity of property rights and the 'rule of law'' (Sachikonye, 2004b:11). It therefore stands in direct confrontation with the position of the hegemonic historic bloc articulated by President Robert Mugabe when he argued that 'It makes absolute nonsense of our history as an African country that most of our arable and ranching land is still in the hands of our erstwhile coloniser while the majority of our peasant community still live like squatters in their God-given

land' (quoted in Meredith, 2002:121). The second strand of the counter-hegemonic bloc's deconstruction of land reform through the deployment of the human rights strategy attempts to merge the two radical positions drawn from the hegemonic and the counter-hegemonic historical blocs in ways that are sensitive to both the imperatives for 'social justice' and 'rule of law', respectively (Sachikonye, 2004b:12). The second strand, except when it is driven by groups that prefer 'principled engagement' (on strategies of engagement see page 165) with the state, such as the Institute of Agrarian Studies, is still biased towards the imperative of the civil and political rights.

Some commentators have argued that the prioritisation of human rights (civil and political rights), over and above the social and economic justice rights that the land reform programme aimed to address, has to do with the historical experiences of limited civil society participation in land policy advocacy in Southern Africa as a whole. According to Drimie and Mbaya (2001:11), civil society in the region has generally circumvented participating in land reform processes because of the political sensitiveness of the land issue. Helliker (2006:245) on the other hand emphasises 'organisational weaknesses rather than government[s] intransigence' to explain the limited participation by civil society in land reform processes. What is clear however is that following the regime's defeat during the February 2000 constitutional referendum the land issues became even more politicised. This argument was confirmed during the interviews by a respondent with the Institute for Agrarian Studies who noted:

Being a land and agrarian reform organisation and trying to influence policy in that area we discovered lack of civil society participation. That there are very few organisations that are engaged in policy (land and agrarian) and also that government, the state itself had sort of privatised or taken a very technocratic approach to land reform and the technocracy was not inclusive or opening up for non-state actors to participate to begin to influence the course of the land reform (Interview 13, 2008).

At different periods from 1980, civil society organisations focused largely on welfare, income and service projects, human rights, humanitarian relief, governance and constitutional reform (Makumbe

and Moyo, 2000b:3-6). These policy issues, Drimie and Mbaya (2001:9) argue were often de-linked from land reforms. The socio-economic rights problems tied to the land question, Moyo *et al* (2000:194) argue, are often treated as 'separate political economy issue[s] to be tackled by the government and not as problems for those dealing with basic welfare [or liberal democratic human rights]'.

In 1998, a donors conference on land reform was held in Harare to give the imperative to market-led, as opposed to state-led, land reforms. The conference kick-started Phase 2 of the land reform programme (LRRP2), and there was increased interest by civil society to participate in land policy processes (Mbaya, 2001:5). Through LRRP2's Complementary Approaches component, development NGOs partnered with the government to provide extension and training services, credit and marketing whilst governance NGOs oversaw transparency, accountability and democratic participation of everyone in the land reform process (Helliker, 2006:248). Perhaps the overly human rights moralism strand that dominates governance civics activities can also be located within this division of labour. The government's sudden shift from a market-led land reform strategy to a state-led (chaotic fast-track) strategy in 2000 reversed the political and policy space that civil society had gained in land policy processes. Partners became enemies. A respondent with the Zimbabwe Project Trust explained this sudden uninterest of civil society in land reform and the labelling of it as a political tool in the following way: '[In 1998] we saw a niche and we started reprogramming focusing on reproduction and training of new farmers. We changed focus again after 2000 because government were soon the sole key implementers and we could not find space in that and also the controversies around it. And because of the violence associated with it we did not want to be associated with that as well' (Interview 20, 2008).

It was as a result of the counter-hegemonic forces' disassociation from the regime's violent but supposedly emancipative politics that led to accusations that civil society were in an unholy alliance

with western imperialists to derail the realisation of the equal important social, economic and cultural rights. Equally, civil society accused ZANU PF of politicising the land question to rekindle its waning popularity and legitimacy. The state-civil society standoff, *vis-à-vis* land reform policy engagement, saw civil society mobilising around the liberal democracy discourse (Moyo, 2004a:16). The white commercial farmers elements within the counter-hegemonic bloc deployed the human rights discourse to advance the sanctity of property rights, whilst the black actors within the same bloc deployed the human rights discourse, instrumentally, to provide victims of electoral and other political motivated violence with institutional structures, norms and values aimed to protect their claim to civil and political rights. The rights discourse has helped to mobilise urban masses against the regime and as well as garner the international community's (western governments and their local constituencies) sympathy against the regime.

A sample of human rights reports on Zimbabwe by the counter-hegemonic civil society and international NGOs in post-2000 clearly shows a bias towards civil and political rights claims.¹⁶ As one civil society respondent with the Catholic for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe argued during an interview;

[...] government is on a warpath against innocent civilians just because they exercised the very rights which are enshrined in the constitution. The right to belong to a political party of your own choice. But today many lives have been lost for exercising that right. So for us it is a matter of concern and this is why we are making a lot of noise that we want to enjoy those rights. These rights are not given by the state but people are born with these rights. So we must not go and beg from the state for people to enjoy these rights [...]. Never, never will we ever go to beg (Interview 22, 2008).

¹⁶ For examples of reports on human rights violations or of the violation of liberal democratic norms in general produced by international NGOs see Human Rights Watch (2007), *Bashing Dissent: Escalating Violence and State Repression in Zimbabwe*; International Bar Association (2007), *Attacks on the Rule of Law*; Amnesty International (2007), *Violations of the Rights to Freedom of Association and Assembly*; Redress (2007), *Torture and Ill-Treatment*. On reports produced by local human rights NGOs see for example, Human Rights NGO Forum (2001), *Enforcing the Rule of Law in Zimbabwe*.

The 2008 civil society People's Charter that was noted above is, in essence, the strategic document of the human rights counter-hegemonic strategy. The Charter has seven themes, namely, the political environment, elections, constitutional reform, national economy and social welfare, national value system, gender and youth (People's Charter, 2008). Thus using the human rights discourse, civil society have decried the absence of the rule of law, political violence, lack of fundamental rights and freedoms (of expression, information, association and assembly) (MISA, 2007), the militarisation of state institutions (Rupiya, 2004; IBA, 2007), the uneven electoral landscape that favours ZANU-PF (ZESN, 2008), the indoctrination and use of youths to perpetrate violence and the dehumanisation through sexual violent acts on females (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2003).

On the national value system, civil society argues it should be based on the concept of *Ubuntu* (Humanness), with an emphasis on the 'humanity of every single individual' and not the humanity of a people as a collective community. The latter aspect would entail the right of a people to collectively seek self-determination. It is upon the imperative of the group right claims over individual right claims that ZANU-PF has accused the opposition and civil society of blindly championing the human rights discourse to preserve the economic interest of a few individuals, namely the white commercial farmers. During the interviews many respondents however disagreed. A respondent with NANGO argued: 'I think what we need to realise is that development is a rights issue. And if you are saying your rights must be trampled down in preference to direct development work, then you are not addressing it properly' (Interview 15, 2008). Another respondent outlined the primacy of civil and political rights this way:

[...] there is no way we can get out of a problem in a polarised society. There is no consensus on what is the problem; what is its source; how is it manifesting itself; what are the possible alternative solutions, and which is the best solution to the problem. Some people define the problem as purely political with economic, social and military consequences. Some will say the problem is economic. But we have tried to come up with economic programs or policies, and less political programs or policies, and the situation has not ameliorated. If anything the

situation has worsened, critically pointing the undeniable fact that those who are discussing the economic question in Zimbabwe are discussing the wrong question. The question that they are supposed to be discussing is the political question, which is inevitable and necessary in our circumstances (Interview 16, 2008).¹⁷

It was pointed out above that there are two strands in the manner of the deployment of the human rights counter hegemonic strategy in present Zimbabwe. The group of social forces that deploy the second strand of rights strategies attempt to balance the imperatives of redistributive justice (as espoused by the hegemonic bloc) and the imperatives of civil and political rights, i.e., rule of law (as espoused by the counter-hegemonic bloc). During the interviews, a respondent with the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) articulated this approach this way:

ZIMCODD basically works in the area of second generation rights as a civil society organisation. [...] we are part of a broader global network that fight for social and economic justice. We use a Rights Based Approach but our approach is such that our main point of entry is second generational rights which are socio-economic and cultural rights. [...] The nutshell is that socio-economic rights are part of human rights. So we then locate ourselves within the broader context of pro-democracy movement in Zimbabwe. That as others are pushing for first generation human rights, for example the writing of a people-driven constitution, others are ordinarily human rights defenders standing up to those whose rights are being abused. We then connect with those and we make the circle for the struggle for human rights a bit more complete in terms of linking your socio-economic rights to your political rights. Not so many people do it as a single organisation tackling all these issues (Interview 4, 2008).

The footprints of this strategy are quite evident in the civil society People's Charter of 2008. For example, theme number four of the Charter, i.e. national economy and social welfare, notes that '[...] our national economy belongs to the people of Zimbabwe and must serve as a mechanism through which everyone shall be equally guaranteed the rights to dignity, economic and social justice [...]'. One of the principles for the realisation of these rights is that the people of Zimbabwe have a right 'to refuse

¹⁷ See also Masipula Sithole (1998) 'Politics or Economy: Which Comes First?' in *Zimbabwe's Public Eye: Political Essays*. This publication is a collection of opinion political articles by Sithole, which he initially penned for *The Financial Gazette* newspaper. Sithole remarks: 'Before you call me "Economy, Stupid", hear what I have to say on the primacy of the constitution – the primacy of politics. I know "starving people don't eat constitutions"! But, please (ndapota), don't give me that. People who are misgoverned and are, at the same time, starving are even worse off. [...] This is why Clinton could say "It's the Economy, Stupid" and win an election without being first sent to rusticate in prison or detention ... for calling the vice-president "stupid"! (1998:43-44).

payment of any odious debt accrued by a dictatorial government'. A ZIMCODD respondent reiterated this principle during the interview: 'We use debt as an entry point to deal with issues of development. [...there is] a case that its immoral for people to starve in order for government to repay a debt, part of which might be illegitimate, in the sense that it could have been borrowed on behalf of the people but not necessarily for the benefit of the people' (Interview 4, 2008). Also of importance is that in the People's Charter social and economic rights are also recognised, alongside civil and political rights, as fundamental principles to guide a new people-driven constitution (People's Charter, 2008).

Before I turn to discuss the critique of the human rights discourse, it is important to acknowledge that gross human rights violations and abuses were carried out by the state and its supportive social forces. According to a number of respondents, therefore, the gross human rights violations obliterated conditions 'conducive for a neutral civil society' (Interview 14, 2008). The media blitz on the status of human rights, therefore, was necessary for catalysing masses against the regime and for drawing the attention of the international community to the crisis. One of the positives to come out of using the human rights discourse to resist hegemony was the SADC coordinated dialogue that gave birth to the coalition government in 2009. There is also a case to make that the media blitz on human rights violations that aimed at amplifying the illegitimacy of the regime kept donors interested and in a sense assisted in funding advocacy programmes by the counter-hegemonic bloc. From the perspective of the land question, a criticism of the human rights strategy is that it abstracts civic groups (especially the urban based ones) from constructive policy engagement with the state. During the early stages of the fast-track land reform programme civil society were criticised for over focusing on governance advocacy, especially as it relates to the civil and political rights and the rule of law, to the point of negating campaigning for land ownership rights for farm workers displaced and retrenched as a result of the land invasions (Moyo *et al.*, 2000; Moyo, 2004a). As a result, the human rights counter-hegemonic strategy became partly an additional centre of conflict and partly a source of solution.

Makau wa Mutua's (2001) critique of the human rights discourse is important in illustrating how rights became a site of conflict in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Mutua's criticism of the human rights discourse starts with damning what he terms its subtext 'savages-victims-saviors metaphor' (Mutua, 2001:201). The savage commits deplorable crimes that are a negation of humanity. From the conventional international human rights law perspective, Mutua (2001:220) argues, the state is the classic savage, a predator that must be contained. Accordingly, therefore, states become savage when they push civil society out of the political space (John Keane 1988 cited in Mutua, 2001). The victim of the savage is '[...] a powerless, helpless innocent whose naturalist attributes have been negated by the primitive and offensive actions of the state or the cultural foundation of the state' (Mutua, 2001:2003). The rescue plan for the victim is political democracy and efficient and accountable institutions of governance. The third dimension 'is the savior or the redeemer, the good angel who protects, vindicates, civilises, restrains, and safeguards'. This savior, Mutua further argues is freedom from the tyranny of the state that allows people to create a better society based on the values contained in the human rights corpus. Whilst these values are streamlined to the Third World through global institutional structures such as the United Nations, INGOs, western governments, etc., Mutua argues '[...] these institutions are merely fronts. The savior is ultimately a set of culturally based norms and practices that inhere in liberal thought and philosophy' (Mutua, 2001:204).

The explanatory power of Mutua's critique of the human rights discourse for the Zimbabwe crisis is that the regime reacted to the label that it was a savage, part of the family of the George Bush's 'axis of evil', by cracking down all anti-state sentiments, ironically in the comfort zone of the fact that the same international human rights covenants, which it abrogated, protected it from external interference by the international community (see Gabriel, 2003:14). The deployment of the human rights counter-hegemonic strategy by civil society therefore fulfils the victim's expected role in the narrative of the human rights corpus and discourse. The savior dimension is a critique directed at the western origins of

the mainstream human rights discourse and, by implication that it is racialised. As Mamdani argues, 'Confronted by a deracialised state, racism not only receded into civil society but also defended itself in the language of individual rights and institutional autonomy' (cited in Nkiwane, 2001:285). Mamdani further argues that the human rights discourse protects racialised privileges by separating the discourse of rights from the discourse of justice (quoted in Nkiwane, 2001:285).

Thus alongside the support for emancipative politics, a critique of the structural makeup of Southern African states was championed by social actors aligned or sympathetic to ZANU-PF. At the core of the argument is that liberal rights discourse freeze structural inequalities in postcolonial societies. For example, Tandeka Nkiwane argues, with regards to post-apartheid South Africa that:

If apartheid is understood, as the liberal discourse would have us believe, as the denial of individual civil rights, then the restoration of these rights the legislative elimination of discrimination would points towards a remedy. If, on the other hand, apartheid is understood as a denial of collective socio-economic and political justice, then a remedy would of necessity need to examine the redress of these collective legacies. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) [...] identified the individual *perpetrators* of apartheid abuse, but failed to identify the collective *beneficiaries* of apartheid, which may be a more important question (Nkiwane, 2001:285, emphasis in original).

Ibrahim Gassama concurs and argues, again with reference to South Africa that:

[...] rights can be deployed to protect the powerful and the status quo just as easily as they can be wielded to advance the interests of the weak and excluded. The power of this observation should be increasingly apparent to rights activists in South Africa. It is not altogether surprising that even as the attainment of political participation rights by blacks in South Africa is celebrated, rights-rhetoric is being successfully deployed to protect the economic status quo – the private property rights – of the white minority in the country (quoted in Mutau, 1997:68-69).

With regard to Zimbabwe, Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros argue:

Any formulation of a strategy and tactics must take into account the authoritarianism that pervades peripheral capitalism. In the case of Zimbabwe today, civil space remains highly

constrained and, should it re-open, will remain weak and conditional. This 'halfway house' between authoritarianism and democracy warrants neither the clandestine and conspiratorial tactics that Lenin, for example, outlined for Czarist Russia nor the socio-democratic articulation of interests prevailing in western democracies which, based on established political parties and trade unions, view civil space as relatively secure and sufficient for political contestation. The articulation of working-class interests in the conditions of peripheral capitalism must adopt a consciously *instrumental* view of civil space employing it for two tasks: to build strong organisational roots that can withstand periodic assault, or 'decapitation' and to confront the state in pursuit of deep and uninterrupted structural reforms. In this sense, working-class organisation must operate on the 'edges' of constitutionality (Moyo and Yeros, 2007:118, emphasis in original).

On Southern Africa as a whole, Michael Neocosmos argues:

[...] the history of liberation and democratisation in Southern Africa cannot be a history of anything but a history of social and political transformation. [...] Rights discourse reduced democratisation to changing legislation and to the introduction of formal democratic procedures: changes took place at the level of institutions, but not at the level of society. [...] The human rights discourse] has major difficulties in addressing collective rights and is quite incapable of confronting *social* grievances (Neocosmos, 2002: 6, 8, emphasis in original).

In the conclusion to this chapter I shall return to address the extremes of the nationalist movement and the extremes of the democratic movement. In the meanwhile it shall suffice here to note that at the beginning of the Zimbabwe crisis, the counter-hegemonic social forces sat precariously, leaning towards civil and political rights, whilst the hegemonic social forces also sat precariously, leaning towards economic and social rights. Within the civic body this dichotomy of rights and the assumed primacy of civil and political rights over the primacy of social, economic and cultural, and vice versa, influenced the strategies to engage the state in policy discursive processes. The next section discusses the strategies that civil society employed to engage the state.

4.2.2.1.3 *Strategies of engagement*

Post-2000 state-civil society relations in Zimbabwe were generally strained, emanating, firstly, from the contested legitimacy of the state not only as a result of the violent land reform programme and the hegemonic and authoritarian nature of ZANU-PF's nationalisms (political and cultural), but also of an outcome of perennial disputation over the freeness and fairness of almost all post-2000 elections. Secondly, strained state-civil society relations can be explained, according to a respondent with the African Institute for Agrarian Studies (AIAS), in terms of 'the framework that brings civil society into this country – neo-liberalism – which put these two formations as opposing forces and not as complimentary forces. Civil society organisations or NGOs are set up to monitor government and not to work with government. So that does not improve relations but creates friction' (Interview 13, 2008). At the formative years of the constitutional movement in the late 1990s, Masipula Sithole captured civics' attitude towards the state when he argued:

There is in the country today a serious school of thought suggesting that Zimbabwe's present woes stem from the fact that the country is now run by a top and therefore unstrategic leadership that no longer has ideas of what it is doing, nor a vision of the future anymore. Moreover, what vision remains in this leadership is incapable of going beyond the liberation war. [...] The country's leadership has long reached its 'level of incompetence' and the process of the 'law of diminishing returns' has irreversibly been set in motion (Sithole, 1998:32).

Thus between 2000 and 2008, three distinct strategies of engaging the ZANU-PF led government were adopted by different civil society organisations. A respondent with AIAS summed up the three strategies this way:

There is the *outright non-engagement*, which is sort of a dominant form of strategy that has been used by human rights formations, etc. Non-engagement because they see the state as illegitimate, some of the actions, even from the historical perspectives of constitutionalism it's seen as an illegitimate state so there is no engagement. Then there are people like us who are at the centre of it who say that there is need to engage with whatever state is there at the moment because otherwise livelihoods would suffer. It's *principled engagement*. We believe in principled engagement with whatever state. Then number three, there is *outright engagement* or what you call cooptation. There are certain formations that are just engaged because of the benefits. Some of the engagement is in the form of consultancy kind of relationship with the

state. But that kind of engagement does not question the contradictions within the state (Interview 13, 2008, my emphasis).

The outright engagement, as argued above, was the preferred strategy by associational formations in the 1980s. In the 1990s, engagement was almost fluid, constantly shifting between confrontation and cooperation but gravitating to the former. This is true of the labour movement during the period of structural adjustment. With regards to the war veterans, the relationship with the state has also historically been a continuous process of engagement and disengagement, confrontation and cooperation. However, in post-2000 and in the context of a 'radicalised state' operating within the prism of a 'revolutionary situation' (Moyo and Yeros, 2007), the war veterans' relationship with the state became markedly one of outright engagement or cooptation. As already discussed above, the outright engagement by war veterans and the 'patriotic intellectuals' served to legitimate ZANU-PF's hegemonic politics. In this section, therefore, the discussion will focus on the outright non-engagement and the principled engagement strategies, used by civil society organisations aligned to the opposition party and therefore constituting key elements of the counter-hegemonic bloc and those used by groups that attempt to walk the middle path and therefore performing a key conflict diffusing or political crisis normalising function, respectively.

The outright non-engagement has been the most used strategy by civil society organisations aligned to the counter-hegemonic bloc. It has been realised in two ways: voluntary non-engagement and involuntary non-engagement. In terms of framing the involuntary non-engagement debate, many respondents during the interviews argued that it is the state that is to blame because of its unwillingness to engage civil society organisations, especially the governance and human rights groups. A respondent with the NCA argued: 'We want to engage with the entire government but as you may be aware this government has closed doors on us. [...] They dismiss us as stooges of western

governments; they dismiss us as agents of western imperialism. So it has almost become difficult to peacefully lobby this government. They don't want to see the NCA. They say the NCA is the enemy of the state. The NCA is part and parcel of the opposition. So they have closed doors for any progressive engagement' (Interview 14, 2008).

The voluntary non-engagement strategy is related to the involuntary non-engagement approach, but is driven more by civil society's perceptions of the ZANU-PF regime as illegitimate and the politics of polarisation that pervade Zimbabwean society today. A respondent with ZIMCODD argued in this regard that:

Because of polarisation we employ a minimal approach in terms of dealing with state actors for the simple reason that if we are going to push for an argument that says part of the reason why Zimbabwe is in an economic crisis is because of corruption, then, your approach is a bit aggressive because you are targeting authorities. So our approach at the moment is more as watchdogs rather than as collaborators. We do not collaborate directly with policy makers, particularly the government of the day. Why? Because we have noticed as a coalition the government of the day has a tendency to abuse civil society and at the end of the day if you are put in the same bracket as the government of the day you run the risk of losing your fellow civil society allies. So we have been extremely cautious in that regard (Interview 4, 2008).

In another interview, a respondent with the Zimbabwe Development Trust claimed that because of the regime's sensitivity to western funded civil society organisations and its perception of civil society organisations as appendages of the opposition party, 'Some ministries are overtly politicised and [...] when you get there sometimes you end up being asked slogans, things like that' (Interview 7, 2008).

Another determinant of the non-engagement approach is the role of donors. The relationship between donors and civil society is discussed in detail in section 4.3. It shall suffice here to note that some respondents felt quite strongly that the non-engagement strategy, especially its confrontational element had its roots from the source of funding. Specifically, the inter-state conflict, it was argued, means that donor organisations from those countries that are at loggerheads with the regime tended to also prefer

to fund groups that are overtly anti the regime. As one academic respondent with the University of Zimbabwe put it '[...] NGOs are funded by various international financial organisations and sometimes you have to sing the donor's song and that's why they get confrontational at some point' (Interview 2, 2008).

The non-engagement approach as a whole has tended to fuel the conflict rather than resolve it. In the context of polarisation, it was also pointed out during interviews that the non-engagement strategy has tended to over highlight the negative policies of the regime and ignore the positive policies: 'Some of them (human rights NGOs) have developed an anti-government face. It doesn't matter what is good from government they would try and have something that is bad out of that. So there are some NGOs that have become naturally anti-government' (Interview 18, 2008). Another respondent pointed out that as a result of the non-engagement strategy civil society organisations in Zimbabwe score minimal, if not zero, success in terms of policy influencing. This is probably true with regards to governance policy issues. An academic respondent who also works for an NGO argued, 'We do splendid work with communities and [during] workshops etc but that work ends up in a workshop report [....]. If you are doing advocacy for policy influence you want to end up meeting with some policy makers and sharing that information. But half the time these processes are ended prematurely. So we do a cycle of half-baked processes' (Interview 12, 2008). This has led some commentators to argue that Zimbabwe's civil society sector is overly dominated by 'conflict entrepreneurs' (Moyo, 2005b).

Against an attempt by the regime to squeeze civil society out of the political space and to silence the governance and human rights discourse, civil society organisations responded by agitating for civil disobedience, for punitive sanctions, for regime change; for the isolation of the regime from the international community, and by amplifying the illegitimacy of the regime to the international community

by exposing human rights abuses. The strategy for civil disobedience has been realised through calls for mass action (street demonstrations or marches and job stay aways). Counter-hegemonic civil society organisations such as the NCA, ZCTU, Crisis Coalition of Zimbabwe, ZINASU and the Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) have been at the forefront of these mass actions since 2000 (see also Appendix 8). There are strong criticism about the effectiveness and appropriateness of mass actions as a strategy. According to a respondent with the NCA, 'The problem is that many people or some people are not willing to risk their lives by participating in actions such as demonstrations because they know the nature of the state under which we operate' (Interview 14, 2008).

Thus, in the wake of frustrations over the untenable mass action strategy some analysts resorted to lay blame on the colonial urban planning policies, which, it was argued, strategically created townships in such a way that mobilising people from high-density suburbs into town is difficult (see ICG, 2002:8). Other commentators feel that the mass action strategy is nothing but 'loud civic activism' to catch the attention of the international community and also to attract donor funding. During the interviews in 2008, and in the context of mounting pressure for ZANU-PF and the MDC opposition to form a coalition government following the violent June 2008 Presidential run-off elections, several respondents also highlighted the fact that the non-engagement approach was untenable. A point was raised that the MDC, which a number of civil society had directly or indirectly mobilised the electorate on its behalf since 2000, had on several occasions under the auspices of SADC, attempted to engage the ZANU-PF regime. A respondent with the African Institute for Agrarian Studies pointed out, therefore, that,

The non-engagement you will see that its becoming problematic even in political circles right now. Because you find that at a certain stage even the opposition political party had to engage with the state. So the non-engagement becomes problematic in that where does it end and its influence is problematic from a civil society perspective because if you look at civil society from an instrumental perspective it should be the link to the state, another link in the face of a disappointing political elite and that insensitive bureaucracy (Interview 13, 2008).

The agitation for punitive sanctions was also overtly supported by many civil society organisations as a way of forcing the regime to reform: '[...The] extrovert sanctions that our political leaders have been banned from travelling was a result of agitation from civil society actors. Formations such as Crisis going to Brussels to lobby which was progressive because it was in response to a state that is closing space. So we are in an environment where Zimbabwe is not living in isolation but is in a community of nations. So that was progressive stance but it opened up other areas of sanctions that they did not anticipate as civil society' (Interview 13, 2008). The regime has been able to use the sanctions discourse to garner support and sympathy from the electorate and African constituencies by discrediting civil society and opposition parties as unpatriotic and anti-poor. Thus one of the unintended consequences of the punitive sanctions against the regime was the escalation of repression of civil society and the opposition.

Following the failure of the MDC's 2003 'Final Push'¹⁸ and, perhaps also as a result of the regime winning few sympathetic ears for its radicalised redistributive social justice agenda, a number of organisations began to frame a debate around 'principled engagement' between antagonistic social forces. Some organisations like NANGO, because of its position as an umbrella body that requires it to speak for, to coordinate and balance the different sectoral interests of affiliated organisations, had always worked within a framework of 'principled engagement'. However those who pursue the principled engagement have also been criticised for supporting the regime. A respondent with the University of Zimbabwe disagreed and argued:

To some extent it's a valid criticism but it is not hundred percent correct. You know these are people who have been in government and universities. These are educated people, very much aware of what is happening in the country, in the region and elsewhere. And so when they come up with issues and in most cases these issues are well grounded and as you know government in some cases has no capacity to do research on some of these issues. So when

¹⁸ This was an MDC's call for mass action against the regime.

they are faced with these facts, issues and demands then they become irritated' (Interview 2, 2008).

The next section discusses the organisational base of the counter-hegemonic social forces in Zimbabwe.

4.3 The sociological determinants of counter-hegemonic politics

The aim of this section is to discuss the organisational and material factors influencing counter-hegemonic politics. According to Gramsci, the counter-hegemonic social forces need to galvanise or organise themselves into a 'collective will' that does not scatter 'into infinity of individual wills' that represent 'separate and conflicting paths' (Gramsci, 1971:128-9; Morton, 2007:98). Three thematic issues are relevant to the discussion: the first is the urban-rural civic divide that characterises the civic sector in Zimbabwe. This divide represents continuity from colonialism, it bears the stamp of the 'urban bias thesis' inherent in the neo-liberal framework that promotes civics in the country, and finally within the context of post-2000 politics it was promoted by ZANU-PF through the creation of 'no go areas' for the counter-hegemonic social forces. Second, the section discusses intra-civil society relations (or the politics of civic coalitions and networks), within the context of advocacy for social change. Third, the section interrogates the elusive idea of an 'apolitical civil society' by examining the embeddedness by civil society in larger political party agendas.

4.3.1 The rural-urban civil society divide

The urban bias character of civil society in Africa has been widely discussed in the literature. In Zimbabwe, as is the case in other African countries, the rural-urban civic divide has its footprints from

the colonial days and post-colonial nation-state building politics. In post-2000, this divide was violently promoted by ZANU-PF through the buffeting of rural areas as 'no go areas' for the counter-hegemonic social forces. I shall briefly trace the colonial legacies of this disconnect before focusing on how the divide was viewed in post-2000. Mamdani traces the rural-urban civic divide from the way the discourse on democracy for Africans was articulated during colonial Africa. He argues that democracy was talked of and promoted by colonial regimes in racial dichotomies. On the one hand, the colonial administrations promoted a racialised urban based white civil society that enjoyed all associated liberal freedoms. On the other hand was a tribalised or ethniced rural based associational life (viewed as 'un-civic') that was left to the whims of Native Authorities who controlled rural societies on behalf of colonial regimes (Mamdani, 1996). Mamdani talks of this urban and rural divide in terms of 'citizens' versus 'subjects', respectively. In the intermediary space – between the all exclusive dominating white civil society and the rural based natives – was an urban black middle and working class (also 'subjects') that had lesser citizenship status compared to its white counterparts. It was also free from traditional authority operational in the countryside. Both in the urban and rural centres the colonial regimes prohibited the formation of African civil society organisations out of fear that these could be turned into mobilising instruments against the administration (Makumbe, 1998, Mamdani, 1996; Callaghy, 1986).

In the 1920s, there was an upsurge of urbanisation in Zimbabwe and a number of labour based African organisations were formed such as the Rhodesia Native Association and the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union. Their preoccupation with wages and living conditions in cities set them apart from rural based associations such as the Matebele National Home Movement and the Vapositori Movement who organised around land issues, in particular against their eviction from land by settlers (Ranger, 1985). In the 1940s, urban African elites, organising under labour unions began to infuse socio-economic concerns with political activism in general. By the 1960s, urban elites had instrumentally transformed labour unions into liberation movements such as ZAPU and ZANU. It was these liberation movements,

at the height of the 1970s struggle against the colonial regime that linked the urban elites and rural masses. Urban (political) elites – i.e., the ‘organic intellectuals’ in Gramscian terminology – led the movements or supported the movements with the ideological ammunition and, therefore, had superior status to rural elites – i.e., the ‘traditional intellectuals’ in Gramsci and the rural masses in general.

This superiority is, of course, a matter of perception but one that permeates and influences a one directional flow of knowledge and development solutions or proposals from elites in the cities of the North, through elites in the cities of the South and down to elites in the rural areas of the South who also pass this knowledge to their lesser educated countrymen (see Chambers, 1993; 1997). However, using Kenya’s civic education programme, Stephen Orvis argues that this flow of knowledge about rights from ‘a region of high elite concentration to a region of low elite concentration’ (my phrasing) has successfully bridged the urban-rural civil society divide. Orvis (2003) argues that the Kenyan civic education programme has successfully used rural ‘non-civic’ networks to achieve ‘civic’ aims (Orvis, 2003:250). What Orvis achieves through his paper is to perpetuate or mimic Mamdani’s thesis that there is no rural civil society in Africa.

As argued above, in the 1980s, ZANU-PF destroyed civil society organisations in the name of ‘the revolution’ (Moyo, 1993:7, 1992) that was anchored on themes of nation-building, reconciliation and unity. When the civil society phenomenon began in the early 1990s, in the context of the democratisation reforms spreading across sub-Saharan Africa, it was promoted with an urban bias built into it. That is, ‘civil’ society was based in the city and ‘un-civil’ networks were based in the rural areas. The implications of this theoretical bias in our conceptualisation of civil society is that even in practice a majority of civil society advocacy and lobbying activities are urban-centric. During interviews, a number of respondents highlighted this urban centric approach in civil society work: on one hand, there is a

group of critics who defend the divide as a natural reflection of how Zimbabwean society is structured and, on the other hand, are critics who argue that the divide is narrow and excludes the majority of rural populations in national development processes and discursive forums. According to one academic respondent the urban centric bias of civil society is influenced by the underdeveloped rural economies, which makes it difficult for rural people to mobilise resources on their own:

You see we are talking about resource mobilisation and people in rural areas have limited capacity to mobilise their own resources in order to alleviate their problems. So by default people who are educated and who stay in towns are the ones that are well networked. Much as we criticise them as elites but these are people who can put out project proposals and they can go to meetings and face donors. So these are the people who are the front gatekeepers for resources (Interview 2, 2008).

Another respondent also refuted the argument that civil society was elite focused and argued:

Virtually in all societies civil society groups that constitute NGOs, pressure groups, interest groups are issue specific groups and normally they are established by issue interested people, people with passion. It is not an ordinary person. It's unrealistic to have every 'Tom and Dick' saying we are the civil society. They have to be led by those people who have deep passion and competency, resoluteness and commitment to carry the things forward without any reservations. And it so happens that most of the leadership within the civil society, I don't think they started off as elite but I think by virtue of the benefits attached to the roles they play eventually they become elites. It's inevitable or it's consequential or collateral (Interview 16, 2008).

Those who criticised the rural-urban civil society divide argued, for instance, that:

The way we have come to understand civil society has been restricted to a very narrow formation – the NGOs. They have dominated the space that is available for civil society. Our understanding [the respondent's institution] is that civil society is a very broad space; you get trade unions, churches, NGOs, social movements, cooperatives, etc. But our problem [in Zimbabwe] is that civil society has been narrowly defined to be synonymous with urban NGOs. So it has been highly exclusive of certain sections of the population that is the majority rural populations who are highly active in this arena. [...] Number one, if you look at the demographic of Zimbabwe, the majority of our people are in the rural areas. You see the problem with urban civics is that there is no class analysis of who is leading it. In most instances they are middle class elements, graduates from UZ [University of Zimbabwe] etc with

very middle class orientations.¹⁹ That's why they even failed to support a pro-poor land reform because to them they are socialised to believe that agriculture should be run on a large-scale manner. So we have a problem because of the class orientations of the kind of civil society that we have. Number two, African academics, like Mamdani, has also worsened the situation by claiming that there is no civil society [in rural areas]. That all rural people are subject to some despotic form of traditional rural authority. [...] So any form of associationalism in the rural areas is seen as an appendage of the ruling party (Interview 13, 2008).

What are the implications of this rural-urban civic divide, *vis-à-vis* civil society struggles for social change and the regime's instrumental use of it for its hegemonic entrenchment? As one respondent argues above, at the height of the farm invasions between 2000 and 2003, civil society was very pessimistic and very critical about the emancipative objectives of the land reforms, arguing instead that the land issue was being manipulated for political survival by the regime (see also Moyo, 2005a,b). So the divide tends to be reflected in differences in policy orientations of urban and rural based formations. Urban based civil society tends to focus on liberal ideas of constitutionalism that centre on democracy, rule of law and human rights. Inversely, rural oriented civil society formations such as the war veterans association and other rural based social movements that organise around the land issue tend to substitute political rights with social rights and to replace the reform discourse with a revolution discourse (Mamdani, 1990:363).

These policy orientations reflect alignment to particular political party formations, with the MDC enjoying support of urban based civil society and ZANU-PF enjoying the support of rural based civic formations. These alignments come with the politics of group labelling and counter group labelling: rural oriented formations such as the war veterans associations – taking leaf from ZANU-PF – label urban based civil society as regime change agents, stooges of the west, allies of imperialism and capitalism, anti-state

¹⁹About four of the respondents during the interviews were former University colleagues of this researcher. Three held positions of Director in their respective organizations and the fourth respondent held a senior position as a Programs Officer in his organization. A number of other former University colleagues were part of the 'Make Our Vote Count' Campaign as representatives of their organizations. This researcher participated in the Campaign in his capacity as an intern with NANGO (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of the 'Make Our Vote Count' campaign).

and, therefore, traitors. Urban civil society in turn have taken a reductionist view of war veterans associations and label it as violent warmongers, opportunists, and 'un-civil' society. A number of academics have also been snared into this 'reductionist trap' that exclude war veterans association – and rural based associationalism in general – from the discursive parlance on civil society. More importantly, because of ZANU-PF's propaganda against urban civil society, the war veterans association does not also perceive of itself as a civil society but a 'reserve army' or 'vanguard of the ruling party' (McCandless, 2005).

In terms of the geographical reach of civil society operations, it almost operates entirely in the major cities of Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Mutare and Masvingo. Workshops, meetings, policy dialogues and public speaking forums are held in cities. The Institute for Agrarian Studies, for instance, runs a series of what it calls civil society dialogues and policy review dialogues. The civil society dialogues '[...]' are very small. We get about twelve to fifteen actors from different NGOs and trade unions to sit around the table and have a retrospective and introspective analysis of what causes their weak participation [in the land policy processes] and what they can do and to begin to share best practices and experiences.' The policy review dialogues '[...]' are broader in terms of participation because we are getting people from the state, civil society, researchers, essentially all stakeholders [...]. Social movements are involved if they want to come[...]' (Interview 13, 2008). Sadly however, as the respondent admitted, '[...] policy space has never been given to rural organisations because policy review dialogues are done in urban areas, in Harare and to a certain extent Bulawayo. But rarely would you hear of a policy dialogue going far as Mutoko in the rural areas. So there is that marginalisation and there is a tendency of urban civic, those that you call development NGOs, speaking for the rural people' (Interview 13, 2008).

Post-2000, however, has seen some interesting innovations from urban based civil society in form of coordinated civic education programmes or some kind of decentralisation projects that aim to bridge the rural-urban divide. A number of civil society organisations – who otherwise would not access rural areas because of their perceived MDC links – have had to use ‘burrowing strategies’ by working within coalitions such as the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) or through local structures of churches or women’s organisations, especially on civic educational programmes that relates to electoral processes. However much of civic education on electoral issues tends to concentrate in the less political problematic urban centres. The Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET) runs a civic education programme on peace and conflict resolution that targets rural areas where political related violence is often reported high. The programme is run by Peace Committees (PCs), which ZIMCET establishes in communities. The PCs are staffed by ‘traditional elites’ comprising of traditional chiefs, councillors, local church leaders, war veterans, village headman and representatives of the youth, women and political parties. Linking the ZIMCET secretariat in Harare and the grassroots PCs are ZIMCET animators, who are on the payroll of ZIMCET. During the interviews, a respondent argued that animators were ‘volunteers’ but receiving ‘a stipend’ (Interview 3, 2008). Whilst the use of local composed PCs in civic education campaigns promotes some semblance of local ownership, there is still an element of the conventional flow of knowledge from urban to rural as illustrated in the following interview excerpts:

These people [PCs] design programs, but first of all we give them capacity in terms of information: What are human rights? What is mediation? What is conflict resolution? What is conflict management? What are the sources of conflict? What are the non-violent approaches to issues that can address those problems that they may have in an area? [The aim is] basically to move from using violence as a mode of operation. And when they fully understand and appreciate the whole vision of peace building, they then go out into the communities and start educating people on the importance of peace and the communities themselves organise public meetings where they actual resolve conflicts at the local level (Interview 3, 2008).

In terms of the decentralisation programmes, a number of organisations such as the NCA, ZCTU and NANGO have regional offices in major provincial cities such as Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Mutare and Masvingo. NANGO's revived decentralisation project that started in 2007 has five regions, namely the Northern region (Harare as the coordinating centre, plus the Secretariat), the Western region (Bulawayo), Southern region (Masvingo), Midlands region (Gweru) and Eastern region (Mutare). NANGO argues: 'For a long time NANGO's operations were centralised in Harare. This centralisation approach to delivery of service to its members that are scattered throughout the country, has proved to be expensive, less effective and inefficient' (NANGO, 2008)²⁰. The aim of the decentralisation project therefore is to devolve decision making to regional and local structures, to get closer to its members, to improve timely responses to issues, to improve service delivery and to enhance participation of members in mainstream developmental processes. The decentralised offices are however still urban-centric. In the majority of cases, it is the NGOs based in these provincial cities, some of which are organised on regionalism or ethnicity that contributes to the activities in the regional offices and then feed reports to the secretariat in Harare. During the fieldwork, the regional coordinators frequently travelled between Harare and their respective cities for meetings and workshops. Rarely do they travel to smaller towns or rural areas, for reasons explained below.

Self-reporting or self-evaluation by ZIMCET, NANGO, NCA – and indeed by other civic organisations – points to the success of civic educational programmes in bridging the rural-urban civil society divide or an increased interest in participating in civil society activities by grassroots communities, in rural and urban. One respondent argued: 'Basically the broader picture is that people are willing to participate. Obviously those who have been negatively critical about our activities are basically championing or pursuing the ruling elite's propaganda or perspectives where they simply regurgitate the ruling party's

²⁰ There had been previous unsuccessful attempts to decentralise NANGO's operations in the 1980s and early 1990s .

propaganda against our operations' (Interview 14, 2008). Because reports or self-evaluations can be tailored to appease donors or for purposes of framing local legitimacy and relevance, a separate study on civic education campaigns in Zimbabwe, perhaps designed as a survey, is needed. The Kenyan post-elections violence of 2007 – and indeed the violence characterising elections in Zimbabwe since 2000 – which erupted despite the hype around the donor funded civic education programmes points to their shortcomings or to another source of the rural-urban civic divide.

In the case of Zimbabwe and within the context of polarisation after 2000, the state deliberately put a political wedge between urban and rural areas. Through violence orchestrated by war veterans, ZANU-PF youths and supporters and in some cases state security agents, the state created what were called 'no go areas' for the counter-hegemonic social forces that include the opposition and urban civil society, especially the human rights and democracy organisations. In addition to the no go areas, ZANU-PF implicitly, through inaction, condoned the disruption of local government structures by war veterans at the height of the farm invasions between 2000 and 2003. There was systematic purging of anti-ZANU-PF forces, which in some cases resulted in arbitrary dismissal of Provisional Governors, Rural District Council Workers, dismissal or transfer to other districts, of teachers and police officers suspected to sympathetic to the opposition (see McGregor, 2002).²¹

Many urban based civil society activists who dared to enter rural areas were also a target and indeed found doing so very difficult. One respondent argued that: 'Getting into new areas is very tough. You need to know councillors, chiefs and war veterans, sometimes at personal level (Interview 7, 2008).

²¹ For a different view on the progressive nature of the processes of the suspension of state bureaucratic structures at local government level by war veterans, see Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros. Moyo and Yeros argue, 'The suspension of bureaucracy in the rural areas was the climax of the revolutionary situation. [...] Socio-political conflict escalated, formal democratic norms and procedures were partially suspended, agrarian property rights were abrogated in a *fundamentally progressive way*, and bureaucratic hierarchy itself suspended in the countryside' (Moyo and Yeros, 2007:105, 112, emphasis in original).

Teachers based in rural areas were viewed as urban centric in their perception of issues because of their level of education. In most rural Africa, when civil servants such as teachers, nurses, police and even agricultural extension officers are deployed to rural areas to assume duties they automatically climb up the elite ladder or hierarchy. In post-2000 Zimbabwe, most rural teachers as a result became targets of violence as the state accused them of mystifying and falsifying the crisis in Zimbabwe and thereby causing rural people to rebel against their government: 'Teachers as opinion leaders have become the targets for political violence. They are targeted simply because they don't parody state propaganda and you cannot cow them down because they analyse and are opinion leaders' (Interview 9, 2008).

This mentality of bifurcating political opponents from entering particular geographical areas in Zimbabwe is a continuation from the guerrilla liberation war, where PF-ZAPU aligned ZIPRA forces and ZANU-PF aligned ZANLA forces fought each other over territorial control. Rural communities were also psychologically under siege to offer unflinching support to the cause of the war. Thus since the war of liberation, through the 1980s, ZANU-PF regards rural areas as its natural support base, not to be interfered with. The relationship between ZANU-PF and rural constituencies, however, tends to reflect patronage rather than purely ideological linings. It is this entitlement mentality to rural support, supported by patronage politics, which led Jonathan Moyo to mock the opposition and urban civil society in 2002 that, 'We should not think that Harare is Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe is Harare. Suggestions that there is a massive turnout in Harare are really pictures painted by people with creative imaginations' (*allafrica.com*, 2002)²². In 2005, the mentality that rural areas are for ZANU-PF and urban centres are for the MDC was being reinforced by civil society activists and analysts who argued that 'Operation Restore Order/*Murambatsvina*' was a coercive policy to move opposition supporters from

²² Minister Jonathan Moyo was reacting to some speculative analysis by many urban civil society organisations, analysts, journalists, and the opposition that the reported high voter turn over in Harare and other urban cities such as Bulawayo during the 2002 Presidential election pointed to an MDC victory.

cities to ZANU-PF dominated rural areas where their votes and support for the opposition would become dispersed relative the high concentration of the ruling party's rural supporters. The divide between rural social movements (aligned to ZANU-PF) and urban civil society (mostly aligned to the MDC) easily promotes patronage and provides source of social forces readily manipulated for conflict. The rural-urban civic divide has not of necessity united urban civil society to fight the authoritarian state, as the discussion below will demonstrate.

4.3.2 Coalitions, networks and policy influencing

This section discusses intra-civil society relations or the politics of civic coalitions and networks, within the context of advocacy activities, with particular focus on the strengths and limitations of these coalitions and networks. This discussion will also be married to the factors that have influenced civil society's capacity to influence policy, in particular democratisation processes in post-2000. Post-2000 Zimbabwe is characterised by a mushrooming of coalitions and networks to address the multiple of policy issues relating to governance, democracy and human rights. Examples of coalitions and networks include, *inter alia* the NCA, NANGO, ZESN, ZCTU, Crisis Coalition in Zimbabwe (CCZ), Women's Coalition (WC), Christian Alliance (CA), Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), Zimbabwe National Pastors Conference (ZNPC) and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) (see Appendix 8 on where these coalitions or networks relatively align themselves, *vis-a-vis* the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic blocs).

The capacity of civil society to influence policy depends on the political nature of the issues being addressed and how the issues are constructed and articulated in the public domain. Parsons (1995) argues that the manner in which issues are constructed is a function of subjectivity versus objectivity by

different actors interested in the policy issue(s). Thus the capacity of civil society is measured in this instance by its ability to mobilize support and build alliances behind issues and interest of 'common good'. Put differently, policy influencing, as Colebatch (1998) argues, is less about deciding but rather negotiating common ground (cited Brock *et al.*, 2001:3). During interviews many respondents highlighted the fact that all issues – from humanitarian relief, music, sports, land, the law, informal trading, and so on – in Zimbabwe had become politicised or framed as 'national security threat issues' [read as security of the regime] (Interview 16, 2008). Respondents pointed out that whilst the state's repressive politics generally united civil society coalitions and networks in condemnation of human rights violations and advocacy for democratisation of politics, there was a tendency, especially amongst 'development NGOs' who specialise in social service delivery to think that state repression is more of a problem of the outspoken 'governance NGOs' than it is theirs. One respondent with ZIMCODD put it this way:

Generally we unite when we are under threat. During the NGO Bill we were really together. But minus issues that are common to many of us, there is this approach to say, political repression is going to target those who talk too much. So there is no common ground particularly between those dealing with governance issues and development/social service delivery. The latter will say the government should understand us because we are distributing wheel chairs to people, what is the problem there. Those people who are dealing with the constitution, the Madhukus and others are the ones in trouble, so it's their issue. But those that deal with governance issues we usually and normally do come together quite often and work together because we are all under threat. So as many as we are we need the comfort of each other. Of course within such a framework you find people with different agendas. Some want to pursue political power through civil society organisations, and some are competing for turf (Interview 4, 2008).

The proliferation of coalitions and networks has attempted – with relative success – to mobilise support and alliances, especially in the urban centres, around the imperative of the governance question as the underlying cause of Zimbabwe's crisis and interest in politics in general. It is through the 'strength in numbers' (Interview 4, 2008) realised through coalitions, networks and sectoral umbrella bodies and the opportunities for information and skills sharing that civil society successfully campaigned for the 'No Vote' in 2000. Civil society also researched and publicised human rights violations and abuses by the

state, which has resulted in international condemnation of the regime and in some cases such as for example during 'Operation Restore Order /*Murambatsvina*' and the electoral violence in 2008, the international community responded by seconding UN special envoys to engage the state. These successes are reflective of the strong policy analytical capacities of civic coalitions and networks, especially the governance or human rights organisations. It was suggested during interviews that human rights organisations have a higher level of understanding policy processes '...because they are led by people who may have one leg in human rights NGOs and another in academia. [These people] interact at an analytical level in the academic community and take their skills from academia into the NGO sector' (Interview 17, 2008).

It was also pointed out during interviews that coalitions and networks had made it difficult for the state to employ divide-and-rule tactics that could expose some organisations vulnerable to harassment and attack: 'Among other civil society we have more or less the same understanding. We network, we share information. [...] If you are not working as a coalition it's very easy in the current environment for one particular organisation to be singled out and to be victimised. But if you are working as a coalition you are able to support each other in that environment. So you get lots of strength in working as a group' (Interview 5, 2008). The coalitions and networks have a shared responsibility towards other like-minded organisations during times of crisis. For instance, NANGO prefers to engage the regime on a 'principled engagement' basis to negotiate favourable operational environment for all NGOs in the country. NCA engages the regime through streets demonstrations. ZLHR provide legal representation of those arrested by the regime. ZESN researches and carries out civic education programmes and campaigns on electoral issues and shares this information with other coalitions and networks. Whilst these organisations employ different strategies to engage the state, viewed as a collective of a governance or human rights 'policy network' (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992), they have successfully provided a united, supportive and sustained opposition against the state.

Another advantage of these coalitions and networks is that they are comprised of organisations representing multiple sectoral interests ranging from human rights, gender, youth, economy, students, people with disabilities, informal traders and so on. This has had two major merits. First, it has assisted some civil society organisations whose advocacy activities are concentrated in cities to begin to have an indirect contact with the grassroots in rural areas, especially through the structures of the churches, informal traders and women's groups. Coalitions and networks in this regard have functioned as a kind of some consolidated strategy towards community mobilisation, which Millistein *et al.* argue, is 'a critical precondition for both material and discursive political inclusion' [and] 'a strategy of political engagement rather than disengagement in regard to the state' (Millistein *et al.*, 2003:463).

Put differently, coalitions and networks have provided civil society with a bargaining tool to demonstrate that its concerns are representative of wider societal interests as opposed to narrow and external driven agendas. Second, sectoral representations in coalitions and networks have ensured a holistic approach to policy deliberations during workshops, meetings and policy review dialogues. The civil society People's Charter, referred earlier, which was adopted by forty organisations, is a good example of a collective position document that mirrors the different sector issues that each organisation, coalition or network specialises on. A reading of the People's Charter clearly shows the inputs of different organisations, such as ZESN (on elections), NCA (on constitutional issues), NANGO (on general operational environment for NGOs), ZIMCodd and ZCTU (on debt, labour and economic justice), Women's Coalition (on gender), Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (on human rights) and Zimbabwe National Students Union (on students and youths).

Underlying the proliferation of coalitions and networks in Zimbabwe and the production of multi-authored documents such as the People's Charter is the belief that 'shared understanding of the cause

of problems and of the way [Zimbabwe...] can be changed lead to consistent, mutually supported choices on issues of public policy' (Fowler, 1997:109). Although the coalitions and networks are comprised of different sector organisations, they are bound together by the primacy that they put on the 'governance question' as the underlying cause of Zimbabwe's crisis. The deployment of the governance discourse functions as the 'hidden face of power' (Parsons, 1995) that unites the civic coalitions and networks. As Brock *et al.* (2001:4-6) argue, discourse frames a group's agenda in ways that dictate the strategies needed to solve a problem and hence probable outcomes, and it also excludes and includes other actors from policy deliberative processes. In this regard civic coalitions and networks – through a consistent dispersing of the governance discourse against the nationalist discourse of the state – have succeeded in developing social trust amongst themselves, even in the face of competition for donor funding and struggles to dominate particular sectoral issues.

However, the story of civil society coalitions and networks in Zimbabwe is not all positive. A number of negatives or limitations were also highlighted during the interviews. One of the challenges faced by coalitions and networks, in a polarised situation, is that they have failed to reconcile their discourses to those whose discourses differ with theirs, like the war veterans association for instance. As the two respondents argue below:

It's not a situation where conciliation is being sought – it's do or die. It's not about a situation where people are moving in one direction and are seeking for what you [the present researcher] are calling 'negotiating the political space'. [...] You push sovereignty; the counter-reaction is to counter that sovereignty with democracy. [So] you have a situation where these positions have been taken that we have to defend them at all cost if you are in ZANU-PF and you have to take them out at any cost if you are in the MDC (Interview 1, 2008).

Every five years you come up with the same issues and you remember that the guys in the rural areas outnumber you guys in the city and they are probably influenced by other needs. But nobody takes the effort in between the five years of each election, for example, to show them how this funny theoretical concept of democracy can work for them (Interview 19, 2008).

This inflexible approach to issues by civic coalitions and networks, as is also the case with ZANU-PF aligned groups, has meant that sometimes there has not been an objective analysis of government policies by civil society to the point that 'Some of them have developed an anti-government face. It doesn't matter what good comes from government they would try and have something bad out of that' (Interview 18, 2008). Another civil society activist respondent argued:

[...] civil society's role is to complement government efforts and we want to be able to feed into these processes. For those of us who are doing advocacy you real want to come up with factual points that you bring to government and make recommendations in terms of how policies can be formulated so that they respond to people's needs. But half the time we don't even have that [factual information] at hand. And if we have it it's wishy-washy. We do splendid work with communities, workshops but that work only ends up in a workshop report. [...] if you are doing advocacy for policy influence you want to end up meeting with some policy makers and sharing that information. But half the time those processes are ended prematurely. So we do a cycle of half-baked processes' (Interview 12, 2008).

The problem of 'half-baked processes' by coalitions and networks can also be understood from the point of view of a state that increasingly became unreceptive to the issues advocated by civil society. This is especially true of governance and human rights issues, which the regime through the 2004 NGO Bill attempted to turn into 'national security issues' so that civil society could not carry advocacy activities about them (Ncube, 2005). In the polarised politics of post-2000 Zimbabwe, the state became the locus of repressive, authoritarian and exclusionary power, deciding which civil society organisations had access to government officials and institutions and which did not and what policy issues were relevant. Thus despite the visibility of civic coalitions and networks in exposing gross human rights violations, the state increasingly exercised its power through what Bachrach and Baratz (1962) have called the process of non-decision making. It is this context that explains why various coalitions' initiatives for reform, such as the Churches of Zimbabwe's *The Zimbabwe We Want* (2006), civil society and the opposition's *Save Zimbabwe Campaign* (2007) and NANGO's 2008 'Make Our Vote Count' campaign (see Chapter 5) did not end state sponsored violence or produce desired political reforms.

Finally civic coalitions and networks in Zimbabwe are characterised by intra-competition for either donor funding (see section 4.3.2.2) or for dominance over particular sectoral policy issues. During the interviews an example was given of women civil society organisations' hostilities during the debate around the Domestic Violence Bill. A respondent with the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA) elaborated these hostilities in following way:

The Domestic Violence Bill was initiated by Musasa Project. We [ZWLA] work for domestic violence providing legal expertise, they [Musasa Project] work for domestic violence providing shelter and counselling. But what you find is that Musasa Project initiated this law reform programme; did the consultations and eventually it got to Parliament stage. But then they started having technical questions being posed to them. And at that point Musasa Project had no lawyer within the organisation. The Women's Affairs Ministry was now coordinating and so it called in ZWLA to assist with legal questions. We have been working with Musasa Project but would know that whenever there is anything to comment on the Domestic Bill it would be left to Musasa. But there were instances when on some issues they no longer had the competency to respond to the issues and ZWLA stepped in to respond to those issues. This created huge a problem of saying where do you draw the line and say this is what ZWLA does and this is what Musasa Project does? There were salient hostilities between organisations to say you are overstepping your mandate, this is something that we introduced and we need to run with it (Interview 10, 2008).

The problem of competing for sectoral policy turfs was also highlighted by many other respondents.

Other argued that this competition results in duplication of advocacy activities. A respondent argued:

[There is] lack of collaboration between civil society themselves. There is a lot of duplication in terms of provision of services, etc and sometimes a failure of specialising. What I mean is that civil society fails to say this is our niche. We are good at research and analysis and that's what we will do. And somebody saying our niche is civic education and we will draw our tape around that; that is our niche. You find civil society with their feet in many sectors and in so doing weakening their ability to be very effective. That's one area, failing to identify a niche, stick to it and perfect it. So you find several organisations doing the same thing and sometimes within the same community'²³ (Interview 12, 2008).

During the violence leading to the June Presidential run-off of 2008, two parallel initiatives by civil society coalitions and networks were implemented. One initiative was coordinated by Crisis Coalition

²³ This is also true of 'development NGOs' in general who specialises on social services delivery (see for instance Moyo *et al.*, 2000).

Zimbabwe and had the support of organisations such as the NCA, ZCTU and ZINASU. The other initiative, the 'Make Our Vote Count' campaign was coordinated by NANGO and its affiliated organisations. In what one respondent informally labelled a 'NANGO versus the self-proclaimed Super Four' affair, a respondent with the NCA justified his organisation's reluctance to participate in NANGO's initiative on grounds that they had not been adequately consulted and that their own initiative had already received donor funding commitments:

It was not only NCA by the way, it was also ZCTU, it was the Zimbabwe Crisis Coalition and many other groups including ZINASU. So it's about consultations. We agree that colleagues come up with an initiative. But before we buy into that initiative we really want to know what it is about. What if it's an initiative that we are already engaged in. Are we not risking undermining each other by coming up with the same and same old initiatives. That was our issue. We said the same issue that is being proposed here has already been proposed. And we had gone to the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition and with them we had started on another initiative to which we invited other civil society organisations²⁴. [...] The Initiative that we are talking about has already received commitments from donors. That is when we said why should we engage in another uniform exercise when we are already at a higher stage (Interview 14, 2008).

The fragmentation within civil society and the problems of duplication of advocacy activities illustrated in the two examples above, points in part, to the interconnectedness of governance issues such as constitutional reforms, democracy, elections, civic education, human rights issues, rule of law and so on, and in part, to donors' un-strategic approach to capacity building of local organisations in the South. As one respondent put it, 'funding partners [are] becoming sexy on certain issues' like elections, human rights, constitution and rule of law (Interview 3, 2008). The intra politics within civil society coalitions and networks also point to the need for these groups to develop into integrated policy networks so that they can become '[...] a mechanism for enhancing mutual power rather than taking power from one or the other' (Smith, 1993:7). The repressive political environment since 2000 was such that there was mutual

²⁴ At the time these parallel initiatives were being debated, this researcher was part of the 'Make Our Vote Count' initiative and had not heard about the Zimbabwe Crisis Coalition Initiative. When the respondent quoted here was pressed during the interview to give the name of the initiative, the researcher observed hesitation, which was only followed by admission that the initiative had received donor funding commitments. This hesitation could be a pointer to one of the strategies that organizations that prefer 'non-engagement' normally use: that is, sudden spontaneous street demonstrations that take state security agents by surprise following well guarded secrecy over the organisers and timing of implementation.

mistrust between different social actors, within and without the state, within and without opposition parties, within and without civil society. This mistrust has not been helped by the problematic issue of the relationship that should exist between civil society and political parties, which I discuss below.

4.3.3 Civil society and opposition party politics

This section discusses the relationship between civil society and political parties, and in particular the relationship between the counter-hegemonic civil society and the opposition party within the counter-hegemonic bloc (see Appendix 8 for examples of organisations that generally lean towards the opposition). As a background, it is important to briefly recall the discussion in Chapter 3. The relationship between civil society and political parties – ZANU-PF to be precise – in the first decade of an independent Zimbabwe equates to Gramsci's *trasformismo*, and was both problematic and controversial. It was controversial in the sense that civil society chose to side with ZANU-PF in the context of Zimbabwe's worst recorded human rights violations in a post-independent dispensation – the Matabeleland disturbances. It was problematic in the sense that society at large demobilised itself at a time when the state was not de-militarising the way it relates to its citizens. Within this context, from 1980 to about the mid-1990s, commentators concur that civil society was embedded under the politics of ZANU-PF, although there were spats of discontent by ZCTU and students in the late 1980s (Raftopoulos, 2000). Raftopoulos argues that the interdependent relationship between ZANU-PF and civil society was made urgent, at least from the point of view of the state, by its weak capacity, which stood in contrast to the strengthening capacities of NGOs as they increasingly became the favoured conduit for international aid (Raftopoulos, 2000:21).

In the 1990s, amid the negative impact of structural adjustment and the convulsive democratisation processes in Eastern Europe, civil society incrementally weaned themselves off the ruling party's patronage largesse. ZANU-PF's reaction to these developments was to tighten control over civil society through the Private Voluntary Organisations Act of 1995. By 1999, the weaning process had been completed and civil society was in full confrontational mode towards the ruling-party over constitutional reforms, the DRC war, and the war veterans' payments. The MDC opposition was formed in 1999 out of these agitations.

It was evident when the MDC was formed that it would function as the political face of civil society. In other words, the MDC would directly compete for political power against ZANU-PF on behalf of its varied constituent members, of which civil society were its core institutional members. In theory the MDC retained organisational autonomy, *vis-à-vis* policy issues and strategies to confront the regime. In practice, the party's organic links to civil society meant that it became a *de facto* affiliate member of the civic coalitions that formed it. Civil society in turn became more or less think-tanks of the opposition on several policy issues, including mobilising and psyching the electorate against the regime. Several scholars have commented that this relationship benefited the MDC but compromised the counter-hegemonic civil society's watchdog role. Gumbo (2002) argues, for instance, that the MDC-civil society pact was uneven because whilst the MDC gained the political legitimacy to lead the democratic movement the latter lost its leadership role to the opposition. Brain Kagoro concurs and argues,

Its [NCA] alliance with the MDC became an albatross around its neck: it meant that the NCA would always be seen as an extension of the MDC. As a result, MDC politics –and at times conflicts –were reproduced within the NCA structures. This symbiotic relationship with the MDC also meant that the NCA experienced increasing difficulty in accessing rural areas that had been designated 'no go' areas for the opposition. Its rapport with the government and traditional leadership suffered a similar fate (Kagoro, 2004a:250).

During interviews, many respondents acknowledged this relationship but others tried to deny it. When one sieves through the interviews a tendency emerges. Those who acknowledge the embeddedness of civil society in larger agendas of political parties are usually academics attached to the university or both the university and research oriented organisations. Human rights activists either acknowledge the problem of embeddedness or deny that it exists. In both cases respondents were quick to point to the polarising political environment and human rights abuses as leaving them with no option but to throw away pretences of non-partisanship. The following interview excerpts from four respondents illustrate these points. The first two respondents – who are academics – were critical of civil society’s relationship with the opposition party:

Civil society has become in the process of what we call the Zimbabwe crisis since 1997/98 very embedded in the political processes, seeming to be friends with a certain political formation and to be foes with another political formation. So any policy advice that is emanating from civil society is treated with suspicion by the state. That’s a very critical challenge for civil society to wash itself and begin to be seen as legitimate, apolitical actors that can influence either way. That even an MDC government was to come into power today; you still develop the same uncritical approach to engage with the state (Interview 13, 2008).

It is a general tendency of NGOs that they lean towards particular political tendencies against others...The embeddedness compromises the autonomy of civil society. Where civil society could for instance play a mediatory role in the current Zimbabwe crisis, it can’t because it already has aligned with one of the combatants against the other. That’s why the state is trying to hammer these NGOs. NCA it raids, Crisis Coalition it raids, NANGO it closes, etc (Interview 17, 2008).

The first of the next two respondents – who are human rights activists – denies the impartiality of civil society arguing that the NCA has an ‘open-door policy’ to membership for political parties, even as it will be clear below that during the 2008 elections the NCA openly endorsed the Presidential candidate of the MDC, Morgan Tsvangirai against Robert Mugabe of ZANU-PF and Simba Makoni of Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn Movement. The last respondent defends civil society impartiality on the basis of human rights violations by the state:

It is a fact that the MDC as a political party stemmed from both the labour and constitutional movement. But when we come to relationships the MDC is a member of the NCA just as ZANU (Ndonga) is a member of NCA, just like the other MDC, both MDCs. ZANU-PF can also become a member of the NCA. So the NCA is open to political party membership. [...] So that's the relationship between the MDC and NCA (Interview 14, 2008).

In a country like Zimbabwe where human rights are being abused day in and day out, as civil society you will be judged harshly if you were to pretend or to be seen to be neutral. So as [name of organisation supplied] we try to be neutral but obviously we side with the people of Zimbabwe and the people of Zimbabwe and government are polar opposites (Interview 4, 2008).

In October 2005, the MDC split into two factions after its executive leadership disagreed over whether to participate in the Senate elections. The resultant factions came to be referred to as the 'pro-Senate MDC' or 'MDC-M' (led by Professor Arthur Mutambara) and the 'anti-Senate MDC' or 'MDC-T' faction (led by Mr Morgan Tsvangirai). The MDC split divided civil society allegiances towards the two MDC: others took a distant neutral position but others openly declared their preference of one faction over the other. Particularly, the MDC-T faction 'ran away with all civil society organisations'²⁵. The two civic coalitions that are part of the so-called 'Super Four' – the NCA and ZCTU – supported the position taken by the Tsvangirai faction to boycott the Senate elections. Election boycott was seen as a strategy to make the regime illegitimate. However, in order to be seen to be neutral, the NCA leadership attended both the two MDC factions' separate annual congresses that were held in 2006.

Later, in the run up to the March 2008 harmonised elections, NCA's Chairman Lovemore Madhuku, took sides in order to drum up support for Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC faction. The NCA argued that Dr Simba Makoni, the former Finance Minister who had broken ranks with ZANU-PF to contest the Presidency as an independent, was not Presidential material because of his past and continued

²⁵ Remark by an MDC-M official, the late Mr Renson Gasela at a public speaking meeting organised by the Mass Public Opinion Institute, Ambassador Hotel, Harare, 2008.

relationship with Mugabe's regime (*Thezimbabwetimes.com*, 2008). The MDC-M faction had pulled out of the March 2008 Presidential election to support Makoni's Presidential campaign. Thus an attack on Makoni implicitly represented NCA's disapproval of the other MDC faction's political legitimacy. During the interviews, a respondent with NCA was asked if the open support for MDC-T was not an equally submission that they did not recognise the MDC-M faction to which he replied:

In a way you can say that. But you are aware of the fact that at that time it was said in a context in which we had another new player in the frame who had come simply to confuse things, whose appearance tended to confuse people. Considering that he was from ZANU-PF and had not said anything about a people-driven constitution, so we then said the MDC is the better devil considering the came from us and are easy to approach and have been fighting with us (Interview 14, 2008).

As a result of the 2005 MDC split some civil society groups openly attacked opposition politicians who were not aligned to the Tsvangirai MDC faction. Top officials from the Mutambara MDC faction, in particular its new President Prof. Arthur Mutambara and the Secretary General Prof. Welshman Ncube, were criticised and accused for working for ZANU-PF in order to destroy the 'only legitimate' Tsvangirai faction of the MDC. When the MDC split in 2005, Paul Themba Nyathi, a top official belonging to the Mutambara MDC faction lamented the vitriol and intolerance that civil society exhibited towards other democratic political players;

One is amazed by the line-up of Mutambara's attackers. Is it possible to imagine that civic leaders, whose core mission should be to promote pluralistic discourse in society at large, would be at the forefront of attacking Mutambara for making a choice that is his birthright and entitlement? We hear reckless pronouncements from civic leaders who should know better suggesting that Tsvangirai is the only possible legitimate leader for the MDC (*Newzimbabwe.com*, 2007c).²⁶

²⁶ Paul Themba Nyathi was defending Professor Arthur Mutambara's choice to join the 'pro-Senate' MDC faction which was being portrayed in the media as an ethnic (Ndebele) rebel group. Mutambara comes from the Shona ethnic group and was strategically roped in to the lead this faction in line with Zimbabwe's ethnic political discourse that has regrettably naturalized the office of the President to the majority Shonas and that of deputy President to the minority Ndebeles. A political party that reverses this 'majoritarian democracy' is derided as a tribal political party.

Whilst the MDC-T did get its share of criticism over the split and the subsequent failure to reunite the party ahead of the 2008 elections, much of the criticism was muted. As one respondent argued,

Within the relationship you see the cycles of change. For instance, the MDC splits and you get a small critique emerging of the MDCs, especially the one branch, the Tsvangirai branch. And suddenly it's papered over. The democratic ideals get submerged to the larger agenda of regime change. When the MDC tries to get involved in street actions then you see a lot of crises and tensions within civil society as to what to do, which should be the leading thing, what strategies to use (Interview 1, 2008).

Gumbo (2002) has argued that when civil society embeds its activities under those of political parties it negates its leadership and watchdog roles in return for resources. This is particularly true of civil society aligned to ZANU-PF such as the war veterans, whose leadership were awarded with patches of farms for the role they played during the violent Third *Chimurenga*. The split in political parties into factions as happened in 2005, Gumbo further argues, leads some civil society to become unstrategically embroiled in the intra-political party conflicts, closing down political spaces for other democratic forces (Gumbo, 2002). It is also important to point out that during the 2008 elections, a number of civil society activists contested Parliamentary seats under the tickets of various political parties.

The Director for ZIMCET, Mr David Chimhini, for instance, contested the elections under the MDC-T ticket and won. ZIMCET worked closely with ZESN in the run up to the elections carrying out civic education campaigns. During the interviews, David Chimhini was asked to explain his election to Parliament on an MDC party ticket whilst at the same time wearing a civic hat for an organisation that is supposed to carry electoral civic education campaigns on a non-partisan basis, to which he said: 'It was never an issue. The chairperson of ZIMCET is Professor Chavunduka who is a National Executive member of the MDC. The Vice Chair by election is Godfrey Malaba who is a Central Committee member of ZANU-PF and Godfrey Malaba stood in Bulawayo as an MP candidate for ZANU-PF and lost'. The respondent also argued '[...] we are accepted by communities because we operate on the

principle of non-partisanship and this is why I have deliberately decided to relinquish my position as Executive Director, so that you are not seen as compromising the principle of non-partisanship. But I can continue consulting for the organisation because there are certain principles and vision that I would like maintained in the organisation' (Interview 3, 2008).

The electoral victories of the MDC candidates, like that of David Chimhini, were celebrated by many civil society activists. It was argued during the interviews that the MDC victories provided an opportunity to deliver change: 'For us there are many opportunities there because we have a Parliament that has 'many of our friends' and we hope to influence policy. We have our friends in control of Parliament to put it quite simple...If our friends win the Presidential elections then we know we are home and dry' (Interview 4, 2008). The embeddedness of civil society in broad agendas of political parties is clearly influenced by the politics of polarisation that exist in the country. External actors have also fuelled this divide. On one hand, the west and most donors in particular took the side of the opposition MDC and civil society that was being battered by the state. And on the other side, many African countries, especially from the SADC regional bloc sided with the ruling party ZANU-PF. In the next section, I discuss the relationship between civil society and donors in the context of the struggle for democratisation in post-2000 Zimbabwe.

4.3.4 Civil society and donors

This section examines some of the perceived pros and cons of donor funded civic policy engagement in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Donors, as is the case in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, have been the shadow bastion of civil society's brave standing against ZANU-PF repression. Donors' interest in non-state actors in Zimbabwe increased dramatically in the early 1990s. Karume (2005:28) argues, however, that

donors' funding of non-state actors in Zimbabwe was not meant to change the regime, but rather to reform and strengthen its institutions, like the parliament, and thereby promote a stable political environment, *vis-à-vis* good governance and multi-party electoral democracy. Dorman (2001:112) concurs and argues that civil society willingly subordinated itself under ZANU-PF's patronage system and was content to complement and pursue policy advocacy under party politics. This situation, Karume argues, ensured the successful implementation of the international financial institutions' (IFIs) neo-liberal economic policies. However, this seemingly innocent approach to donor funding was enough to capacitate civil society to break away from state patronage. The break away from state patronage, Kagoro (2004b) argues, was further facilitated by the absence of a holistic legislative framework to coordinate and supervise the registration and operations of both local and international NGOs. The Private Voluntary Organisations Act (PVO Act) of 1995 that placed stringent civil society registration provisions and gave the minister powers to deregister civil society sought to fill this lacuna in legislative framework for non-state actors (Ncube, 2005). Another point to note here is that in the early to mid-1990s, donor funding for civil society – even in the area of constitutional reforms was less problematic for the regime than in post-2000 (Karume, 2005:32). Perhaps this is so because the regime also got funding from donors at the time. Apart from the fact that idea of 'regime change' had not yet mutated to mean removal of ZANU-PF and Mugabe from power, the welcoming attitude of the regime can also be explained as an outcome of civil society's use of non-confrontational strategies to engage the state (Raftopoulos, 2000:37).

However, after 2000, donors increased funding towards democracy and human rights organisations with an explicit agenda for 'regime change', at least democratically. Donors also became active in sponsoring private media outlets such as the banned *Daily News* and advocacy and research institutions such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ) (Karume, 2005:40). These private media outlets worked successfully to give the

opposition and civil society the political space to articulate an alternative democratic politics and their policy programmes. This has been crucial in order to counter the regime's propaganda that is channelled through state-controlled media. Consequently, there has been a tense relation between the state and pro-democracy civil society and between state and some donor organisations. With regard to civil society-state relations, as discussed above, the regime passed legislation such as POSA and AIPPA in order to constrain the political space for civil society. With regard to state-donor relations, the regime castigated donors and Western governments for meddling in its domestic affairs by funding anti-government civil society in order to politically destabilise a sovereign and democratically elected government.

However, because of these strained relations some donors no longer fund, explicitly, democracy projects but have not increased funding towards the state either. This dilemma is appositely summed up by Taylor and Williams (2002:564) who argue that whilst 'adopting such a "bottom-up" approach will not produce results quickly, sowing progressive political seeds within civil society may represent the only sound basis on which to build a stable polity in the future'. In 2000, DFID increased funding for non-state actors in the area of land reform, even though the state now dominated this policy area. DFID argued that the state lacked the political will to implement a transparent and pro-poor land reform. DFID asserted:

Against this background we have decided that the best way to try to help the poor is to support land resettlement through non-government channels. DFID will work with the private sector and NGOs to do this. We will make available up to a total of £5 million (Z\$300m) over the next 3-5 years. The aim will be to improve the livelihoods of poor men, women and children in rural areas. NGOs are already submitting proposals (DFID, 2000:3).

However, in the context of a politically polarised society where all policy areas became political and attached to 'national security', the regime was suspicious of such funding, which it did not have access

to. The regime argues that some NGOs abuse this privilege, especially in rural areas to campaign against ZANU-PF. Thus in the face of increased repression and constrained donor-state relations, Karume (2005) argues that some donors either scaled down funding or total withdrew operating in Zimbabwe. The worsening economic situation, however, meant that civil society could hardly self-finance their policy advocacy work without external assistance. This of course had always been the case even before the crisis. Sam Moyo discusses at great length the problems of financial and institutional sustainability of NGOs in Zimbabwe (Moyo, 2000:62-77). According to Moyo, the local financial base of NGOs is very weak and, therefore, are largely dependent on foreign funders. A respondent with an international NGO concurred with this view during the interviews and argued that:

Local NGOs are very weak in terms of financial capacity. They depend very much on international NGOs like ours. International NGOs also depend on the purse out there. The purse out there will influence our thinking here. And we operate with particular NGOs that have to be manageable to the extent that if you resist the influence which trickles down from the top it means you are not a good partner. So there is a lot of influence from the North through the international NGOs and we go down to influence local NGOs to the extent that their own atmosphere is actually in terms of how we see them and how we want to be at (Interview 18, 2008).

It is in this context that another respondent argued that in Zimbabwe, 'Civil society has become a banana. Obviously some organisations have tried to pursue their own policy lines or agenda but that's only to a certain extent because the people who pay want to swear you in some directions' (Interview 14, 2008). The role of donors in defining the nature and form of civil society's agenda as well as the parameters for policy engagement have been instrumental in shaping civil society's self-understanding, *vis-à-vis* relations with Mugabe's regime. While donors sometimes mean well, in a polarised environment like Zimbabwe, this worked to fuel the conflict as one respondent confirmed: 'Yes it is problematic because in a polarised political situation once you receive something from outside then you may be misconstrued to be an organisation that is funded by Tony Blair and George Bush' (Interview 9, 2008). Moreover, increased donor funding for the counter-hegemonic civil society seemed to cement

ZANU-PF's powerfully constructed hegemonic system that successfully defines its opposition on the basis of the 'if you are not for us then you are against us'. In this context, donors were criticised by the government for funding anti-regime programmes and consequently some civil society respondents passed on the blame to donors as too prescriptive, culturally indifferent to the nature of African politics and un-strategic in their approach to building capacity among local NGOs. For example, two respondents argued that:

[...] some of the donors are naïve. They are quite naïve. They don't know our culture. They have an influence in some of these activities but this is a different set up. In Europe you can do all sorts of things but when you come to societies in Africa you have to be very careful. You may be correct but somehow you have to be careful in the way you present your demands (Interview 2, 2008).

[...] I wish in the same manner that we are talking about collaboration between government and civil society that there should also be collaboration between civil society and donors to the extent that we do away with the top-down approach where donors are being prescriptive in terms of what need to be done. Yes they should provide the funds but once they have done that they should leave the autonomy with civil society organisation who are grounded in the issues and know what needs to be done and have faith in them to be able to deliver (Interview 12, 2008).

Other commentators have argued that increased donor funding for democracy, human rights and good governance issues in the late 1990s, differentiates between 'old' civics (those established in the 1980s) and 'new' civics (formed in the late 1990s and beyond). According to Gabriel;

'[Established] CSOs in the region have tended to display a Gramscian self-understanding where civil society is the terrain in which the state contests and establishes its legitimacy. Such CSOs would engage in advocacy work on targeted policy issues to *transform* state institutions and government policies. However, new social movements tend to display a more Hegelian self-understanding where civil society is necessarily contra-state and works to replace the state (Gabriel, 2003:14).

The Hegelian notion of civil society has arguably become the common 'self-understanding' identity by civil society in contemporary Zimbabwe. It was argued during the interviews that this donor driven anti-

ZANU-PF promotes the 'commercialisation of civil society'. By this is meant that the civil society or NGO sector in Zimbabwe has become an entrepreneurial business sector, wherein middle-class, educated elites not only seek lucrative paying jobs but also constantly manoeuvre their proposals and/or chant resistance slogans to keep donors interested. For example, when civil society criticised the 2007 Constitutional Agreement No.18 as betrayal of the struggle, some commentators opined that such criticism was motivated by greed and not wanting the political crisis to end because it 'has become a lucrative source of employment for many' (IWPR, 2007). During the interviews a respondent concurred and argued that:

[...] our society has become pervaded by corruption to such an extent that it has become a cancer in need of chemotherapy. ZANU PF's political system has bred a culture of corruption which has pervaded into civil society. You can look at civil society leaders being into this [struggle] mainly for personal benefits rather than democracy. Look at how some of them are on huge salaries, look at the cars they purchase, 4x4s largely personalised. If someone is earning a salary of \$US3000 a month, is there still a crisis. They have become separated from the problems that are there. And you will discover that some of these people, nine out of ten are always out of the country. They have become aeroplane activists. You tell me week in, week out you are out of the country and you tell me you are waging a struggle for democracy when you are always on the plane. If through this crisis I can be able to purchase houses on a continuous basis I may as well want the crisis to continue because I am benefiting. That's where the risk is, when people have positions of comfort within the struggle because of the crisis. You get your US\$, you benefit from the parallel market. The season is good for you (Interview 14, 2008).

Tendi (2008:391) also argues that the Zimbabwe crisis saw a rise in the phenomenon called 'bending the analysis' and the exaggeration of the crisis by civil society activists in order to sustain a 'crisis industry' for donor funding. Gumbo (2002), a civic activist himself, argues that in a desperate move to legitimise their existence to donors and the state, some civil society organisations 'bribed' participants to attend their activities. Gumbo (2002:n.p) argues that '[while] the numbers of activists [has grown] very quickly the ideological growth of the movements [does] not match their numerical growth. Massive discrepancies could be seen. On various occasions youths and women could be heard discussing how

lucrative belonging to one organisation was as opposed to the other'. Elsewhere, Gumbo argues again that;

NGOS have been able to co-opt the energies of the poor and commodify their resistance potential. An NGO that pays bribes in some or the other form for activism survives or even flourishes. Donor funding has become a numbers game as well as an ideological game. So the grassroots base tends to be drawn towards spaces where there are financial reward for demonstrations, pickets, workshops and other sites of struggle virtually skimming the cream out of the movement. Those leaders that are drawn from the grassroots get co-opted and do much to close ranks to more radical activists. Many envy the highly paid NGO leaders and look forward to their day, their sun. Remaining activists get demoralised and feel used and abused for personal agendas (Gumbo, 2004:n.p).

It can be argued, therefore, that donor funding and state repression has combined to nurture, implicitly, authoritarian or undemocratic tendencies within the civic movement in Zimbabwe. According to Brilliant Mhlanga, when the state introduced the NGO Bill of 2004 to crack down on governance civil society, it also 'introduced' the idea of an 'Executive Director'²⁷ within the NGO sector and it is this phenomenon of Executive Directorship within the NGO sector that produced 'a lot of clumsy individuals [who] turned people driven organisations that were established through Trusts, to individual organisations run by an Executive Director' (Mhlanga, 2006). It is important to note however that even before 2004 several other organisations such as for example ZIMRIGHTS already had the position of Executive Director. Mhlanga's criticism of individuals holding these positions perhaps reflect a deeper problem to do with a 'flawed' corporate governance system within the NGO sector in Zimbabwe in which an Executive Director of organisation 'X' sit in the Board of Trustees in organisation 'Y' and the Executive Director in organisation 'Y' is a Board member in organisation 'X'. During the interviews this problem was portrayed as a phenomenon of 'rotating boards':

It's these same faces that are always there rotating boards. You meet in this board meeting, in three weeks you are in another one. There are catchment names that are sought after. There are some people that are seen as influential in terms of attracting donors. So a lot of NGOs would want to have that person in their board so that if you then approach donors and say I

²⁷ It is important to note however that before 2004 several other organisations such as for example ZIMRIGHTS already had the position of Executive Director.

have 'X' on our board then they say if he is involved then it's a good organisation lets fund it' (Interview 5, 2008).

In other words, the commercialisation of civil society in post-2000 Zimbabwe, has promoted an enclave of groups 'embodying social capital [with] a certain radius of trust...Beyond this "radius of trust" other forms of associational life [have been] excluded' (Fukuyama, 2001:8). This also explains the inter-politics of coalitions and networks discussed above. While the exclusion can indirectly promote pluralism, in practice however, as Warren (2001:8) argues, it can 'undermine democracy, and enable conspiracy and corruption' (Warren, 2001:8). In the context of Zimbabwe, it reinforces the elite leadership and composition of most civil society organisations. Through links with political parties, the top leadership of civil society develop ambitions for political office at various levels. It is this scenario that breeds intolerance to alternative democratic forces even by civic activists who purport to champion a democratic and inclusive political culture.

During interviews a number of respondents raised the problems of donor dependency syndrome and the close ties that civil society has with an opposition, which is also a donor client. Many respondents spoke of the need to 'wean ourselves' from donor funded agendas, but only a few had alternative fundraising strategies. The relationship between civil society and the business sector, *vis-à-vis* funding the activities of the former is non-existent. A respondent explained, 'Because most civil society organisations are seen as appendages of the opposition no one wants their business to be associated with civil society particularly those working on human rights issues. So we are also cautious in terms of approaching them. We don't want to approach them and they fund us the next day their business is taken over. So we would rather look for resources elsewhere' (Interview 4, 2008). Other organisations argued they had invested in few properties from which they raise funds through rentals: 'As an organisation we are fortunate that we have buildings that we own. We have two other buildings as big

as this one. So we rent those out and get some income from them. Not much but it gets us going. We also do consultancy work' (Interview 5, 2008).

In conclusion, donor funding since the late 1990s has helped capacitate civil society to struggle against state hegemony, to negotiate the opening of the political space and to promote participative policy making processes in Zimbabwe. The *commercialisation of civil society* advocacy work, however, has been the antithetical result of this outsourced political capacity. In response to the upsurge in the militancy of civil society activism, the state narrowed the political space to groups it perceived to be anti-government. The *patronisation of policy spaces* has been the undemocratic by-product of this authoritarian politic.

4.4 Conclusion

The post-2000 Zimbabwe politics demonstrates a scenario in which the contesting hegemonic discourses – nationalism and democracy – have attempted to block each other, but without necessarily reaching a point of 'Caesarism'²⁸. Within each of the contesting hegemonies, as the discussion above demonstrates, are elements that are both fundamentalist in their truth claims and annihilatory in their rejection of each other (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006). The extremist way in which agents defend the dominating elements within the contesting hegemonic projects blocks or inhibits the full realisation of the emancipative potential of either of the discourses. Alan Hunt (1990:315) talks of a 'blocked hegemony' to describe this scenario. He argues that hegemonic contestations should be '[...] about securing basic shifts in the centre of gravity of contested issues'. Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros (2007) and Brian Raftopoulos (2006) have also argued for the need for a 'New Left' kind of politics in

²⁸ This is a point of truce, at which fighting parties realise that the longer the fight goes on then the destruction of both of them is the only outcome.

Zimbabwe, one that recognises both the imperatives for both economic and social justice, on one hand, and for civil and political rights, on the other. Moyo and Yeros are generally supportive of the nationalist project and argue:

If the sources of nationalist re-radicalisation have been fundamentally social, these same sources continue to require a political force which would carry forward Zimbabwe's radical nationalist inheritance. A new political force must sink new roots in the working class; it must unify the proletariat and semi-proletariat across the rural-urban divide; and it must wrest itself from political parties, the state, and external interference. It must also obtain a new level of ideological clarity which never obtained in the liberation struggle, the land occupation, or the political opposition. The objective of this 'New Left' is to establish the organisational means to engage in sustained confrontation with imperialism, both internally and externally, and to recommence an uninterrupted process of social transformation process in Zimbabwe (Moyo and Yeros, 2007:117).

Raftopoulos on the other hand is very critical of the nationalist project and argues:

It is easy to be dismissive about left alternatives in our region, given the weakness of the forces of the Left both in Africa and globally. It is true that those who still claim some affinity to selective aspects of the legacies of Marxism have had to confront the huge political defeats of that history and the theoretical challenges that it has presented. This is particularly true in the face of a growing reactionary nationalism that threatens to enclose our political structures within the narrow agendas of our ruling elites. For some on the African Left, this resurgent nationalism represents a necessary defensive stance in the face of the New Imperialism, an abrasive face towards the global bully. Unfortunately much of the anger of this embattled nationalism is channelled against the citizens of our states, and the nationalism that presents itself as the nation's shield is often the suffocating embrace of murderous regimes. We need to find new collective discourses that build on a broad participation, and a deep commitment to critical discussion and debate (Raftopoulos, 2006:219).

Within this polarised environment, both in practice and in theory, the role of civil society as agents for transformative social change agenda in post-2000 Zimbabwe has been very problematic. The hegemonic civil society – largely the land movement constituted around war veterans – appropriated the language of economic, social and cultural rights as a strategy to transform the enclave dual economy inherited in 1980. Nationalism was given a radical meaning by 'patriotic intellectuals' within the hegemonic bloc, and ZANU-PF was defended, at all cost, by all means, from electoral defeat by the

opposition. The imperative for land reform was defended at the cost of lives of many innocent citizens. This kind of engagement did not question the contradictions within the state. On the other hand, the counter-hegemonic civil society – largely democracy and human rights civil society – appropriated, broadly, the language of law and rights as a strategy to resist hegemony and effect social change. However, as the discussion above demonstrates, the deployment of this discourse reproduced the same situation of repression through fundamentally taken positions that panders to universalised norms and values defining the practice of politics. ZANU-PF's politics was seen as a deviant in need of reform or total replacement.

Zimbabwe, and Africa at large, needs to move towards a 'democratic nationalist' inspired politics that recognises that economic and social rights are complementary and interdependent with civil and political rights (Steiner, 1991). In other words, the right to self-determination needs to be achieved in a way that does not infringe upon other rights such as civil and political rights. Similarly, as Steiner (1991:928) argues, the discourse on property rights, which in the Zimbabwe case took centre stage during the farm invasions, needs to be de-linked from the discourse on civil and political rights, because it has a strong and clear economic character. The next chapter presents a case study of the role played by civil society in electoral politics in post-2000 Zimbabwe, with special reference to the 2008 'Make Our Vote Count' campaign.

CHAPTER 5

CIVIL SOCIETY, PUBLIC ACTION AND THE POST-2000 ELECTORAL POLITICS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the role of the counter-hegemonic civil society in galvanising public political action to demand free and fair democratic elections in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Prior to 2000, ZANU-PF's electoral hegemony was rarely ever threatened by the fragmented opposition parties, which also lacked broad national appeal. The uncompetitiveness and therefore predictability of the elections outcome effectively demobilised society as it lost interest in electoral politics. Although the formation of the MDC in 1999 galvanised citizens' interest in electoral politics, it did not necessarily halt ZANU-PF's hegemony because of the electoral system that favours the latter. Instead, there was increased political intolerance towards the opposition and civil society activists by ZANU-PF. Consequently, one of the defining features of post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis is the contested legitimacy of the ZANU-PF led government. The MDC party and the counter-hegemonic civil society has led vociferous calls for the reformation of Zimbabwe's electoral system, which gives unfair political advantage to the ruling party. The counter-hegemonic civil society in particular has led calls for non-violent public action to demand free and fair democratic elections in Zimbabwe in order to end the socio-economic and political crisis. This chapter therefore discusses the challenges and opportunities that have been faced by the counter-hegemonic civil society in this task (see Appendix 8 for an illustrative listing of these organisations). The analysis needs to be understood within the context of the overall politics of hegemonic contestation discussed above.

The chapter is divided into three major sections. In section 5.2 the chapter discusses the institutional and legal framework for the conduct of elections in Zimbabwe, which entrenches ZANU-PF's hegemony. It also discusses the role played by civil society in the struggle for democratic elections in Zimbabwe in three key areas that include civic and voter education, research and advocacy, observation and monitoring. Section 5.3 uses civil society's 2008 'Make Our Vote Count' campaign (hereafter, the Campaign) to further illustrate the chapter's argument. The chapter concludes, in section 5.4, by posing two questions: Does Zimbabwe's electorate appreciate the power invested in them by civil society during election periods? Can civil society be a transformative agent to entrench the concept of 'electoral mandate' as a critical force for social change? Reflective of the chapter's argument, it is argued that the case of Zimbabwe demonstrates the futility of elections as policy windows where citizens are supposed to exercise their power to give or take away electoral mandate from political elites that are not responsive to the needs of the governed.

5.2 Hegemony and electoral politics in post-2000 Zimbabwe

5.2.1 Institutional context of elections

The Constitution of Zimbabwe, the Electoral Act and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Act (amended in 2008) provides the legal framework for the administration of elections in the country. Since 2000 Zimbabwe has held five general elections, namely the 2000 and 2005 parliamentary elections, 2002 presidential election, 2006 senatorial elections and the 2008 harmonised and presidential runoff elections.²⁹ Four institutions – the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), the Delimitation Commission (DC), the Electorate Directorate (ED) and the Registrar General of Elections (RGE) – manage the electoral process. Duplication and lack of synchronisation of roles between these electoral institutions exposes the entire electoral system to manipulation by ZANU-PF (Kabemba, 2005:10). Before 2008,

²⁹ In addition, there was the February 2000 referendum, urban and rural council elections, executive mayoral elections and by-elections.

the RGE registered voters, prepared voters' roll, printed ballot papers, set up polling stations, hired electoral staff, declared election results and assumed overall custody of all election materials. The RGE has held the office for over 20 years and is a senior member of ZANU-PF, which comprises his partiality (Makumbe, 2006:11). The RGE often refuses or delays releasing the voters' roll for inspection by opposition parties ahead of elections. As a result 'ghost voters' have been discovered still appearing as registered voters. Opposition parties and the counter-hegemonic civil society have also criticised the RGE for over printing ballot papers, arguing this exposes the elections to possible rigging through ballot stuffing.

The DC draws up constituency boundaries using the voters' roll provided by the RGE. The DC has been accused of gerrymandering constituent boundaries in favour of ZANU-PF by either increasing rural constituencies or expanding them into peri-urban constituencies in order to dilute the opposition urban support base (Makumbe, 2006:8). According to the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) (2005), the DC sometimes delays publishing new boundaries resulting in some voters being turned away at polling stations after going to wrong constituencies. The ED provides logistics support to the other three institutions and also ensures '[...] that all government ministries and departments cooperate fully and effectively in the discharge of tasks that are related to the conduct of elections' (Makumbe, 2006:10). This coordinating role ensures that state resources are diverted towards the election campaign activities of ZANU-PF. ZEC was established through Constitutional Amendment Act No. 17 (2005) to replace the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), which lacked constitutional authority to direct a review of irregularities in the data provided by the other electoral institutions (Kabemba, 2005:12). In 2000, the ESC mounted two unsuccessful High Court challenges against government's unilateral usurping away of its constitutional functions by either reallocating them to the ED or by allowing the RGE to wield more influence over the electoral system contrary to the constitution (Pottie, 2002:486-487).

The electoral institutions' personnel are appointed by and accountable to the President and collaterally must demonstrate loyalty towards ZANU-PF.³⁰ This lack of autonomy from ZANU-PF interference has been criticised by election observers, the opposition and the counter-hegemonic civil society. Following Constitutional Amendment Act No. 18 (2008) the functions of the RGE and the DC were placed under ZEC (ZESN, 2008:20-21). ZEC now conducts and supervises all elections. It supervises the registration of voters, compiles voters' rolls and registers, prints and distributes ballot papers, conducts voter education, accredits observers and has the power to instruct public service employees to assist with the administration of elections (ZESN, 2008:21). However, the impartiality of ZEC is still compromised because its personnel are appointed to reflect the hegemonic wishes of ZANU-PF. Much of the rhetoric on electoral reforms since 2000, as Kriger (2008) argues, conceals ZANU-PF's hegemonic project. For example, whilst the 2008 ZEC Act prohibits state security agents from conducting election related work, except when providing security, there is still covert militarisation of the electoral process through secondment of retired military officers to serve under ZEC (ZESN, 2008:21-22).

In addition, post-2000 elections in Zimbabwe were conducted under a climate of acute constitutional and institutional collapse, manifested among other things, by the partisan conduct of state security agents, co-optation of traditional leadership, attacks on the independence of the judiciary, politicisation of civil servants, 'militarisation' of unemployed youths and war veterans, and the partisan conduct of state owned media. The repressive constitutional and institutional environment was fortified by draconian laws and legislations that curtailed freedom of expression and association, especially with regards to opposition political activities and civil society advocacy and civic education work. Electoral politics in post-2000 Zimbabwe was also influenced by the economic crisis as acute shortages of basic

³⁰ Constitutionally, the President makes the appointments in consultation with the Public Services Commission but is not obliged to change his preferences.

commodities meant that elections became a protest weapon against ZANU-PF, albeit one that proved a no march to the regime's coercive and hegemonic apparatus.

5.2.2 Civil society, electoral processes and public action

The uneven and contested electoral playing field buttressed ZANU-PF's hegemony but inversely amplified the regime's illegitimate status. Within this context civil society coalitions and networks mushroomed in post-2000 to advocate for free and fair elections as a way to usher a democratic social change. Civil society participates in electoral politics in four broad areas, namely civic and voter education, research and advocacy, election monitoring and observation and monitoring and documentation of political violence. ZANU-PF has always been suspicious of civic and voter education outside its sphere of influence. The 2000 constitutional referendum victory by the counter-hegemonic civil society heightened ZANU-PF's sensitiveness towards non-state controlled civic and voter education. The referendum victory gave hope to the electorate that it was possible to take back the electoral mandate that it had given to ZANU-PF since 1980. The 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections provided the perfect opportunity. The hope was short lived as ZANU-PF promulgated repressive legislation and unleashed violence on the opposition and its supporters, counter-hegemonic civil society and commercial white farmers. The MDC failed to access the electorate as many of its campaign rallies were banned, cancelled and/or interrupted by war veterans and ZANU-PF youth militia. Voter education programmes run by the counter-hegemonic civil society suffered the same fate. According to the Commonwealth observer team, the restrictions on civil society actors '[...] effectively barred this important sector from participation in the democratic process, and prevented them from carrying out much needed voter education activities' (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2002:44).

Although the Electoral Act in general stipulates that civil society, including hegemonic civil society, should participate in voter education, this role has a secondary status because the ZEC has the primary responsibility to conduct adequate, accurate and unbiased voter education. The ZEC may however second other persons to assist with voter education provided they are permanent Zimbabwean citizens. Civil society can provide voter education provided funding for the exercise is sourced locally and the programme and material are approved by the ZEC. However, the ZEC has been criticised for conducting little voter education and what they do is often too late to reach the entire country or to cover all critical electoral issues. Furthermore, the ZEC seems comfortable only in allowing civil society to encourage people to register in order to vote, but does little to enlighten the electorate about its rights to elect leaders of their choice. In 2008, when ZESN tried to fill up this gap, the ZEC interfered and stopped all civil society led civic and voter education activities (ZESN, 2008:31).

Another factor that has militated against civil society conducting sufficient civic and voter education is repressive legislation such as Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which requires civil society to notify police of all scheduled civic and voter education workshops and public meeting. The police have often refused to grant permission for such public meetings citing threats to order and security. Citizens who participate in civic and voter education workshops organised by perceived anti-government civil society risk being branded supporters of the opposition and therefore agents of the regime change agenda. Therefore, what little achievement the counter-hegemonic civil society realises in civic and voter education is swiftly eroded by state sponsored violence, torture and intimidation of the electorate. This suggests perhaps that efforts in-between elections should also be channelled towards conflict and resolution issues and transforming the pervasive culture of political violence in Zimbabwe in general.

There has also been an increase in research on broad political, social and economic policy issues by the civil society since 2000. For example, Transparency International-Zimbabwe researches on corruption. The Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe (MISA-Zimbabwe) researches and advocates for democratic media reforms. The Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) and Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZIMRIGHTS) research on human rights violations and abuses and advocate for implementation and adherence to international conventions on broadly defined human rights. The National Association for Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) researches and advocates for the free operating environment for NGOs in the country, in addition to taking on board broad socio-economic and political issues that are also focus areas for its institutional based membership. The Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI) gauges, through opinion surveys, the public's perception on several topical policy issues in the country. The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA)'s focus is the constitution. These and other organisations come together and put forward position policy papers such as the 2008 People's Charter, which reflects the multifaceted dimensions of the Zimbabwe crisis.

Since 2000, the counter-hegemonic civil society has also attempted to influence the nature of electoral politics through documenting electoral related violence, electoral fraud and gauged the public's opinion on their preferred election outcomes. The ability to research and document human rights abuses, election fraud and electoral related violence is arguably the strongest asset that counter-hegemonic Zimbabwean civil society has got. This has been attributed to the fact that most civil society organisations within the counter-hegemonic bloc are headed and staffed by personnel 'with one leg in the academia and another leg in the civic' (Interview 17, 2008). A criticism however of civil society research work is that it is inaccessible to ordinary people in the streets or rural areas. This has to do with both strategies for dissemination and the elite and donor biased manner in which policy issues are articulated. As argued in chapter 4, human rights discourse dominates civil society strategies of

mobilising public action against the regime. However, this discourse is yet to fully resonate with the development aspirations and hopes of the grassroots social base mostly located in the countryside (see also Gumbo, 2002).

In terms of advocacy, counter-hegemonic civil society uses various strategies to influence Zimbabwe's electoral politics, which include writing letters to key stakeholders, dialoguing with government and political parties officials, street demonstrations, media blitz campaigns, and public meetings or workshops. The success of these strategies in influencing the ZANU-PF regime to reform the uneven electoral playing field and to influence voter behaviours has been limited, judging by the recurrent electoral related violence since 2000. Street marches and demonstrations have been ruthlessly quashed by the police. As a result there has been reluctance by Zimbabweans to participate in civil society organised public action because: one, such public action has not delivered desired democratic social change; two, the repressive legislative environment has abrogated the right of people to freely participate in electoral related politics; and three, some of the demonstrations by organisations such as NCA and the Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) are what one can describe as 'ambush public actions'. They are organised in secrecy in order to catch authorities by surprise, but this kind of approach means only a few people can be mobilised to participate.

Counter-hegemonic civil society also monitors and observes elections, either as individual institutions or as part of a broad election network such as ZESN. Through ZESN, civil society recruit, train and deploy monitors; it documents electoral irregularities and violence; and it carries out parallel votes tabulations to pre-empt rigging (ZESN, 2008). Local civil society organisations (and other eminent citizens) are invited to observe and monitor elections by the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. Regional and international civil society organisations (and eminent persons) are invited by the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs. Organisations and persons that pass the screening processes within these two ministries are then officially accredited by ZEC (ZESN, 2008:30). Since 2000, election observation and monitoring, just like civic and voter education, has been a contentious and controversial subject. ZANU-PF has been critical of western countries arguing that there is a covert attempt to impose their hegemony and to subvert Zimbabwe's sovereignty through confrontational, judgmental and critical election reports (Matlosa, 2002). Consequently there has been, since 2000, a tight surveillance of election observers and monitors by the state. Observers from countries critical of the regime have been refused accreditation to observe elections in Zimbabwe. The next section discusses the role of counter-hegemonic civil society in catalysing public action in electoral processes, with special reference to the 2008 'Make Our Vote Count' campaign.

5.3 The 'Make Our Vote Count' campaign

5.3.1 The politics of the 2008 elections

Zimbabwe's 29 March 2008 elections were held against the backdrop of Southern African Development Community's (SADC) mediated inter-parties dialogue. The dialogue resulted in Constitutional Amendment No.18, which amended repressive legislations such as the Access to Information, Privacy and Private Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). For the first time, the presidential, senatorial, parliamentary, urban and council elections were all held concurrently and the results were posted outside polling stations in all constituencies. The latter aspect was meant to ensure transparent and to guarantee the credibility of the elections. In the presidential election, a candidate needed to garner 50% plus one vote to be declared the absolute winner, a deviation from the previous first past the post system (ZESN, 2008:22). The peaceful environment in the run up to the elections raised people's hopes that the ballot would be free and fair and that a legitimate government would emerge to reverse the economic and political crisis. Preliminary election statements by observer teams

such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (2008:4) and the SADC Election Observer Mission (SEOM) (2008) applauded the environment as conducive for free and fair elections.

However, the credibility of the electoral process was later tainted, first, by ZEC's delay in announcing the results. It took seven days – from 29 March to 4 April – for ZEC to announce all the House of Assembly results. The results were announced in pairs such that at a given moment the main contending parties – i.e. ZANU-PF and MDC-T – had equal number of seats and neither party led the other until the last day or until '[...] they could no longer hide the fact that the MDC had defeated ZANU-PF at the parliamentary level' (Makumbe, 2009:128). The same pattern was used to announce the Senatorial results, which took five days – from 4 to 9 April. The presidential results were not released until after thirty-three days, on the 8th of May 2008. The table below summarises the election results.

Table 5.1: Results of the 29 March Harmonised Elections

Election	ZANU-PF	MDC-T	MDC-M	Independent	Total
Senatorial	30	24	6	-	90
House of Assembly	97	99	10	1	207

Presidential Candidate	Party	Votes	Percentage %
Morgan Tsvangirai	MDC-T	1195 562	47.9
Robert Mugabe	ZANU-PF	1079 730	43.2
Simba Makoni	Independent	207 470	8.3
Langton Towungana	Independent	14 503	0.6

(Source: based on report by ZESN (2008)).

In a possible move to pre-empt rigging of the elections, the opposition and civil society reacted to the ZEC's delay in announcing results by releasing their respective tabulated results that had been collected from outside polling stations by their monitors and polling agents. These unofficial results put the two MDCs in control of the House of Assembly and projected an MDC-T presidential victory. The MDC-T celebrated the victory by declaring it 'a historic moment for us all' (*Newzimbabwe.com*, 2008) and further arguing 'Mugabe's victory is not possible given true facts' (Shaw, 2008). ZANU-PF rejected these announcements, and argued they were unlawful, but also added spin that the MDC was under pressure from western governments to announce the unofficial results. As the table above shows, when the official results were announced, none of the presidential candidates had received the stipulated absolute majority votes and this constitutionally paved way for a presidential runoff on the 27 of June 2008. The looming presidential runoff resulted in the second factor to taint the elections: state sponsored violence.

Using war veterans, youths and state security agents, ZANU-PF unleashed violence, tortured, abducted, killed and arrested several opposition supporters and civil society activists. MDC-T campaign rallies were either banned or disrupted. ZANU-PF threatened civil war if the MDC was voted into power. The army was drawn in to mobilise the electorate on behalf of ZANU-PF and the electorate was repeatedly warned that the ballot would never be permitted to defeat the bullet. As a result, the presidential runoff was turned into a military as opposed to a political contest (Masunungure, 2009:79, 83). ZANU-PF argued in its manifesto that it was '**utterly preposterous**' to allow Mugabe to be succeeded by "**Tsvangirai of all people**". [...] **the succession question does not arise at all in relation to the presidential runoff on June 27**. Most Zimbabweans in and outside ZANU-PF now fully **appreciate that the runoff is not and cannot be a succession decider**' (ZANU-PF, 2008:38-40, bold emphasis in original). Eventually, the MDC-T candidate Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew from the election on the 23rd of June 2008. The ZEC and ZANU-PF refused to recognise the withdrawal and

subsequently a one-man presidential election was held and Robert Mugabe was re-elected President of Zimbabwe. Table 5.2 below summarises the 27 June presidential runoff election results.

Table 5.2: **Results of the 27 June Presidential Runoff Election**

Presidential runoff candidate	Votes	Remarks
Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T)	233 000	A loss of 962 562 votes
Robert Mugabe (ZANU-PF)	2 150 269	A gain of 1 070 539 votes
Spoiled/Rejected Votes	129 781	High number of spoilt papers in urban centres with insulting messages directed to both candidates but more to ZANU-PF's presidential candidate

(Source: Author's version based on original table by ZESN (2008:58-59))

The presidential-runoff election was condemned by both local and international community actors as a sham. ZANU-PF ignored the criticism and hastily arranged a swearing in ceremony for Robert Mugabe. Thereafter, the regime began to be receptive to the idea of a negotiated political settlement through a Government of National Unity in contradiction to its prior public posturing that it would never work with the MDC 'puppets'. This politics demonstrates that the institution of the Executive presidency as a power concentrating centre remains one of the stumbling blocks to democratisation, not only in Zimbabwe, but also in other sub-Saharan African countries. The MDC on its side adopted a 'defeatist stance', but one that projected its undisputed political value in the resolution of the Zimbabwe crisis. The MDC scornfully told ZANU-PF '*chitongai tione*' (govern and let's see). Against this political stalemate ZANU-PF and the two MDC factions were pressured to negotiate a power sharing deal to pave the road to democracy and economic recovery. In the section below, I discuss counter-hegemonic civil society's response to this contested and violent electoral process.

5.3.2 Civil society's 'Make our Vote Count' campaign

The context of the MOVC Campaign was the delayed official election results by the ZEC and the state's organised violence and intimidation against the opposition and counter-hegemonic civil society activists. This context has been defined by a group of Zimbabwean scholars as a case of the ZEC and ZANU-PF 'defying the winds of change' (Masunungure, 2009). Counter-hegemonic civil society's first response was to convene, through NANGO secretariat, a 'Civil Society Electoral Post Election Review Meeting' in Harare on the 3rd of April 2008. The meeting was attended by over one hundred and twenty civil society representatives. Its purpose was to 'evaluate the 2008 electoral process and outcomes, implications thereof and to collectively define the broad strategic directions for civil society in Zimbabwe's post-electoral era' (NANGO, 2008c). Civil society lamented the fact that they had been 'left staying in the dark with regard to the electoral process' (NANGO, 2008d). Various speakers took turns to lament, among other issues, the failure of Zimbabwe's electoral processes to bring about a democratic social change, the vulnerability of women and children during electoral related conflicts and voter apathy amongst the youths. Most importantly speakers engaged in self-reflective criticism of the civil society sector in general. The problems of competition and lack of coordination were highlighted as civil society was urged to avoid the propensity to outsmart each other in order to be effective in catalysing non-violent public action to defend peoples' votes.

After deliberations;

A broad strategic framework for collaborated civil society action inclusive of a unified civil society message, mass civic education campaign, increased information dissemination to remote areas through existing structures and non violent social action was endorsed by the meeting as the way forward in response to a set of five possible scenarios that could emanate from the election process. The most prominent scenario was defined as the disaster management approach. This approach compels civil society to organise effectively to avert a possible downturn into the 2002 and 2005 election processes which were characterised by among other things, human rights abuses, the deployment of war veterans and youth militia, cordoning of rural areas and the closure of space for civil society and the media (NANGO, 2008d).

A twelve member Working Group representing the church, labour, women, youths, media, constitution, the disabled and human rights was drawn up and the NANGO secretariat was mandated to coordinate its operations. The composition of the Working Group aimed at bridging the coordination gap, to lessen inter-civil society competition but more importantly to harness the mass mobilising potency of organisations such as labour, women's groups and the churches. The Working Group met on the 12 of April 2008 at Action Aid offices in order to develop the Campaign's strategy. The Campaign's problem statement was identified as: 'The disrespect for the people's voice/vote through failure to release 29 March legitimate results and the militarisation of politics and development which has seen violence and intimidation' (NANGO, 2008e).

The major goal of the Campaign was, 'To protect our peaceful vote and make it count'. The Campaign aimed to affirm the election of 29 March as the only legitimate expression of the people's will, to promote peace and tolerance amongst Zimbabweans, it demanded the demilitarisation of the political and electoral processes, and expressed civil society's willingness to mobilise citizens to defend their vote and human dignity (NANGO, 2008e). Key messages of the Campaign were listed as 'Return democracy to the people', 'Our vote counts, respect it', 'Peace and respect for the people's voice', 'Your vote is your voice', 'We have spoken', 'Do not make our democracy a security issue', etc (NANGO, 2008e). The target audience was foremost ordinary Zimbabweans, the state through its institutions such as the ZEC, the judiciary and state security agents, political parties, international governments through their local based diplomats and international organisations. Table 5.3 below outlines the five key campaign strategies and sub-components of each major strategy:

Table 5.3: The 'Make Our Vote Count' Campaign Strategies

Key campaign strategies	Sub-components of the key strategies
1. Mass-based non-violent actions	-consensus building among civil society actors -stakeholder mobilisation (targeting the grassroots, NGOs, media houses, churches and business) -Putting on white ribbons, scarves, hats -Prayer meetings -Marches -Boycott independence celebrations
2. Targeted engagements	-Name and shame -Roundtable discussions with perpetrators and representatives of political parties -Petitions and letters -Use of respected individuals in society as campaign ambassadors
3. Media advocacy	-News alerts and supplements -Give interviews to local and international media -Weblogs and email alerts -SMS campaign
4. Provision of protection, support and security services/safety nets	-Encourage presence of leaders in communities -Legal support -Safe houses for victims and IDPs -Medical support -Food and sanitary needs
5. Establishment of coordination centre	-Collation of information from members -Dissemination of information -Provision of referral centre

Source: NANGO, 2008e. (This is my own tabulated version of the MOVC campaign document).

The MOVC Campaign and its critique

Prior to the 29 March 2008 elections, counter-hegemonic civil society had met to assess its preparedness. In a post-workshop statement, civil society noted the difficulties of operating in a polarised political environment but more significantly it noted that '[...]Zimbabwean civil society is faced with a host of ideological, principle and logistical challenges begging urgent resolution' (NANGO, 2008f). These challenges played themselves glaringly during the MOVC Campaign. Several challenges, both external and internal to civil society, faced the implementation of the MOVC

Campaign. Externally, ZANU-PF heightened its articulation of the ideological hegemony based on its war of liberation credentials and the notions of sovereignty and empowerment and a marked gravitation towards the use of force. ZANU-PF embarked on a systemic structural closure of the political space, especially in rural areas. A political campaign code-named '*Operation Makavotera Papi*' (How did you vote?) was implemented by war veterans, youth militia, ZANU-PF supporters and state security agents. Several official and unofficial roadblocks were set up along the country's high ways and feeder roads linking urban centres and rural areas during which suspected opposition supporters were beaten in the presence of the police who took no action against such lawlessness (Pan African Parliament Election Observer Mission (PAPEOM), 2008: 15).

As a result of the structural closure and partisan policing, civil society were unable to conduct civic and voter education ahead of the presidential runoff (ZESN, 2008). Rural communities remained unmobilised against yielding to ZANU-PF intimidation and violence. This situation was generally worsened by poor communication and transport infrastructure between rural areas and urban centres. Thus, the Campaign's strategies such as marches, web blogs and email alerts remained suited for urban centres and only targeting urban audiences. Moreover, in urban centres not everyone has access to internet. The high visibility of the military in major cities made it difficult for urbanites to be mobilised for demonstrations. Instead, ZANU-PF youths freely harassed and force matched people to attend ZANU-PF rallies and to sing slogans such as 'WW', meaning 'Win or War'³¹. A number of people who had never heard the slogan before were labelled opposition supporters and beaten.

³¹ The slogan was coined in reference to ZANU-PF's declaration that the gun was superior to the pen (elections) and therefore ZANU-PF had to win to avoid civil war.

With the entire state security machinery, which included the military, the police, the CIOs and para-military groups such as war veterans and ZANU-PF youth brigades, involved in the intimidation, beating and abductions of opposition supporters and key government officials threatening war against the opposition it became difficult for civil society to know whom to engage, in a progressive manner. As one respondent put it, the 'country is on auto pilot. Things are just occurring on their own' (Interview 22, 2008). The idea of a 'country on auto pilot' mirrored a general institutional panic and loss of coherence within key government ministries and departments to intervene or voice concern over violence because of the high visibility and intimidating role of the military in trying to influence the outcome of the Presidential run-off election. For instance, organisations such as the Women's Coalition could not get the cooperation of the Ministry of Gender to intervene and protect women and children who were at the stick end of the violence. This was despite the fact that various women's groups had worked closely with the Ministry of Gender to campaign for an increase in number of women legislators regardless of political party affiliation, under the 'Women can do it Campaign' (Interview 10, 2008). Moreover, on the 4th of June 2008, the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare directed that NGOs and/or civil society organisations 'suspend all field operation until further notice' because of allegations that they were '[...] breaching the terms and conditions of their registration [...]' (Goche, 2008) to campaign for the opposition. The ban made it difficult for counter-hegemonic civil society to have access to rural areas where violence was concentrated. In cities the police responded to the Ministry's directive by raiding perceived pro-opposition civil society organisations and forced them to close.

The MOVC Campaign had initially aimed to demand the release of results of the 29 March election and to mobilise the electorate to go again and vote in the presidential runoff. However, as the numbers of internal displaced people (IDPs) and victims of violence running away from rural areas increased, the Campaign was caught up between advocating for people to go and vote and responding to the

humanitarian situation. One respondent captured the dilemma civil society organisations found themselves in as follows:

Organisations had also other pressing issues to deal with: IDPs, the violence, dealing with victims, providing humanitarian relief and at the same time you are trying to organise a campaign for people to vote again. So in terms of having enough resources in terms of capital and manpower to run the campaign it became problematic. We had competing interests, you are trying to make people to vote but at the same time you have a backlash of people who are being victimised for having voted in the other election. What's more important to take care of these people or to organise more people to vote? (Interview 10, 2008).

Because of the imperative to respond to the victims of violence the campaign lost momentum with regards to implementing mass based non-violent actions involving street marches and mobilising grassroots, both in urban and rural areas, through increased civic and voter education. The distribution of white ribbons symbolising calls for peace went only as far as to a few who visited NANGO secretariat offices or civil society activists who attended workshops. And more so, only a few civil society activists seemed prepared to put on the white ribbon and be identified with the Campaign. As a result of this fear the Campaign's visibility never went beyond civil society offices, hotel workshop venues and newspaper adverts. The Working Group's two meetings held on the 4th and 7th of April 2008 for instance reported that the Campaign was being viewed as top-down and therefore 'elitist driven' and that Community Based Organisations (CBOs) were complaining that strategies being proposed in Harare by key civil society organisations were not complementary. Another factor that worked against the Campaign was the general situation of an economic meltdown characterised, among other things, by hyperinflation, haphazard power and water cuts and rationing, acute shortages of cash and basic commodities. This made people generally unresponsive towards civil society and even opposition calls for mass-based action against the regime because of pressures and struggles over daily survival.

Internal to the civil society sector, the Campaign faced challenges of disagreement over strategies and procedural issues for mobilising relevant stakeholders. In terms of the procedural issues an argument

was put forward that NANGO had not consulted widely before inviting some particular organisations especially those like the NCA and Zimbabwe Crisis Coalition who are not affiliate members of the umbrella body. For example, a respondent representing the church argued, 'They have not invited us as yet. But when they have problems they will come. The moment they have enough money they don't invite us. The moment they have squandered all the money they will invite the church. This I am telling you' (Interview 21, 2008). Another respondent defended his organisation's unwillingness to participate in the Campaign by arguing that 'You know, one of the fundamental conditions or pre-condition of any progressive engagement in a democracy is that of consultation. Dictators become dictators because they do not want to consult the people. Any initiative that should be embarked on must be based on consultation. [...] I really would appreciate an organisation that wants to be consulted before it engages in any form of campaign. That is necessary for coordinating purposes. You cannot just jump into an initiative before you understand it, before you are fully appraised about it. So I think that was the whole tension if you want to call it tension but obviously to us we thought we were engaging in fruitful discussion. It was about progressive disputation' (Interview 14, 2008).

Also related to the issue of consultation, some people seconded by NANGO secretariat to sell the Campaign to the leadership of other civil society networks were perceived as not of the 'right politics'. For instance, when a respondent was pressed during interviews to explain why his organisation had taken the position against participating in the Campaign when they had been attending meetings with NANGO, the respondent criticised the sudden visibility of white people in the civil society sector and in particular in this Campaign. The respondent put it elaborately as follows:

And again on this matter, obviously this issue is controversial. There is racism in civil society. It's something that people are not talking much about. You will discover that the initiative, this 'Make Our Vote' campaign is largely a brainchild of the likes of John Stewart, Dr Francis Lovemore, etc. And there are complaints from other quarters that these guys they tend to want to present themselves as the 'super activists'. There is some dangerous spirit that is affecting civil society, that of racism. [...] in Zimbabwe you have an element of racism where the ex-

Rhodies still want to stick to 'their' land etc. And you will then discover that some of these guys are part of us not because of the overall objective of creating an environment of freedom for the downtrodden ordinary Zimbabweans, but some of them are part of the whole process as a result of their own personal political vendetta with Mugabe. But some of us are not doing what we are doing because we hate Mugabe. Mugabe is an incidental, coincidental and perhaps accidental piece of history. We don't care about Mugabe the individual; we care about the system. That is what we are fighting for. So some of these guys are there simply because they lost a farm. They are bitter and they say let me join the crusade to remove Mugabe. You look even at the manner in which they were celebrating an MDC victory you then discover that these people celebrate not because they want a new framework in which even the poor will get something from the national cake but because Mugabe is gone and probably Morgan will return their farms. [...] So the politics, you will discover that it was John Stewart and that white lady who is the policy advisor at NANGO who approached Matongo. Two white people approaching Matongo! It becomes then obvious, it becomes suspicious (Interview 14, 2008).

The discourse of race has been revived by ZANU-PF to mobilise Zimbabweans against White commercial farmers. Interestingly, the allegations that the respondent was putting forward pandered to the same rhetoric that the ZANU-PF regime was peddling in order to justify its fallback on violence to avert electoral defeat. In terms of disagreements over strategies some respondents felt that NANGO's '*principled engagement*' approach in dealing with the unfolding electoral impasse and state orchestrated violence was ineffective compared to the strategy of *outright non-engagement or confrontation*. The outright non-engagement strategy is normally expressed through forms of civil disobedience such as street demonstrations, marches, job stay aways and by amplifying the illegitimacy of the regime. In this regard, organisations such as the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU), Zimbabwe Crisis Coalition, NCA and WOZA have been in the forefront of calling for mass action against the regime. In this vein, the purpose of the Campaign to catalyse nationwide grassroots based non-violent public action to protect the people's vote became problematic with some civil society networks. As one respondent argued, 'There is currently confusion and there is also confusion about strategies' (Interview 26, 2008). The differences over strategies also reflected what one respondent referred to as 'the Super Four' versus NANGO and its civic affiliates. On the 5th of May 2008, the Campaign's Working Group however defended its characterisation of the campaign as non-violent

social action on the basis that an alternative, which is violent, might just give the regime justification to declare a state of emergency. In any event, the Working Group further argued, the radical groups had not initiated alternatives that contributed to solving the electoral crisis.

International dimension of the Campaign

The Campaign benefited not only from international interest on the 2008 elections, but also from the increased regionalisation and internationalisation of the Zimbabwe crisis that had gained momentum since 2000 (Meissner, 2005). On the basis of credible reports on state organised violence and torture, which constituted 'an effective barometer of democratic freedoms, political tolerance and political violence' (Matyszak, 2009:136)³², counter-hegemonic civil society carried out regional and international advocacy activities targeting inter-governmental institutions (e.g. SADC, African Union and the United Nations); Western and African governments through their local diplomatic representatives; regional and international civic organisations (e.g. Congress of South Africa Trade Union (COSATU), Amnesty International (AI)) and election observer missions (e.g. SADC Election Observer Mission (SEOM)) (NANGO, 2008g). Civil society called upon the international community 'to assume leadership responsibilities and obligations and alleviate the gross suffering of innocent citizens [not only of Zimbabwe, but] of this World at the hands of rogue dictators and politicians' because 'Africa does not deserve another Rwanda. Africa does not deserve another Darfur' (NANGO, 2008h:11). The Campaign catalysed and amplified regional and international condemnation of the regime. Election observer missions unanimously gave a negative verdict on the presidential runoff election describing it not free, not fair and not credible (SEOM, 2008:6). SADC governments who are normally reluctant to criticise ZANU-PF weighed in, with Zambia and Botswana at the forefront of criticising the regime (Badza, 2009:165-168). The UN Security Council (2008) condemned the runoff election as incapable of

³² See for example Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), 2008; Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR), 2008; and Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (ZHR NGO Forum), 2001.

producing a legitimate government and urged political parties to yield to a negotiated political settlement.

The ultimate triumph of the Campaign however was the regional and international coordinated response to stop the ZANU-PF regime from importing military arms from China during a volatile election period. In April 2008, a Chinese Ocean Shipping Company's owned vessel, the *MV An Yue Jiang* attempted to dock at South Africa's Durban harbour with six containers of weapons destined for Zimbabwe (du Plessis, 2008). Local, regional and international civil society immediately mobilised against the shipment of weapons to Zimbabwe. Civil society in South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia successfully sought legal injunctions through the courts and prevented the ship from docking. Across the Southern Africa region, trade unions urged dockworkers not to handle the Chinese vessel's cargo. Although the ship finally docked in Angola's Lobito harbour, a court ruling permitted Angolan civil society to monitor it and ensure that no arms would be offloaded. From a legal perspective, South African civil society argued that the weapons conveyance permit in possession of the ship violated the South African Conventional Arms Control Act (2002) (du Plessis, 2008). From a moral perspective, regional civil societies were in solidarity with counter-hegemonic Zimbabwean civil society and argued that ZANU-PF would use the weapons to precipitate more human rights violations and repression (de Plessis, 2008:27). The strengthening of the military at a time when the regime was facing electoral defeat shows that ZANU-PF's hegemonic project has been built, strengthened and sustained on the basis of taking full control of state apparatus and developing an oppressive security institutional system, incorporating security forces and associated non-state affiliated security groups.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the role of civil society in galvanising non-violent public action to demand free and fair elections in post-2000 Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe case demonstrates the continuing futility of elections as policy windows for citizens to exercise their power to give or take away electoral mandate from political elites. This is an outcome of the institutional framework for the conduct of elections, which favours the ZANU-PF regime. Since 2000, ZANU-PF has manipulated the electoral system, promulgated repressive laws, harassed and intimidated civil society activists, the opposition and its supporters in order to entrench its hegemony on Zimbabwean politics. Consequently, the prospects for the electorate to take away 'electoral mandate' from an unresponsive government and give it to the opposition remained an elusive agenda. In this regard, a respondent argued that, '[...] the fundamental principle that we have not addressed is the holding of free and democratic elections. If we are to ignore this the problems will re-emerge at some point. We need as Zimbabweans to come up with a democratically elected government for this country' (Interview 10, 2008).

Whilst civil society has successfully documented electoral irregularities and related violence, ZANU-PF's exclusionary politics, which criminalise civil society's participation in electoral processes, constrained the latter's ability to galvanise non-violent public action to defend people's electoral voice. The case of the 2008 elections and specifically the presidential runoff election demonstrates ZANU-PF's authoritarian response to attempts by citizens to vote alternative political parties into power. Thus, despite civil society's well designed 2008 MOVIC Campaign to catalyse non-violent public action, citizens were cowed through violence to consent to ZANU-PF's authoritarian nationalism. The regionalisation of civil society's struggles for social change, like the blocking of the importation of arms from China by ZANU-PF, demonstrates the live transformative potential of civil society, but within the context of transborder activism. However, internal to individual countries, the democratisation of

national politics is needed, but may have to be replicated within the civil society sector for localised struggles to succeed in institutionalising democratic electoral politics and social change.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis has been to deploy Gramsci's theory of hegemony in order to examine state-civil society relations in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2008. In order to achieve this, the thesis proposed two major objectives. The first objective was to examine the dialectic role of civil society in Zimbabwe in legitimating and resisting hegemony in the context of the post-2000 struggle for social change. The second objective was to explore the sociological base of counter-hegemonic politics in Zimbabwe. This concluding chapter therefore aims to pull these two objectives together and to discuss the implications of themes that emerged from the thesis for better understanding of Zimbabwean politics and the role of civil society in the struggle for social change both in theory and practice.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In section 6.2 the chapter reflects on some of the epistemological and ontological issues that underpinned this thesis. This is followed by section 6.3, which is divided into two sub-sections. Sub-section 6.3.1 briefly outlines the ideological context of the post-2000 contentious politics for social change, which generally pitted a head-on collision between nationalism and democracy. Sub-section 6.3.2 is further divided into two parts and it discusses the findings of this thesis. The first part summarises the role of civil society in legitimating and resisting hegemony and the second part discusses the sociological factors that influence counter-hegemonic politics in Zimbabwe. Finally, the chapter concludes in section 6.4 by discussing the implications of the findings and by flagging up probable future areas of inquiry with regards to Zimbabwean politics.

6.2 The Zimbabwe crisis: context and interpretation

The thesis was premised on two major problems in the way post-2000 Zimbabwe politics is generally talked of and studied. First, there is a methodological problem in terms of how we study and talk about civil society and its role in the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe. Since 2000 there has been a flow of literature, both academic and journalistic, on state-civil society relations in Zimbabwe within the context of struggles against ZANU-PF's authoritarian and repressive politics. The theorising about civil society and the practice of civil society in Zimbabwe reflects the influence of the neoliberal framework that promoted it from the early 1990s, which pitted civil society or perceived it to be anti-state. Then, and now, the mainstream thinking is that the Zimbabwean state is highly bureaucratized and cannot efficiently deliver, hence the diversion of resources – mainly development aid – from the state to NGOs and/or civil society. This created friction between the state and civil society. Instead of working to complement the state, civil society organisations were set up to monitor it and to possibly provide alternative centres of political power. The formation of the MDC party by the labour movement and the NCA in 1999 and the violent contest for hegemony that followed bears these neoliberal imprints.

The implications, as one respondent put it during the interviews, has been the predominance of a functionalist or atomistic theorising of civil society in Zimbabwe. In other words, civil society is theorised in a Weberian institutional sense as entities, institutions or organisations that oppose the authoritarian state, without organically situating it in society and the broader notion of the state. This has given effect to a tendency to label and counter-label certain entities as civil society and others as not. This is equally a function of the neoliberal definition of a civil society as it was also directly promoted by the state discourse on civil society since 2000, which became overly negative – in the sense that civil society was viewed as unpatriotically anti-ZANU-PF.

Moreover, there has been a tendency within Zimbabwe scholarship to conceptualise civil society monolithically as non-state actors that are aligned to the counter-hegemonic movement. Unsurprisingly as a result, when war veterans orchestrated farm invasions in 2000, or earlier in 1997 when they demonstrated against the state demanding war gratuities, in methodological terms, this politics was rarely theorised as a *disillusionment of elements of civil society within the ZANU-PF led historic bloc*. Commentators were split with regard the civic status of war veterans. The main stream civil society organisations rarely accepted war veterans as part of the body of civil society in the neoliberal sense, at least until the Zimbabwe Liberators Platform – a faction of war veterans – broke away from ZNWLA and aligned itself to the counter-hegemonic movement. This reductionist theorising and practising of civil society in Zimbabwe risks promoting a one dimensional view of civil society as necessarily counter-hegemonic or anti-state. It was also noted in chapter 1 that this reductionist theorising was also fuelled by the war veterans' self-exclusion from the rubric of civil society because of political alignment to ZANU-PF (see McCandles, 2005).

Within the same context of an 'inexistent' hegemonic civil society, the problematisation of civil society in the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe has rarely considered elites or more specifically intellectuals and artists attached to ZANU-PF as part of civil society. This seems to stem from a liberal and narrow, but nonetheless dominant, understanding of civil society actors as institutions as already pointed above and the idea of a Zimbabwe state exclusively reducible to 'an apparatus of government', about which more is said below. Thus one of the contributions that this study makes is the widening of what and who is part of civil society. The issues flagged here mirror divisions amongst Left scholarship that is interested in interpreting Zimbabwe politics. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007:46) argues, there are scholars who 'focus more on economic and structural issues of class and race and in the process peripheralise the issues of democracy and human rights that are at the centre of the Zimbabwe crisis.' At the same time there are scholars who upon being overwhelmed by the level of state violence and repression

reduce Zimbabwe's politics to 'a moral discussion around human rights' (Interview 1, 2008). Moyo and Yeros (2007:103) are very critical of this camp of scholars and argue that they 'have been subject to Eurocentric and/or populist influences'. The deployment of Gramsci's theory of hegemony in this thesis attempted to provide balance between these two approaches.

The second problem that underpinned this research stems from the fact that whilst there is consensus that post-2000 Zimbabwe society is highly polarised, this polarisation tends to be presented in a reductionist sense that pits the MDC (and its civil society allies) versus ZANU-PF (and war veterans) in the struggle for political power. Moyo and Yeros (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2006) and Cameron and Dorman (2009) however provided this research with an alternative and insightful interpretation of polarisation that goes beyond ZANU-PF and the MDC. Moyo and Yeros for instance talk about a radicalised post-2000 Zimbabwean state within which ZANU-PF and the MDC are just symbols and/or instruments of a larger head-on collision between two antagonistic centres of ideological power. The polarisation pits nationalism against democracy (Cameron and Dorman, 2009). Within this conflictual ideological framework, the different social forces in the struggle for social change in Zimbabwe are influenced by different discourses, political ideals and values that are mastered for hard line political actions in a game of power politics. It is in this context that Katz (2005) reminds us that contest for hegemony is forged in the multiplicity of antagonisms evolving in and by way of the social relations of civil society.

Therefore, an analysis of Zimbabwe politics that fails to factor in the role of discourse or ideological hegemony as the most important face of power risk making superficial conclusions as to why ordinary Zimbabweans found it difficult to influence positive social change post-2000. In a light-hearted, but still

sobering way, a respondent, upon receiving my request to interview him and having gone through the interview guide that had been sent in advance remarked:

.....so I just laughed when I looked at your program because what you are trying to look at is the ideal. But doing an analysis for Zimbabwe looking at the current situation it will be difficult to convince me that an ordinary Zimbabwean can influence policy decisions to a level where you can change the status quo with the *current government* that we have. Your study will be very ideal in terms of assisting to say if a *new and different government* came into power these are things that could be looked at in terms of policy formulation and policy decisions (Interview 3, 2008, my emphasis).

Although, there are other civil society organisations who felt that they do influence government and manoeuvre around the intransigence of the regime to do so, it seems to me that the above pessimistic view of the inability of ordinary Zimbabweans to influence policy processes cannot solely be accounted for on the basis of the visible physical political confrontation between the MDC and its counter-hegemonic civil society allies and ZANU-PF and its hegemonic civil society friends. Instead, a less visible but potent conflict, waged at the ideological level creates a framework that is not conciliatory or facilitative of inclusive policy making processes through which civil society can begin to influence positive social change. There is therefore a sub-text underlying the respondent's contrast of *current government* [of ZANU-PF] against *new and different government* [of MDC]. Critical research should aim to unravel the ideological sub-text that fuels this polarisation and, as the discussion in chapters 4 and 5 show, this in essence has been a contest between the primacy of the nationalist and the post-nationalist paradigms as vehicles of transformative change and peace in Zimbabwe.

Therefore, in order to address the problems flagged above, within the context of putting empirical information to the thesis' two research objectives, the language of hegemony was deployed. Gramsci's theory of hegemony rests on the idea of 'the integral state', which combines 'not only the apparatus of government [political society], but also the 'private' apparatus of 'hegemony' [civil society] (Gramsci,

1971:261). These two aspects of a state are only separated for methodological purposes because in practical terms the 'state = political society + civil society' (Gramsci, 1971:263). The state, Femia (1981:27) argues, organises and centralises civil society in the advancement of its social world view thus permitting the practice of politics to combine coercion (force) and persuasion (consent). Thus one of the contributions the thesis makes is the widening of the civil society discourse within Zimbabwe to go beyond the dominant liberal view of civil society as located only within the counter-hegemonic bloc. In other words, the organic link between civil society and political society in the notion of the integral state allowed me to discuss war veterans as a key representative of Gramsci's hegemonic civil society that stood contrasted to the counter-hegemonic civil society represented mainly by governance and human rights organisations.

Another point that Gramsci makes is that persuasion (consent), i.e., the construction of hegemonic ideologies is done by intellectuals within civil society. By going beyond the dominant view of civil society as entities or institutions, this permitted me to analyse the role played by Zimbabwe's intellectuals – the so-called 'patriotic intellectuals' versus 'critical public intellectuals' (Tendi, 2009) – within the rubric of the civil society discourse in the struggle for social change. Finally, the theory of hegemony provides social forces with a strategy for social change. According to Gramsci, a revolution that is waged on competing ideological worldviews (i.e., war of position) is practically more winnable than one that aims at a frontal take over the state's coercive apparatus (i.e., war of maneuver). Thus without necessarily negating the fact that polarisation in Zimbabwe has been an outcome of a contest to control the coercive apparatus of government by political actors, the study also focused on the deployment of competing discourses by civil society to legitimate or resist the status quo.

One of the criticisms of using Gramsci to interpret contemporary politics is that his theory of hegemony retains less analytic power beyond the confines of the historical events of 19th century Italy (German and Kenny, 1998). Gramsci (1971:201) however argues that if a theory cannot be applied beyond its original historical context 'it is a byzantine and scholastic abstraction, good only for phrase-mongers to toy with'. In applying the theory of hegemony to interpret contemporary Zimbabwe politics, this thesis was therefore indebted to Morton's (2003; 2007) argument that we should emphasise 'thinking in a Gramscian way': i.e., aim not to solve contemporary problems but to explore the origins of prevailing social orders, institutions and social and power relations (Cox, 2004:14).

This analytic approach entails identifying the relation of social actors in a given context, examining how they historically constituted themselves into historical blocs, identifying conflicts and unity of interests, exploring how conflicts and interests continuously configure and disfigure social and power relations and finally identifying the interrelatedness of the material, organisational and ideological apparatus that binds social actors (Cox, 1999; 2004). This is exactly what this thesis attempted to do. In order to piece together information required to think in a Gramscian way, interviews, textual analysis and participant observation research methods were used. Cognisant of the fact that civil society in Zimbabwe is diverse and that it eschews any easy generalisations, the findings that are presented below nonetheless go a long way in broadening our understanding of Zimbabwe politics. The next section will summarise the main findings of this thesis and set out the implications of the findings for our understanding of Zimbabwean politics.

6.3 Post-2000 Zimbabwe in Gramscian perspectives

6.3.1 Ideological context of conflict

In the 1990s, Zimbabwe adopted neoliberal economics and politics (i.e., the Washington consensus) through the implementation of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). In economic terms, scholars argue that a number of fiscal prudence and anti-state control measures were implemented that positively, but relatively, diminished ZANU-PF's patronage system thus improving efficiency, transparency and accountability of bureaucratic administration (Brett, 2005; Doig, 2006). Inversely however, huge government expenditure cuts and rise in poverty fermented societal disgruntlement towards government. In political terms, a relative moment of *glasnost* ensued as pro-democracy and human rights civil society organisations and political parties mushroomed, and divergent political views were tolerated to an extent. However, as argued in Chapter 4, the democratic wave of the 1990s also allowed ZANU-PF's political legitimacy and monopoly of power to be challenged, both within and outside its ranks.

Within ZANU-PF, Makumbe and Moyo (2000a:18-20) note that parliamentarians fearlessly challenged party-government legislations and objected to the imposition of electoral candidates by the leadership. Liberation war veterans – historically linked to ZANU-PF – demonstrated against the ZANU-PF leadership, demanding land and pension for their role in liberating Zimbabwe. In 1997, ZANU-PF made a truce with the war veterans, and paid them huge sums of unbudgeted payouts, effectively bringing them back into the fold of its hegemonic project. Outside ZANU-PF, the labour and students movements led demonstrations, protests, and job strikes in protest against deteriorating living standards. The discontent culminated into a crisis of authority as people abandoned ZANU-PF for the newly formed MDC party and began to believe less the words of national leaders and more of leaders in civil society. In Gramscian language therefore,

...the State trembled, a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only the outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks ... The massive structures of modern democracies, both as State organisations, and as complexes of associations in civil society, constitute for the art of politics as it were the 'trenches' and the permanent fortifications of the front in the war of position' (Gramsci, 1971).

The ideological war of position pitted advocates of a radicalised *nationalist paradigm* (nationalism) of development versus disciples of *post-nationalist paradigm* (neoliberalism) of development. Nationalists emphasises the 'land question', sovereignty, state security and Zimbabwe's territorial integrity whilst the latter focuses on the 'governance question', especially the liberal democratic ideals of human rights and the rule of law. This ideological context of conflict was critical in answering the main research questions of this thesis.

6.3.2 Civil society and social change

6.3.2.1 *Main findings: hegemony legitimation and resistance*

The first major research question looked at the role played by civil society in legitimising and challenging hegemony in Zimbabwe within the context of the struggle for social change. In order to answer this question, two forms of civil society – the hegemony legitimising civil society and the hegemony resisting civil society – were identified as leaning towards nationalist and democratic politics, respectively. In 2000, elements of civil society re-coalesced around ZANU-PF to form a hegemonic historic bloc that reawakened nationalist sentiments that were tied to the emotive and long standing grievances over land redistribution by majority black Zimbabweans. Through the land question, the language of economic, social and cultural rights was radically appropriated as a strategy to effect social change in Zimbabwe. In this thesis, I have shown that a two pronged strategy combining both coercion

(force) and persuasion (consent) was used by civil society within the hegemonic historic bloc to defend the state's transformative vision for Zimbabwe.

The persuasion strategy was articulated by ZANU-PF aligned intellectuals (i.e., 'patriotic intellectuals') who enjoyed the monopoly of the communicative space provided through state-controlled media. Intellectuals were crucial for 'bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a universal plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental group over a series of subordinate groups' (Gramsci, 1971:182). In other words intellectuals supplied the discourse that united the interests of subaltern groups such as war veterans and landless rural peasants and that of ruling elites in the ZANU-PF led hegemonic historic bloc. Through a radical infusion of culture and politics, what Mbembe (2002) calls 'Afro-radicalism', Zimbabweans were urged to defend the country's sovereignty and resist the re-colonisation agenda of western governments. Zimbabweans were also urged through a 'nativism' (Mbembe, 2002) discourse to rehabilitate and defend the uniqueness of black African identity, values, traditions and interests. A propagandist argument was put forward that the history of slave trade and colonialism teaches us that the interests of a white person, both native in Zimbabwe and abroad, will never be the same. These discourses served to cement real political power within the ZANU-PF ruling elites by portraying those in power as having everyone's best interests at heart, unless they are white. More fundamentally, is the contradictory and self-serving agenda that the interests of the people are best served by an elite gradually growing richer.

Thus in order to reject and defeat neo-imperialism, people needed, first, to reject historical and present narratives of Africa written by whites because they are distorted for the economic and political good of the west. Second, white commercial farmers, the MDC and its civil society allies, in particular the

governance and human rights organisations were supposed to be rejected and demonised because they were the local face of neo-imperial forces. Third, recognition that land redistribution was the key to economic emancipation of the masses was necessary and this justified the violent restitution policy. Within this context, a strong message was put across that 'Land is the economy and the economy is land'. This message resonated well with the economic interests of most rural landless peasants and war veterans, whose rural livelihoods depend largely on farming. But that message also appeared to urge on ruling elites to appropriate for themselves most of the prime land and to grab more than one farm, contravening the law. These contradictions within ZANU-PF were not seriously questioned by social actors within the hegemonic bloc.

This thesis has argued that the above vision for social change based on a radical transformed terrain of the relations of social forces of production, vis-à-vis unequal land ownership between minority white commercial farmers and majority blacks was positive. It was however championed within the context of ZANU-PF's fading political legitimacy and the scattering of the coalition of different social forces that the state had held together since 1980 through a combination of authoritarian politics and socialist policies (Cameron and Dorman, 2009:2). As a result, resolving the legitimate land question and reasserting ZANU-PF's grip on power was convoluted and defended in ways that went beyond persuasive politics to include explicit coercive politics. This strategy is not new, but represents continuities in the use of force and consent by ZANU-PF, since 1980, to deal with alternative centres of power that threaten the party's political life (see also Dorman, 2001).

The use of coercive violence as a tool to legitimate ZANU-PF hegemony was carried out by members of the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), Zimbabwe Liberation War Collaborators (ZILIWACO), Zimbabwe Political Detainees and Restricttees Association (ZIPDRA),

ZANU-PF youths and supporters. The term war veterans is generally used to refer to members of ZNLWVA, ZILIWACO, ZIPDRA, but also include government and ZANU-PF party officials who fought in the war of liberation, or are associated with it as either former war collaborators or were previously detained for their support of the war. The term also includes serving and retired military, police, prison and air force officers. Therefore, within the purviews of a radical and authoritarian nationalist discourse, ZANU-PF 'empowered' these various constituent elements of war veterans, including youth militias and its supporters to harass, intimidate, and beat white commercial farmers, opposition party leaders and supporters and counter-hegemonic civil society. The social forces aligned to the counter-hegemonic bloc were labelled sell-outs, traitors, unpatriotic and accused of conniving with neo-imperialist forces to try to topple Robert Mugabe's government through undemocratic means. As chapter 5 has shown, violence became more pronounced during elections as people were killed, beaten and their properties destroyed for voting for the opposition MDC. This criminalisation of democratic politics and therefore the stabilisation of the hegemonic project were supported by the regime's deliberate creation of what I have called institutional paralysis.

Specifically, the regime usurped the independence or autonomy of state institutions such as the judiciary and security agencies (e.g., the police and army) to respond impartially to the breakdown of law and order in commercial farms and during elections. Opposition politicians, supporters and the counter-hegemonic civil society activists were beaten, arrested, and imprisoned on numerous false accusations that either they wanted to effect an illegal regime change, that they were violent, had organised unsanctioned meetings or that they had demonised Robert Mugabe. This kind of politics, I have argued, entrenched fear among citizens and promoted 'a sense of fatalism and passivity toward political action' (Boggs, 1976) against the regime. As a result change was systemically blocked even though the economic crisis and human rights abuses seemed to offer ripe conditions for a revolution.

This thesis has also shown that at about the same time a hegemonic bloc coalesced around ZANU-PF, an equally militant counter-hegemonic bloc comprising of the labour movement, governance and human rights civil society organisations and the MDC opposition party emerged to transform a nationalist visioned social order by articulating an alternative social order rooted in liberal democracy. Within the broad purviews of liberal democracy, two related counter-hegemonic discourses – i.e., the constitutional discourse and human rights discourse – were flagged out as having defined the contours of opposing ZANU-PF hegemony. The constitutional discourse was deployed to argue that Zimbabwe's development conundrums are rooted in bad governance. The solution to this malaise was 'regime change'. I have shown however that the idea of 'regime change' when used within the constitutional discursive strategy to resist ZANU-PF hegemony has a double meaning. The first strand focuses on reforming current undemocratic set of rules that govern the way people talk and practice politics in Zimbabwe. It is rooted in civil society's belief that the 1979 constitution is flawed in the sense that it concentrates power in the Executive arm of government whilst weakening other arms of government.

In addition, counter-hegemonic civil society has strongly argued that the current constitution does not adequately enshrine several bills of rights necessary to protect citizens from state abuse. As a result the ZANU-PF government has long ceased to be accountable to those on behalf it governs. On this basis, when the constitution reform agenda was put to a referendum in 2000 and when the state sponsored draft constitution did not reflect changes to these rules, civil society successfully urged the electorate to reject it. Thus since 2000, the counter-hegemonic civil society has called upon the regime to allow a more open, participatory and non-partisan process of re-writing the country's constitution. The mantra of a 'people-driven' constitution dominates. On the point of a 'people-driven' constitution, I have shown in chapter 4 that the counter-hegemonic civil society is ready to break their alliance with the MDC should it be seen to abrogate on that commitment as happened in 2007 when the MDC and ZANU-PF parliamentarians unanimously agreed to endorse Constitutional Amendment Act No. 18.

The second strand of 'regime change' supports a change or replacement of ZANU-PF by a different political party (largely the MDC) with a complete different set of ideological orientations, beyond nationalism. In terms of operationalising this strand, the strategies that the counter-hegemonic civil society used to engage the regime reflected the fact that it instrumentally formed the MDC. As a result one of the noticeable strategies by civil society to oppose ZANU-PF hegemony is the implicit, and sometimes explicit, bias towards the MDC, especially during elections where the electorate is urged to vote for the MDC (Interview 14, 2008). Furthermore, a number of civil society activists have contested Parliamentary seats under the political ticket of the MDC (and other parties). This embeddedness of the counter-hegemonic civil society in the political agenda of the MDC is not necessarily acknowledged. I have argued that this reflects the uneasiness and difficulties faced by civil society to toe the line of an 'apolitical civil society' within both the dictates of the neo-liberal framework that promotes civil society in the country and the realities of the conflictual and polarised nature of how politics came to be articulated and practiced since 2000. One of the implications of this polarised politics is that some civil society organisations either opted not to engage the regime in policy processes because of its illegitimate status or the regime itself was unwilling to engage with social forces that it viewed as stooges of neo-imperial forces.

Another strategy used by the counter-hegemonic civil society to resist ZANU-PF hegemony was the human rights discourse. The contours of the human rights discourse to critique ZANU-PF authoritarianism can be traced back to the condemnation of the regime during the 1980s Matabeleland disturbances and the regime's repressive response to the food riots of the 1990s. In post-2000 however, the human rights discourse was deployed in the context of deconstructing (or re-articulating) the land reform as a violent political tool used by ZANU-PF to gain lost legitimacy and to prevent losing power to the popular MDC. I have shown in this thesis that the human rights discourse as a counter-hegemonic strategy, just like the constitutional discourse, is used in two ways.

The first strand emphasises 'the sanctity of property rights' and the 'rule of law' and, perhaps unintentionally, overlooks the significance of the historical human rights wrongs, vis-à-vis the forcible eviction of black Africans from their land by colonial settlers. Its intention is to destabilise the hegemonic nationalist narrative that sought to achieve redistributive justice by suspending the rule of law and order and creating a violent and chaotic political environment. In deploying the language of law and rights that has been negated by the state and exposing the savage nature of the regime's crimes against humanity, the counter-hegemonic civil society was able to awaken the masses to appreciate the exclusive nature of ZANU-PF's nationalist project and the way the regime uses state institutions and rules to its advantage to control and dominate society (see also Kagoro, 2004a:251). The attention of the international community was also drawn to the unfolding human rights abuses and western governments duly responded with punitive sanctions against top ranking officials of the regime. By so doing civil society effectively used the human rights discourse to continuously negotiate the opening of the democratic space that the regime sought to close.

The second strand of the human rights discourse as a counter-hegemonic strategy attempts to merge both the imperatives for redistributive justice and the imperatives of civil and political rights. I have argued that this perspective is preferred by social actors who favour 'principled engagement' with the regime. Academic research institutions such as the Institute for Agrarian Studies and organisations such as the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) have been instrumental in attempting to reconcile the regime's politics of land redistribution with the counter-hegemonic bloc's constitutional and human rights discourses. This reconciliation agenda has two starting points: firstly, it starts by recognising that the hegemonic bloc's politics of land reform has a truly emancipative and transformative potential, but only if it can be successfully refocused away from ZANU-PF's violent politics and more fundamentally be refocused beyond wealth accumulation by ZANU-PF ruling elites. Secondly, it also recognises that the counter-hegemonic bloc's politics based on the constitutional and

human rights discourses has effectively unravelled the internal contradictions and violent nature of ZANU-PF's nationalist and hegemonic project, but that for it to be an equally true emancipative and transformative force it must begin to seriously critique the structural makeup of the post-independent Zimbabwean state, in order not to risk freezing structural inequalities inherited from the colonial administration.

6.3.2.2 *Main findings: sociological determinants of counter-hegemonic politics*

The second major research question looked at the organisational and material factors influencing the transformative politics of the counter-hegemonic bloc in general and specifically within that context, how it influenced the counter-hegemonic civil society's struggles for social change. In terms of the organisational factors, the argument was divided into three sub-thematic issues, namely the urban-rural divide nature of the civic sector in Zimbabwe, the politics of civil society coalitions and networks and the embeddedness of civil society struggles for change in larger political party agendas. With regards to the rural-urban civic divide, I used Mamdani's (1996) thesis of 'citizens' versus 'subjects' to locate its genesis in Zimbabwe from the colonial era. The colonial regime promoted a racialised urban based white civil society (the citizens), on one hand, and criminalised urban based African civil societies and promoted tribalised or ethniced rural based associational life (the subjects), on the other hand. The opening of the political space in Zimbabwe, in the context of the liberalisation and democratisation policies in the 1990s did little to overcome this divide. Furthermore, in post-2000 the divide was deliberately amplified by the state through violent zoning off of most rural areas as 'no go areas' for the opposition and most governance and human rights organisations that were perceived as proponents of regime change.

I have shown however that people have divided opinions about the urban biases of civil society work. On the one hand, there are critics that think the divide is natural, given the underdeveloped rural economies that make it hard for rural masses to mobilise their own resources and the existing knowledge gap, vis-à-vis ability to put out project proposals that meet standards set out by most donors. On the other hand are critics who argue the divide excludes rural populations in national development processes. The implications of this divide, and within that context the domination of rural politics by the regime, was that most civil society struggles for social change came to be concentrated in major cities such as Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Masvingo and Mutare. Thus, in the absence of sustained and effective civic education campaigns in rural areas by counter-hegemonic social forces, the regime was presented with a source of compliant social forces easily mobilised for conflict politics that kept it in power. Therefore to a certain extent, – but not withstanding the role of state violence, the pervasive patronage system and the impact of poverty and unemployment – rural constituencies remain rather skeptical about the relevance of the language of rights and rule of law for their daily struggles for survival. In other words, the dividends of the liberal democratic discourse remain abstracted from the urgency of immediate ‘bread and butter’ issues.

In terms of the second sub-thematic issue under organisational factors, the thesis has shown that the authoritarian and repressive nature of ZANU-PF politics resulted in the formation of several coalitions and networks after 2000 to provide a coordinated response to the Zimbabwe crisis. The regime’s continuous threat to close the operating space for civil society generally united civic coalitions and networks in condemning human rights abuses and to advocate for the decriminalisation of politics. The advantage of these coalitions and networks is that they are mostly staffed and led by middle class actors, mainly graduates from universities, and as such they have been able to use their research, documentation and analytic skills to successfully demystify and expose the violent, corrupt and nepotistic nature of ZANU-PF’s nationalist project.

Moreover, whilst different coalitions and networks preferred different strategies to engage the intransigent regime, when viewed as a collective of a 'governance policy network', they have demonstrated a highly shared responsibility to unite, to share information and to support comrades either incarcerated or being harassed by the regime. In addition, multiple sectoral interests, e.g., human rights, gender, youth, trade unions, students, people with disabilities, informal traders, church and so on are evenly represented in most civic networks and coalitions. This has facilitated a holistic approach to policy deliberations by civil society. Moreover, the structures of churches, informal traders and women's groups, which often bridge the rural-urban divide, have been crucial in assisting human rights organisations to have access to some rural areas that the regime previously declared no go areas.

However, there is a downside to civic coalitions and networks. Often they represent the 'coalition of the willing' or more specifically those who share the argument that the 'governance question' (and not the 'land question') is the root cause of the Zimbabwe's development conundrums. As a result, whilst the coalitions and networks have succeeded in cultivating social trust amongst counter-hegemonic social forces, they have also been a mechanism for excluding social actors that lean towards ZANU-PF's nationalist politics. This self-selecting grouping means that some organisations such as for example ZIMCODD and NANGO that may prefer 'principled engagement' with the state are caught between a rock and a wall – i.e., either they dine with the devil (the regime) and lose the trust of their civil society allies or they join the anti-regime bandwagon and suffer the consequences of blocked policy spaces.

Finally, civic coalitions and networks have been characterised by intra-competition for either donor funding or for dominance in particular sectoral policy issues. Thus despite, sometimes progressive collaborative responses to state hegemony by civil society organisations, there still exist friction such as the examples cited in chapter 4 between NANGO and the so-called 'Super Four' and between women's

groups reveal. As a result there tends to be lots of duplication of civil society advocacy activities. This points to the fact that more work still needs to be done for civil society to fully organise themselves into a 'collective will' that, in the words of Gramsci, does not scatter 'into infinity of individual wills' representing 'separate and conflicting paths' (Gramsci, 1971:128-129).

The third sub-theme that was discussed under the organisational determinants of counter-hegemonic politics was the relationship between civil society organisations and political parties, in particular the opposition MDC. The MDC was formed by a coalition of civil society organisations. In theory, the MDC autonomously designs its own policy issues and political strategies distinct from those of civil society. In practice, however, close collaboration exists to the extent that some civil society organisations mobilise and excite the masses to support the opposition against the ZANU-PF regime. Moreover, several civil society activists have contested elections under the ticket of the MDC party. This alliance is an albatross around civil society's neck because where the MDC gets into conflict with ZANU-PF, civil society is automatically drawn into the ring, not as power and conflict arbitrators but as agitators. Thus together with the opposition, civil society has been labelled an enemy of the state. In addition, civil society has tended to be uncritical of undemocratic tendencies in the opposition, as happened in 2005 when the MDC split into two factions. I have shown however that this embeddedness of civil society in opposition party politics is not necessarily acknowledged by all activists. There are those who acknowledge this embeddedness but nonetheless are quick to point out that an apolitical civil society is a luxury in the context of gross human rights abuses by the state.

In terms of the material determinants of the struggle for social change, the thesis examined the pros and cons of donor funded civil society programmes for change in post-2000 Zimbabwe. The year 2000 marked a sharp break from the early to mid-1990s when donors funded non-state actors to collaborate

with government to reform and strengthen state institutions. Instead, there began an explicit funding of democracy and human rights organisations by donors for the purposes of resisting ZANU-PF hegemony and possibly effect 'regime change'. Therefore, in the context of a collapsing economy and increased repression, donors became the shadow citadel of civil society's brave and sustained resistance against ZANU-PF hegemony.

On the negative side, increased donor funding for civil society, side stepping the state, fuelled the already fractious relationship between the state and civil society and between the regime and western governments where most donors came from. Donors were accused of meddling in the country's domestic affairs in order to destabilise a sovereign and 'democratically elected' government. As a result the regime prohibited externally sourced funding for governance and human rights related advocacy activities. The other criticism of donor funding towards civil society in post-2000 Zimbabwe is that it fuelled undemocratic tendencies within the civic movement. In particular, there was increased intra-civil society competition which often resulted in the negation of progressive collaboration. The thesis has also shown that there is a strong perception that readily available donor funding promoted the 'commercialisation of civil society' whereby civil society activists either 'bent the analysis' and/or exaggerated the crisis in order to sustain a 'crisis industry' for more donor funds. Some of these criticisms and accusations are based on perceptions but others carry substantive truths.

6.4 Conclusion: implications of the findings

During the process of writing this thesis, a coalition government comprising of ZANU-PF and the two factions of the MDC was formed in 2009. Its official mandate is to implement several economic recovery programmes and political reforms and prepare for free and fair elections to usher a legitimate

government. From a theoretical point of view this mandate should reconcile the antagonistic discourses discussed in this thesis, which informed both destructive and progressive political actions by different social forces. Indications are that this normalisation arrangement has brought back hope and belief that a transition to a democratic dispensation is still possible. Further gleaning this politics from a theoretical standpoint, my verdict of the progress made so far is that the country is still hovering between uncertainty and chaos: in Gramscian dialectics, there is a sense of hope that the old nationalist hegemonic order is giving way, although the alternative democratic social order is not necessarily crystallising into society, fast enough. What therefore is the future and nature of democracy in Zimbabwe?

The contentious politics that I discussed in this thesis, in which two fundamentalist discourses of nationalism and democracy tried to block each other, point to common developmental challenges faced by states in Southern Africa, and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. One of the fundamental challenges faced by the post-colonial state is to carry 'the dual burden of democratisation and economic development' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006:13). Unfortunately, the extremist way in which different social forces defended the primacy of one over the other in post-2000 Zimbabwe, blocks or inhibits the realisation of the emancipative potential of either of the discourses. There are two critical lessons from Zimbabwe. Firstly, neither democracy nor economic emancipation can be advanced at the expense of the other. I argue that the future of a stable democratic Zimbabwe rests on a 'democratic nationalist' inspired politics that recognises that economic and social rights are complementary and interdependent with civil and political rights. The struggle for independence was premised upon the need to extend both economic and political rights to majority black Zimbabweans. Put differently, until 2000 the discourses of nationalism and democracy in the evolution of state-society relations in pre- and post-independent Zimbabwe were not understood by Zimbabweans as opposites.

Secondly, the complementary relation between democracy and nationalism in Zimbabwe highlights a major limitation of a Gramscian analysis that interprets post-2000 Zimbabwean politics in terms of a clearly delineated boundary between 'nationalists' and 'democrats' and therefore between the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic blocs, respectively. In other words, the discourses of nationalism and democracy overlap within both the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic blocs. For example, some social actors within the counter-hegemonic bloc advocate for democratisation in order to reclaim the negated ideals of the nationalist struggle that they perceive to have been negated by ZANU-PF. Equally, social actors within the hegemonic bloc claim not only to be democratic but that they are the best custodians of this democracy which was realised at independence through a nationalist inspired politics.

Thirdly and linked to the two points above, the categorisation of civil society organisations as falling either under the hegemonic or counter-hegemonic bloc is of a relative nature (see Appendix 8). This is so because organisations continuously move back and forth along the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic continuum depending on a 'critical juncture' in a nation's political and economic history. That is, a historical moment in a nation's political and economic development where a new ideational framework and new principles of organising state-society relations are created and result in major institutional formations and changes (Collier and Collier, 1991). Post-independent Zimbabwe has three such 'critical junctures'. First, the 'critical juncture' of the 1980 independence created euphoria, which saw many civil society organisations being incorporated and willingly collaborating with the state. In the early to mid-1990s, the 'critical juncture' created by the implementation of neoliberal policies opened the political space for a gradual but cautious disengagement by civil society organisations from the state. However in post-2000, the 'critical juncture' of the formation of a strong labour opposition party, the 2000 constitutional referendum and a declining economy created for the first time in post-independent Zimbabwe, a clear process of mobilisation and counter-mobilisation of civil society groups

towards either the hegemonic or the counter-hegemonic bloc. Thus the use of Gramsci's concepts of 'hegemonic historical bloc' and 'counter-hegemonic historical bloc' and therefore the categorisation of civil society groups as either 'hegemonic' or 'counter-hegemonic' with respect to Zimbabwe should be viewed simply as a mere methodological device and not an organic delineation. This thesis therefore reinforces Adam David Morton's (2003, 2007) idea of 'thinking in a Gramscian way' in the use of Gramsci's theory of hegemony in order to explore the origins of prevailing social orders, institutions and social and power relations in contexts different from the one the theory originally historicised.

Another point to be made is that the application of the concept of hegemony in this thesis to understand the role of civil society as development or political actors reveals the symbiotic relationship between *agency* and social *structures* in the struggle for change. First, social agents act on the basis of perceived or real existing exploitative structural contradictions in society. That is, social agency is driven by perceived structural problems. The legitimisation role of civil society aligned to the hegemonic bloc was driven by the unresolved land ownership question that enabled particular sections of society, i.e., white minority commercial farmers, to live opulent lifestyles whilst the majority landless black peasants were mummified in poverty, by two decades of pontifying to the 'willing-buyer, willing-seller' policy on land restitution. The resisting role of civil society aligned to the counter-hegemonic bloc was driven by the quest for plurality against ZANU-PF's homogenising, violent, racist and one-sided version of Zimbabwe's historiography (see Ranger, 2004).

Second, social agents make social structures. Thus for example, in the process of reversing the structural abnormalities inherited at independence, the hegemonic civil society created a 'ZANU-nised' structural version that constrained the opposition forces but enabled those who supported it. The coalition government that is currently in place is creating a new version of a social structure. There are

possibilities that a new and different form of hegemony with a different set or coalition of previously antagonistic actors may come out of this arrangement, thus clearing ground for new oppositions. It is in this regards that Morton (2000:258) reminds us that hegemony is never complete or monolithic, but transitory and historically specific. This reinforces a point made above that the positioning of social actors and the associating of particular discourses with either the hegemonic or counter-hegemonic bloc in Zimbabwe is simply a heuristic critical device to help understand a complex and transient political reality.

Finally, the formation of the coalition government that I alluded to at the start of this section and the political and economic reforms that are being undertaken have created a fourth 'critical juncture' likely to redefine a 'new' constitutional framework to organise state-society relations. Therefore, there is scope for further critical research to be directed at analysing the role of civil society in justice and reconciliation processes that the coalition government has initiated. Civil society in Zimbabwe is diverse and this eschews any easy generalisations. But on the basis of the story presented in this thesis, the envisaged research should be critical of who is or who can drive this transformative politics, and whom this politics is meant to benefit. Consequentially, for Zimbabwe's process of transition to democracy to firmly and permanently crystallise itself in society, both structural and institutional reforms must be constitutionally safeguarded so that when the future government (state) trembles, it can be democratically denied the trenches and fortifications (realised in civil society) that violently defended ZANU-PF hegemony.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Matrix Table of Research Questions, Respondents and Methods

RESEARCH QUESTION	RESPONDENTS	METHODS
<p>1. Why and how does civil society negotiate political space to influence policy in Zimbabwe?</p> <p>1.1 What strategies does civil society employ to influence policy in Zimbabwe?</p> <p>1.2 To what extent is the viability of civil society policy engagement in Zimbabwe contingent on loyalty to patron-client politics?</p> <p>1.3 To what extent are the strategies used by civil society to engage the state in policy discourses inclusive and institutionalised?</p>	<p><u>Civil society actors</u> -executive directors -programme coordinators -CSOs administrative staff</p> <p><u>Other actors</u> -academics and politicians -state actors (where possible)</p>	<p>Questionnaire?</p> <p>Documentary analysis</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Non-participant observation</p>
<p>2. What are the institutional opportunity structures for policy engagement by civil society and to what extent have they hindered or facilitated policy influence by civil society in Zimbabwe?</p> <p>2.1 Why and how has the 'Zimbabwean crisis' (economic and political downturn) since 1997 affected civil society policy advocacy activities?</p> <p>2.2 What is the nature of the interface between civil society, the state and donors in Zimbabwe and how do these relations strengthen or weaken policy influencing by civil society?</p> <p>2.3 Why and how does the existing legislative environment in Zimbabwe enable or disable civil society policy engagement and influence?</p>	<p><u>Civil society actors</u> -executive directors -programme coordinators - CSOs administrative staff</p> <p><u>Other actors</u> -Academics (researchers) -Donors - politicians (opposition and ruling party-where possible)</p>	<p>Questionnaire?</p> <p>Documentary analysis</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Non-participant observation</p>
<p>3. What are the structural and organisational characteristics of civil society and to what extent have these affected civil society</p>	<p><u>Civil society actors</u> -executive directors -programme coordinators -CSOs administrative staff</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Documentary analysis</p>

<p>capacity to influence policy in Zimbabwe?</p> <p>3.1 To what extent do members involve themselves in CSO advocacy activities?</p> <p>3.2 To what extent are CSOs autonomous from external actors and how does this impact on policy influence?</p> <p>3.3 How do issues of accountability and transparency influence CSOs' policy activities?</p>	<p><u>Other actors</u></p> <p>-Academics (researchers)</p> <p>-Donors</p> <p>- politicians (opposition and ruling party-where possible)</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Non-participant observation</p>
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Appendix 2: Sample Semi-Structured Interview Questions

A). INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Topic Area 1: Civil Society and Policy Influence

- (i) CSOs' major activities
- (ii) State actors (ministry or ministries) that you work closely with
- (iii) Policy areas that you seek to influence
- (iv) Strategies used to influence policy and why use these strategies (*p-c networks*)
- (v) What have been your successes in these activities?
- (vi) Major challenges (*Policy engagement and wider societal interests?; membership participation in activities*)
- (vii) In the areas where you have less influence, what strategies do you think you can use to improve your impact?
- (viii) CSOs' inputs translated into concrete policy outputs by the government?
- (ix) Other factors affect your policy advocacy activities?

Topic Area 2: Institutional Opportunity Structures

- (i) Economy and politics
- (ii) Intra-CSOs relations:
 - (a) Means and strategies of communicating with other CSOs
 - (b) Cooperation among CSOs on policy issues
 - (c) Importance of these relations on negotiating political space and policy influence
 - (d) Intra-civil society policy engagement and clientele networks
- (iii) State–civil society relations:
 - (a) Areas of state-civil society relations
 - (b) Importance of these relations with CSO activities & autonomy
 - (c) Terms of engagement with the state
 - (d) Assistance from state (e.g. financial material, etc)
- (iv) Civil society–donors relations:
 - (a) Sources of resources (financial etc)
 - (b) Donor funding and CSO autonomy
 - (c) Strategies for fundraising and successes
 - (d) Existing CSO legislations and internal/external assistance
- (v) Legislative environment:
 - (a) Legislations and CSO policy advocacy activities
 - (b) Requirements for CSO registrations and activities

Topic Area 3: Structural and Organisational Factors

- (i) Citizen participation:
 - (a) Participation in CSOs advocacy activities?
 - (b) Membership rate and composition in CSOs
- (ii) Level and nature of organisation:
 - (a) CSOs autonomy from state interference
 - (b) Effective coordination and regulation of CSOs by umbrella bodies
 - (c) Linkages with international organisations and capacity to influence policy
- (iii) Democracy, governance and accountability:
 - (a) Accountability and transparency in CSOs
 - (b) Culture of tolerance within the CSO sector

B). INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STATE ACTORS

Topic Area: Engaging Civil Society in the Policy Process

- (i) Brief description of the policy process in the ministry
- (ii) Current priority policy areas in your Ministry or Department?
- (iii) Who are the main stakeholders or partners that you work with?
- (iv) Which services do you contract out to some of your stakeholders? Criteria used to decide which CSOs to contract or to engage with generally
- (v) In what ways do CSOs contribute to the ministry's priority policy areas?
- (vi) How do you use CSOs' inputs/contributions in designing policy in your Ministry?
- (vii) How do you perceive or describe the relationship of Zimbabwe's CSOs with international organisations and Western states?
- (viii) In your views how does this relationship affect the ministry's relation/engagement with CSOs?
- (ix) In what ways do CSOs relations with these foreign agencies influence their activities?
- (x) What is your opinion about the current legislations regulating the operations of CSOs? In your opinion in what ways have they improved the nature of policy advocacy by CSOs that work with your Ministry or Department? And why?

C). INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DONORS

Topic Area: Promoting Civil Society to Influence Policy in Zimbabwe

- (x) How long have you been operating in Zimbabwe?
- (xi) What are your main activities?
- (xii) What are your current priority policy areas in Zimbabwe?
- (xiii) Who are the main stakeholders or partners that you work with?
- (xiv) What criteria do you use to decide which CSOs to contract or to sponsor?
- (xv) In your views how successful has CSOs in influencing policy in Zimbabwe?
- (xvi) In the areas where CSOs have less influence, what strategies do you think are needed to improve their impact?
- (xvii) How do you perceive or describe the relationship between your organisation and the state as a result of the assistance that you provide CSOs?
- (xviii) What is your opinion about the current legislations regulating the operations of CSOs? In your opinion have they improved the nature of policy advocacy by CSOs that you fund? And why?
- (xix) What other problems and/or challenges that you have encountered either working with CSOs or with the state in Zimbabwe?

Appendix 3: Sample Questionnaire Sent to Respondents³³

I am a PhD candidate at the University of Birmingham, conducting a research on 'Civil Society and Policy Influencing in Zimbabwe'. The research aims at examining the institutional opportunity structures for policy engagement by civil society with a view to providing a theoretical and empirical framework for understanding and promoting a genuine, strong and credible civil society as instruments of democracy and social justice in Zimbabwe. Thus, this questionnaire aims at understanding and appreciating your **perceptions** concerning Zimbabwean civil societies. Confidentiality would strictly be maintained in the use of the information provided herein.

Part 1: *In this section I would like to ask you questions about **your** organisation, vis-à-vis, how it influences policy in Zimbabwe.*

1. **Name of your organisation:**

.....

2. **What is your position within the organisation?**

.....

3. **Which of the following best describe your organisation? Please tick.**

- a. NGO
- b. Community group
- c. Independent research institute/'think-tank'
- d. Government research institute/'think-tank'
- e. University-based research department
- f. Consulting company
- g. Network
- h. Other (Please specify)_____

4. **Other than Zimbabwe, which other country do you work in?**

.....

5. **Does your organisation seek to influence government policy?**

a. Yes []

b. No []

Explain your answer:

.....

.....

6. **Overall, how would you rate the success of your organisation in influencing policy in Zimbabwe?**

a. Not at all successful []

³³ As already discussed in the methodology section (chapter 1) this questionnaire was not used because many respondents did not return or respond to it. However, it can be a useful tool for future research that seeks to make a general scoping of the role and influence of civil society in policy making processes in Zimbabwe, perhaps in a study designed as a survey. In designing this questionnaire, I am indebted to a similar work by Kornswieg *et al* (2006:15-21).

- b. Partially successful []
- c. Very successful []

Please explain your answer:

.....

.....

7. Which of the following strategies does your organisation use to influence policy? Please rank 1-5, where 1 represent least used and 5 most used strategy.

Strategies					
	1	2	3	4	5
Work on projects commissioned by policymakers					
Piloting alternative policy approaches					
Comment on draft policy documents					
Organise policy seminars					
Newsletter to policymakers					
Insider lobbying					
Networking with other organisations					
Publications on policy issues					
Submit articles in the media					
Website					
Provide training					
Provide services					
Demonstrations and strikes					

8. Explain more about the strategy/strategies you consider most successful, or list other ways in which your organisation seeks to influence policy that were not mentioned above.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. Which of the following policy areas has your organisation tried to influence in the last 10 years?

- a. Rural livelihoods/agriculture
- b. Urban poverty
- c. Education
- d. Health
- e. Housing
- f. Environmental/conservation
- g. Women's issues/gender
- h. Child welfare
- i. Labour
- j. Budget processes
- k. Economic policy
- l. International trade and/or finance
- m. Rule of law/justice/human rights
- n. Governance/Accountability
- o. Transport
- p. Other (Please specify): _____

In your opinion, which of these policy areas have you had the most success in influencing? And why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

10. What type of support would most help your organisation to influence policy?

- a.....
- b.....
- c.....
- d.....

Please comment more about your top three policy influence support needs:

.....
.....
.....

11. In your opinion, what is the single most important action that needs to be taken to improve the policy impact of your organisation?

.....
.....
.....
.....

PART 2: *In this section I would like to ask you questions about civil society in general, not necessarily just about your organisation, vis-à-vis, how they influence policy in Zimbabwe.*

1. Overall, how successful is civil society in influencing government policy in Zimbabwe?

- a. Not at all successful []
- b. Partially successful []
- c. Highly successful []

Why or why not?

.....
.....

2. Is the political environment favourable for CSO engagement in policy processes in Zimbabwe?

- a. Yes []
- b. Limited []
- c. No []

Which political factors make it easy/difficult for CSOs to engage in policy processes?

.....
.....

3. To what extent is patronage politics and/or clientelism a barrier or opening for CSO engagement in policy processes in Zimbabwe?

- a. Not at all []
- b. Partially important []
- c. Very []

Explain your answer:

.....
.....
.....

4. (a). In general, what are the main barriers to CSO engagement in policy processes in Zimbabwe?

.....
.....
.....

(b). What do you think can be done about the barrier(s) you chose above?

.....
.....

5. In your opinion, what is the single most important action that needs to be taken to improve the policy impact of CSOs in Zimbabwe?

.....
.....

6. Please feel free to offer any additional comments you have, including any topics you think have been missed in designing this questionnaire.

.....
.....

Thank you very much for your time

Please return completed questionnaire to [E-mail provided]

Appendix 4: Sample Letter Requesting Interviews Sent to Respondents

March 12th, 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,

Ref: Request for Interviews

I am writing this letter to request your permission to conduct face-to-face interviews with you. I am a Doctoral (PhD) candidate of Public Policy at the International Development Department, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. I am conducting a research on **“Civil Society and Policy Influencing in Zimbabwe”** In light of this, I have few questions that I would like to ask in order to test the assumption of the study and/or answer the research questions.

I would like to further emphasize the importance of this research in understanding the role played by civil society organisations in influencing pro-poor policy in Zimbabwe. The study is also significant to not only public policy making and implementation but importantly to Zimbabwean nation struggling to develop pro- poor policies through civil society organisations. This study would, no doubt, serve as a theoretical and empirical framework for understanding and developing genuine and credible civil society as instrument of development and governance in Zimbabwe.

I would therefore, be much grateful if my request is given the best of your favorable consideration. You will find attached an introductory letter from my University and interview schedules for your perusal and consideration.

Thanking you in anticipation of your favourable cooperation. I can be contacted through the [...mobile number provided].

Yours sincerely,

Cornelias Ncube.

Appendix 5: Sample Introduction Letter from the University of Birmingham³⁴

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
International Development
Department (IDD)
School of Public Policy

12th March, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to introduce Mr Cornelias Ncube, who is studying for a doctoral degree in Public Policy at the International Development Department, University of Birmingham, UK.

Mr Ncube is writing a doctoral thesis on: ***“Civil Society and Policy Influencing in Zimbabwe”***. This is an important and interesting area of research, which has implications for reforming and improving the role of civil society in influencing pro-poor policies.

To enable him undertake this study, Mr Ncube requires access to relevant public organisations/institutions and officials in Zimbabwe. The department and the University of Birmingham would like to ask for your cooperation and support during Mr Ncube's field research in Zimbabwe. I should be very grateful if you could facilitate his work and help him in any way possible.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Heather Marquette
Research Supervisor

Dr Paul Jackson
Director/Head of Department

³⁴ The original letter used during the field work had the official logo of the University of Birmingham and had been signed by both Dr Heather Marquette and Professor (then Dr) Paul Jackson.

Appendix 6: Sample Introduction Letter from the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations³⁵

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

14th May, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to introduce Mr Cornelias Ncube, who is an attaché in the Policy and Advocacy Department of the National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in Zimbabwe.

Mr Ncube is reading for a PhD in Public Policy with the University of Birmingham, UK. His research topic area is on ***'Civil society and Policy Influencing in Zimbabwe'***. To enable him undertake this study, Mr Ncube requires access to relevant public organisations/institutions and officials in Zimbabwe.

The NANGO secretariat would like to ask for your cooperation and support during Mr Ncube's research. I should be very grateful if you could facilitate his work and help him in any way possible.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Fambai Ngirande
Advocacy and Public Policy Manager

³⁵ The original letter had the official logo of NANGO and had been signed by Mr Fambai Ngirande

Appendix 7: Matrix Table of Role and Organisation Affiliation of Interviewees

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE	ORGANISATION	POSITION	DATE
Interview 1	African Institute for Agrarian Studies	Executive Director	June 5, 2008
Interview 2	Institute of Development Studies, University of Zimbabwe	Lecturer	July 9, 2008
Interview 3	Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust	Executive Director	June 16, 2008
Interview 4	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt & Development	Executive Director	June, 2008
Interview 5	Child Protection Society	Director	June 9, 2008
Interview 6	Zimbabwe Human Rights Association	National Programmes Coordinator	July 30, 2008
Interview 7	Zimbabwe Development Trust	Executive Director	June 9, 2008
Interview 8	Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe	Programs Officer	
Interview 9	Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe	President	June 19, 2008
Interview 10	Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association	Policy and Advocacy Officer	August 4, 2008
Interview 11	Alternatives to Neo-Liberalism in Southern Africa	Director and Programme Coordinator	June 11, 2008
Interview 12	University of Zimbabwe (Poverty Reduction Forum)	Executive Director	June 11, 2008
Interview 13	African Institute for Agrarian Studies	Programs Officer (civil society dialogue)	July 10, 2008
Interview 14	National Constitutional Assembly	Executive Director	April 21, 2008
Interview 15	National Association of Non Governmental Organisations	NANGO vice chairperson & NANGO Advocacy Chairperson	August 1, 2008
Interview 16	University of Zimbabwe (Dept. of Political & Administrative Studies)	Lecturer	June 20, 2008
Interview 17	Mass Public Opinion Institute	Executive Director	July 8, 2008
Interview 18	Save the Children (Norway)	Communications Officer	August 6, 2008
Interview 19	German Development Service	Regional Director (Zimbabwe/Botswana)	April 18, 2008
Interview 20	Zimbabwe Project Trust	Executive Director	July 7, 2008
Interview 21	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop Conference	Director & Parliament Liaison Office	May 1, 2008
Interview 22	The Catholic for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe	National Director	May 1, 2008
Interview 23	Cadec –National Office	National Director	May 1, 2008
Interview 24	Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe	National Coordinator	May 30, 2008
Interview 25	Christian Alliance	National Coordinator	July 31, 2008
Interview 26	Media Information for Southern Africa	Acting Executive Director	April 18, 2008
Interview 27	Helen Keller International (Zimbabwe)	Programme Officer	June 10, 2008

Interview 28	Friedrich Neumann Foundation (Germany)	Civil society consultant	August 18, 2008
Interview 29	Department of Social Welfare (in the Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare)	Program Officer (Private Voluntary Organisation)	August, 20, 2008
Interview 30	Justice for Agriculture	Executive Director	June 17, 2008
Interview 31	Gays & Lesbian Association of Zimbabwe	Director	June 5, 2008
Interview 32	National Association of Non Governmental Organisations	Policy and Advocacy Manager	August 21, 2008
Interview 33	National Association of Non Governmental Organisations	Programmes Manager	August 19, 2008

Appendix 8: Illustrative Matrix Table of Civil Society Positioning along the Hegemonic – Counter-Hegemonic Bloc Continuum

<p>Counter-Hegemonic Bloc (MDC as the major political player)</p> 	<p>Hegemonic Bloc (ZANU-PF as the major political player)</p> 	
	<p><i>PRINCIPLED ENGAGEMENT WITH REGIME</i></p> <p>Examples: -Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt Development (ZIMCODD) -National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) -Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop Conference (ZCBC) -African Institute of Agrarian Studies (AIAS) -Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA) Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI)</p>	<p><i>OUTRIGHT ENGAGEMENT WITH REGIME</i></p> <p>Examples: -Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) -Zimbabwe Liberation War Collaborators (ZILIWACO) -Zimbabwe Political Detainees and Restricttees Association (ZIPDR)</p>
	<p><i>BLOCKED OR OUTRIGHT NON-ENGAGEMENT WITH REGIME</i></p> <p>Examples: -National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) -Crisis Coalition of Zimbabwe (CCZ) -Justice for Agriculture (JAG) -Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) -Gays and Lesbian Association of Zimbabwe (GLAZ) -Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) -Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) -Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)</p>	<p>The historical institutional and organisational evolution of state-civil society relations in Zimbabwe determines the positioning of actors along the hegemonic-counter-hegemonic continuum. Organisations continuously adapt their strategies to engage the state depending on the politics of the day and the state of the economy. Strategies and relations with the state also vary according to sectorial /policy issues addressed by organisations at any given time. This matrix should therefore be interpreted simply as a methodological device capturing tendencies, and not an organic classification.</p>

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