

**RESILIENT  
SOCIAL  
CONTRACTS**

**WITS SCHOOL OF  
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# Forging A Resilient National Social Contract:

The Case of Zimbabwe

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper provides an analysis of findings from a Zimbabwe case study of an 11-country research and dialogue project that examines what drives a resilient national social contract in countries affected by conflict, fragility or with unresolved political settlements. It examines the value of three proposed ‘drivers’ of a resilient national social contract, and their intersections, and how this contributes to peace. The paper argues that Zimbabwe’s attempts at political settlement have failed to address core issues driving conflict emanating from the colonial rule. They have also failed to provide an inclusive basis for a nationally owned social contract. International actors have played a part in this, by among other things supporting agreements and processes that compromise the forging of robust institutions, limit ability to address CCIs and deliver services. The paper concludes by suggesting critical pathways towards this end, including transforming Zimbabwe’s deep state and related institutions, harnessing Zimbabwe’s resilience capacities and strengthening social cohesion.

## 1. Introduction

*I urge you, whether you are White or Black, to join me in a new pledge to forget our grim past, forgive others and forget, join hands in a new amity and together, as Zimbabweans, trample upon racialism, tribalism and regionalism and work hard to reconstruct and rehabilitate our society (Mugabe 1980, 3).*

Zimbabwe illustrates an interesting paradox: despite liberation from colonialism and achieving majority rule in 1980, experiencing relative stability over time (no major war recurrence), and illustrating strength on numerous state building fronts, the country has made little progress towards forging a more resilient social contract, 38 years post-independence. While many Zimbabweans and outsiders blame the state, international actors have historically led or supported processes that have contributed – i.e., first by facilitating a peace agreement at independence that restricted government’s ability to address the land question, a key grievance of the liberation war, and by enforcing (neo-)liberal reforms which compromised the state’s ability to forge robust institutions and deliver services. Efforts to transform politics and usher in a better life for all Zimbabweans have failed, and the political settlement is still far from being settled - the first foundational step, we argue, towards a resilient social contract. However, a widely popular (signifying a collective desire for change) military coup in November 2017, has renewed optimism and opened up new possibilities.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter reflects on the value of three proposed drivers (Box A) and their interactions in forging such a contract in Zimbabwe. The research is based on in-country interviews and focus groups<sup>2</sup> and extensive scholarly and policy desk analysis, including Afrobarometer surveys and data from other global indices. For the sake of our examination, we focused on two core conflict issues, namely, ‘the political question’ and ‘land question’ – two issues that have deeply challenged the forging of a resilient national social contract – explained and justified below.

The Zimbabwe experience illustrates and builds upon common trends in literature as discussed in the research framing (Box A), where the failure to design and implement measures to forge an

- 
1. Whether or not this was a military coup is debated among Zimbabweans and international actors. Some prefer military-assisted transition since arguably the military did not take over the running of government but for a period neutralised other security arms of state and facilitated transfer of power from one civilian leader (Mugabe) to another (Mnangagwa). Still others call it a coup because, by intervening in this manner, the military without doubt usurped Mugabe’s authority as the civilian authority. Mugabe says it was a military coup.
  2. Two regions plus the capital, Harare, were investigated for comparative value: the Matebeleland region, dominated by the Ndebele ethnic group and seen as the most marginalised, and Mashonaland, dominated by Shona, who form majority of ruling elites and are the most dominant ethnic group and seen as having most benefited by post-colonial development. Other groups and subgroups within these ethnic categories exist, addressed in social cohesion section.

inclusive political settlement undermines the ability to address grievances, and transform politics and institutions in ways that are more inclusive and responsive to citizen needs and priorities. The 2009 attempt at settling Zimbabwe's crisis – the Global Political Agreement (GPA) – though elite-driven, reflected considerable societal consensus on how issues should be tackled, but ultimately followed a path dependent track of elites operating outside formal agreements, playing out unofficial power dynamics that have served to scuttle the process and create new grievances. It failed to ensure new institutions perform as envisaged and to transform existing institutions along more inclusive and representative lines. The securocracy (Mandaza 2015) and civil service, akin to a 'deep state' at the centre of Zimbabwe's authoritarianism, have not been altered and, if anything, appear to have been reinforced after a military coup in November 2017 ousted Mugabe, who had been in power for 37 years. A subsequent election was won controversially by the man backed by the military, Emmerson Mnangagwa.

A key question that arises is how official political agreements, tending to deal with formal structures of power, can transform informal, quasi-formal and shadowy structures of power that drive authoritarianism. The inability to move towards a more inclusive peace is depicted further by the state's unwillingness or inability to perform core developmental functions and deliver services consistently, effectively or fairly. It has also not created a conducive operating environment where other actors (i.e., civil society, customary authorities, community structures, the international community, the private sector – and, perhaps most importantly, ordinary Zimbabweans) can effectively support these goals. Discussed later, while social cohesion has been forged in some respects (i.e., peaceful coexistence between ethnic groups), it has not fully taken root between some groups and the state, and levels of mistrust and fear of the state are high, as is political intolerance. These trends interact and undermine progress towards achieving and sustaining peace. These questions hold particular import in this new era for Zimbabwe, where expectations of a new social contract are high – shared across societal and political divides – yet old grievances are resurfacing. Lessons from the past cannot be ignored.

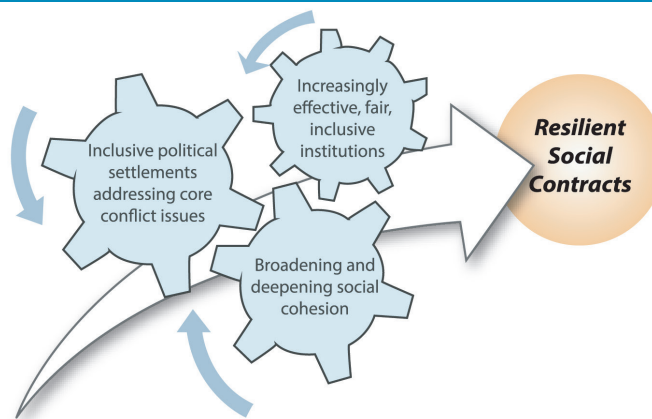
# Background to Project and Methodology

This case study and overarching 11-country research and policy dialogue project are informed by a conceptual framing and methodology<sup>3</sup> that investigates what drives a resilient national social contract – that is, a dynamic national agreement between state and society, including different groups in society, on how to live together. Such a contract includes the distribution and exercise of power, and how different demands, conflict interests and expectations around rights and responsibilities are mediated over time through different spheres and mechanisms. Three postulated ‘drivers’ of such a contract, constructed through deeply rooted in evidence-based research and dialogue within the project working group, are that:

1. Political settlements are increasingly inclusive and responsive to ‘core conflict issues’.<sup>4</sup>
2. Institutions (formal, customary and informal) are increasingly effective and inclusive and have broadly shared outcomes that meet societal expectations and enhance state legitimacy.
3. Social cohesion is broadening and deepening, with formal and informal ties and interactions binding society horizontally (across citizens, between groups) and vertically (between citizens/groups and the state).

The value of these proposed drivers and their interactions is assessed in these studies for their ability to better understand what went wrong, and the prospects for attaining and sustaining peace in Zimbabwe.

**FIGURE 1: THREE DRIVERS OF RESILIENT SOCIAL CONTRACTS**



‘Social contract-making’ spheres and related institutional mechanisms – central to the study framing and findings – are conceptualised as follows: Peacemaking (i.e., through a peace agreement or political agreement); Transitional (i.e., sequenced dialogues, commissions, truth and reconciliation processes); Governance-related, including formal mechanisms (i.e., codified structures of government, formal institutions, national development plans, devolution frameworks/policies) and hybrid mechanisms (i.e., where religious/customary/non-state actor and state mechanisms interact); and Everyday (i.e., citizen actions or practices, norms, mores). In this study, the everyday sphere also serves as a litmus test of the extent to which higher-level, formalised agreements or processes represent wider societal views.

3. This research was overseen, and this working paper edited, by Research and Project Director, Erin McCandless. For full project framing, see McCandless, Erin. 2018. “Reconceptualizing the Social Contract in Contexts of Conflict, Fragility and Fraught Transition”. Working Paper, Witwatersrand University. <https://www.wits.ac.za/wsg/research/research-publications-/working-papers/>

4. As defined in this study, these are overt drivers of conflict and discord, either historical or contemporary in nature, broadly agreed by the main parties to drive conflict and discord, that are being disputed in the policy arena nationally, over time, and have resonance for most, if not all of the population. Ideally, they are reflected in formal agreements or mechanisms and enable examination of how state and society address conflict (McCandless 2018).

## 2.0 Context

### 2.1 State and national identity formation

#### *State formation and political settlements*

Four settlements are most notable in independent Zimbabwe, namely, the 1979 Lancaster House Agreement (LHA) ending colonial rule, the 1987 Unity Accord which merged ZANU and ZAPU into ZANU-PF, the 1998 Donor Land Conference, the Kadoma Declaration of 2001 between government and labour to forge a national social contract and the 2009 GPA. Here we touch on the first three, and take up the GPA, the most recent and comprehensive attempt to address Zimbabwe's conflict issues, in detail in section 3.0. The end of Mugabe's rule at the end of 2017 is without doubt significant, marks an end of an era and - judging by the level of consensus for change within the everyday sphere and across all political parties - may present new possibilities that we explore in the analysis and conclusion sections.

The LHA, though marking a historical departure from minority colonial to majority rule and as such presented opportunity for the development of a broad-based social contract, had severe limitations. Though it was negotiated and signed by the main political parties, it did resonate with societal demands for universal suffrage. Among the agreement's problematic compromises brokered with the assistance of US and Britain was a property clause that meant the government could only acquire white-held land through 'willing-seller, willing-buyer' approach. This within a context where "population densities were over three times greater in the black than in the white areas, and some 42 percent of the country was owned by 6,000 whites [...], most of whom had fought tooth and nail to prevent majority rule" (Palmer 1990, 165) was problematic. Attempts at settling the land question after the expiry of the LHA land clause in 1990, culminated in the 1998 Donor Land Conference, but this did not yield much progress.

Moreover, the LHA did not lay a path for victims to have justice - perhaps catalysing a trend of impunity characterizing post-colonial Zimbabwe. Violations had not only been committed by the colonial government, but by liberation fighters as well, against civilians generally and notably women, including within the ranks of the fighters, "a story which will never be told" (Interview, Rudo Gaidzanwa, 01/24/2017). As reflected in Mugabe's quote above, the call was for unity and reconciliation, without any form of justice or recourse. Also overlooked were women's grievances such as equal access to land, equality before the law and the Equal Work - Equal Pay were not addressed - nor were they addressed over time.

The second significant moment was the 1987 Unity Accord between ZAPU led by Joshua Nkomo and ZANU led by Mugabe. Between 1983 and 1987, the ruling ZANU government carried out a violent campaign named Gukurahundi (Shona for 'early rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains') targeted at leaders and supporters of ZAPU and leading to the killing of an estimated 20,000 people mainly of the Ndebele ethnic group (CCJP 1997). Newly declassified US and British communications of the time (Cameron 2017, Doran 2015) show that Gukurahundi was organised by Mugabe to eliminate political opposition and establish a one-party state (Doran 2015). The information also reveals how, despite having detailed information, the Western governments failed to act (Cameron 2017). The violence ended in 1987 when ZANU and ZAPU supposedly merged into ZANU-PF under the Unity Accord, where Joshua Nkomo became one of the two vice-presidents. This is now commemorated every 22 December.

Thirdly, the Kadoma Declaration of 2001 was a joint commitment to create a social contract among the government, labour and business and to save the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF), a social



bargaining platform for the three social partners that was failing. It set out mutual obligations, rights and responsibility towards resolving the country's mounting socio-economic challenges, including the land and political questions. Disagreements dated back to the attempts at a one-party state in 1990 and the decision by the ruling party to adopt the IFI-backed neo-liberal reforms (largely blamed for Zimbabwe's socio-economic decline) from the early 1990s (Kanyenze 1996). In the late 1990s, a new national consensus started to emerge on the need for civic-political reforms, in addition to the land question. The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a broad-based social movement emerging in 1997 and calling for a new democratic constitution, and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a new, strong opposition party formed in 1999 – both backed by labour – can be understood within this context.

In 2000, there was an attempt at a new constitution, which included, among other things, a clause for land expropriation without compensation. War veterans responded by embarking on violent land occupations. The Kadoma Declaration never took off due to political polarisation among key stakeholders and lack of broad participation. Moreover, the agreement was not legally binding and thus depended on the good will of parties involved, which was not present.

In 2008, Zimbabwe's crisis plunged to a new low when, for the first time, two formations of the opposition MDC<sup>5</sup> won a combined parliamentary majority but fell short of the 50 percent required to win the presidency and capture state power necessitating a presidential run-off election. This was won by Robert Mugabe 'uncontested' after opposition candidate Morgan Tsvangirayi withdrew, citing widespread violence against his supporters. The African Union and SADC, mediating Zimbabwe's contested elections as far back as 2002, stepped in and facilitated a Global Political Agreement (GPA) leading to a Government of National Unity (GNU) – discussed in detail in section 3.0.

Though the GNU improved the socio-economic conditions, ZANU-PF's highly unexpected 2013 electoral win ended the GNU, undermined the reform momentum and infused great uncertainty again into the political process while spiralling the economy downwards – described in section 4.0. The ruling ZANU-PF has retained a considerable social base through patronage and elite accumulation, reinforced by partisan state institutions, most significantly the security sector. Internal battles to succeed the increasingly frail 92-year-old Mugabe culminated in a military coup<sup>6</sup> that saw him replaced by his deputy Emmerson Mnangagwa. The new administration promised economic recovery and a new era of political freedom. The 2018 elections won by ZANU-PF and Mnangagwa have left the country much more polarised with the main opposition refusing to accept Mnangagwa's victory, alleging that the vote was rigged. The massive clampdown on opposition in the aftermath of the election, the death of least seven people when the military opened fire on opposition supporters protesting delays in the release of presidential results on 1 August 2018 have raised question about whether Zimbabwe is indeed turning the corner. Questions of healing and justice for victims of Gukurahundi, given Mnangagwa's alleged role in the massacres, remain to be addressed. A cholera outbreak soon after the election leaving at least 20 people dead highlights the dire state of the country's health and service delivery system.

## *Core conflict issues and resilience for peace capacities*

Zimbabwe's ongoing crisis is deeply rooted in competing contextual narratives. The 'Liberation narrative' stresses the country's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity. Advanced by state-controlled media and intellectuals aligned to the ruling party, as well as public schools, it aims to foster collective memory of pre-colonial nationhood, with national symbols, war heroes and shrines – central to the post-colonial state's nation-building project. The narrative is tied to

5. The MDC first split in 2005 over whether to take part in newly introduced senatorial elections. Then leader Tsvangirai stayed with the main wing (MDC-T) while Welshman Ncube led the break-away (MDC-N).

6. See Footnote 1.

a 'patriotic history' that places ZANU-PF and Mugabe at the centre of Zimbabwe's nationhood, with the imperative to 'complete the unfinished task of liberation', namely, black economic empowerment and land redistribution. For ZANU-PF, the country's problems are a result of external interference in the country's domestic affairs, sanctions and the West's regime change agenda - as punishment for taking back land from white people.

Competing narratives, shared by many in civil society, the opposition and a good number of the international community active in Zimbabwe, suggest the emergence of a "post-nationalist consensus" (Raftopoulos 2004). Such perspectives have driven opposition politics and much civic activism, suggesting alternative Zimbabwean values and national priorities. Critical scholars further argue that Zimbabwe's nationalism is premised on a discredited notion that people lived harmoniously as one nation before the disruption of British colonialism (Mlambo 2013, 51); it is merely a colonial and nationalist construct that is yet to become a nation (Ndlovu 2009). These narratives argue that ZANU-PF has over-politicised the land question and exaggerated its centrality to divert attention from real issues of economic governance and collapse in service delivery, providing an excuse to disregard the rule of law and mask elite accumulation. Further, the manner in which the land question has been addressed has created new problems (discussed in section 3.0). The real problems are 'democratic deficits', i.e., political violence, impunity, lack of fundamental rights and freedoms, and the over-securitisation of the state (see The People's Charter 2008).

Bearing in mind the strong, competing historical narratives that underpin different perspectives of belonging and national identity in Zimbabwe, it is perhaps of little surprise that a coherent, agreed understanding between state and society, across social groups, on how to live together, is in place. Zimbabweans interviewed among them villagers in rural Matebeland and Mashonaland, politicians, civil society and academics expressed common understandings of the social contract concept, i.e., "the kind of society you want to build", common "understanding of the rules of the game", "obligation of the state towards fulfilling its mandate" and distribution, "who gets what, when and how much within a particular society". A number of key informants highlighted the pivotal but, in the end, failed historical attempts to forge compacts amongst key stakeholder groups – needed to transformation politics, the economy and state-society relations.

In this study, bearing the different narratives in mind, two core conflict issues underpinning the ongoing crisis, with roots in the liberation struggle, are examined: the 'political question' and the 'land question'.

The 'political question,' which many argue is the overarching issue obstructing peace and development in Zimbabwe, is about the modalities through which political power is acquired, exercised, retained and transferred. Despite the attainment of liberation in 1980, the right to vote (freely), a major grievance for blacks during the colonial rule, is yet to be fully realised. The post-colonial government has ruled by coercion and limited consent, while propagating a narrative of national unity in which dissent is anathema. In 2008, for example, the military stopped an imminent transfer of power through a campaign of violence. Army generals have publicly expressed support for ZANU-PF (The Guardian 2008; The Telegraph 2002; Rupiya 2013).

The 'land question' is a vestige from the colonial era as the most politicised and emotive aspect of inequality between whites and blacks. Not effectively addressed by the LHA, the issue stymied post-independence economic transformation, further perpetuating uneven development (Bond 1998) and ultimately exacerbating the nationwide political crisis in the late 1990s. While earlier attempts by rural communities had been met with government resistance, rising pressure from the country's war veterans on the government and the rejection of a 2000 draft constitution that had contained an important land clause, prompted a massive war veteran-led, government-supported movement of occupations of white-owned farms. Today, following what became Zimbabwe's Fast-Track Land

Reform Programme (FTLRP), the majority of land is now in black hands: 11 million hectares were transferred to blacks, compared to 3 million from 1980 to 2000 (Sachikonye 2003).

The rapid change has created new problems, not least: multiple ownerships, poor land utilisation, partisan allocation, insecure tenure, duplication of title and conflict between mining and surface rights, among other things (Rukuni 2012). The economy-wide impact has thus far been negative, while its impact on livelihoods is not conclusive. Farm workers who have historically constituted 40 percent of total national work force were excluded and found themselves destitute overnight. It is also linked to questions about natural resources, surface rights versus mining rights or conflicts over mining permits, socio-environmental impacts and customary rights and traditions, in relation to those of civil administrators. White farmers who lost land without any form of compensation might still want to claim. The land question is therefore far from resolved.

Aside from the issues that divide, Zimbabweans reflect enormous resilience, with many individuals and institutions diligently working to move the peace process forward. Key ‘resilience for peace’ capacities<sup>7</sup> include a strong sense of national identity, civic activism and a pervasive informal sector. The first is supported by a pervasive value amongst Zimbabweans, supported by intellectuals and politicians who promote national, rather than ethnic, tribal or regional identities. This mediates against narrow ethnic or tribal narratives gaining traction, notably through political parties. The thriving informal sector is a result in many ways of the failing economy but rooted in Zimbabwe’s colonial history where the non-white majority had to find innovative ways to thrive and rebel has been key to coping with the economic crisis. Access to land following the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme has enabled living through not only farming but by highly informalised artisanal and small-scale mining, and access to South Africa has fed a thriving informal cross-border trade and the ability of the diaspora to support those living in-country. Civic activism, undoubtedly rooted in Zimbabwe’s anti-colonial history, thrives across all sectors and regions.

These issues that drive conflict and resilience in Zimbabwe over time are not the only issues that actors would deem central. Few would doubt, however, their relevance to Zimbabweans as a whole, over time. They are taken as a means to reflect upon and illustrate the ways in which Zimbabweans (including the state and society, and groups within society) are able to mediate different demands and conflicting interests in response to contextual factors and through varied mechanisms, institutions and processes – effectively – all of which lies at the core of a resilient national social contract.

### **3.0 DRIVER 1 – Addressing Core Conflict Issues through Social Contract-Making Spheres**

This section examines Zimbabwe’s attempt at addressing two core conflict issues – the political question and the land question – through the GPA and related transitional sphere mechanisms of ‘social contract-making’, as articulated in Box B below, and how these related to the everyday and hybrid spheres, following the 2008 crisis. We reflect particularly on the quality of the agreement, the extent to which it represents consensus among the parties and its inclusiveness in addressing core conflict issues, and whether conflict issues have been addressed, and resilience capacities effectively channelled, in ways that support a state-society agreement that can serve a resilient social contract. As part of this analysis, we also reflect on the development of the new constitution and early efforts of some of the new commissions, despite that these blur into more formal governance spheres and arrangements.

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7. As defined in the study, endogenous capacities (norms, values, institutions, practices) to address shocks and stressors (including drivers of conflict and fragility) in ways that minimally (adaptively) mitigate the effects of conflict and more maximally (transformatively) uproot these drivers and foster new or revitalised structures and systems that support peace.

## BOX B: SPHERES AND MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL CONTRACT-MAKING IN ZIMBABWE

1. **Peace-making:** Global Political Agreement (GPA)
2. **Transitional:** Government of National Unity (GNU); Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC); Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI); Constitution Parliamentary Committee (COPAC)
3. **Formal Governance:** 2013 Constitution; independent oversight institutions, e.g., land commission, Human Rights Commission (HRC) and National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC).

The GPA, signed in 2008 between ZANU-PF and the two MDC parties, provided for a transitional GNU (2009-2013), where parties shared power and agreed to implement several reforms to address conflict issues.

Relating to the political question, the transitional arrangements would culminate in a free and fair election, to usher in a legitimate government. Electoral laws were to be amended to ensure a level playing field among political actors. Under the GPA, ZANU-PF retained the president and two vice-president posts while the MDCs took the prime minister's and two deputy prime ministers' positions. The president was required to consult with the prime minister on important decisions and appointments. Ministerial posts were divided with ZANU-PF in slight minority overall, though retaining all the security ministries, while the MDC took mostly economic and welfare ministries.<sup>8</sup> To address and avoid a repeat of the 2008 election violence, the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) was set up, chaired by a vice-president. A Joint Monitoring and Implementation Mechanism (JOMIC) composed of four senior members from each of the political parties and an annual review committee was responsible for monitoring implementation and mediating conflicts among the GNU partners.

Parties agreed to a Parliament-led process – the Constitution Parliamentary Committee (COPAC) – to draft a new democratic constitution to build upon and reinforce agreements in the GPA. Approved in 2013 through a resounding 'yes' vote (98 percent), the new Constitution of Zimbabwe spawned several independent formal commissions to support democracy and nation-building, human rights, elections and national peace and reconciliation – all key to addressing the political question. To address historic demands by civil society and the opposition, it includes presidential term limits (two terms, each five years in duration), an independent judiciary and a prosecuting authority. Building on the GPA, there is a clause on decentralisation of power and devolution – meeting a key concern especially of people from middle and southern Zimbabwe, where there is a persistent perception of marginalisation. The roles of traditional authorities are perhaps more clearly defined than in the past, limited to promoting cultural values and heritage of their communities, facilitating development, administering communal land and resolving local disputes in accordance with customary law inter alia. Reinforcing the GPA, it also bars them from political activity or acting in a partisan way – a longstanding societal concern.

Regarding the land question, the GPA and subsequently the 2013 Constitution provided for expropriation without compensation, transparency, fairness, productivity and security of tenure. Both provide for a comprehensive and non-partisan land audit and call on the UK to meet its LHA promise of funding land acquisition and the restoration of productivity on all agricultural land. Under the GPA, a periodic review mechanism would among other things assess progress on the 'land question'. The Constitution provides for an independent Land Commission (LC), composed of two to seven people reflecting regional and gender balance. The LC is tasked with conducting regular land audits, ensuring

8. Of the 31 ministerial posts, 15 of which were allocated to ZANU-PF, 13 to MDC-T and 3 MDC-N. Of the 15 deputy ministers' positions, 8 went to ZANU-PF, 6 MDC-T and 1 MDC-N, leaving the actual appointments to further negotiations. Article 20 of the GPA.

accountability, fairness and transparency in the management and acquisition of land and transfer of rights and advising government on land issues.

In reflecting on that which is beyond official governance mechanisms where social contract-making occurs on these issues, as indicators of the robustness of this political settlement, we touch upon the hybrid roles of traditional authorities and local government, and what citizens and social movements are doing, in an ‘everyday’ sense. This includes reflection on how the 28 February 2008 People’s Charter, a declaration by more than 3,000 delegates from labour, civil society, churches and social movements, resonates with other social contract making-mechanisms and agreements around how to address the core conflict issues. We also consider land occupation movements, and illegal mining activity, as illustrations of dissatisfaction and incongruence with the higher-level processes.

### 3.1 Core conflict issue #1 – the political question

#### *Quality of inclusion and consensus on process and issues*

The GPA negotiations were a political process limited to the three main political parties based on the 2008 parliamentary election results in which MDC-T attained 48 percent, ZANU-PF, 47 percent and MDC-N, 5 percent. The GPA was seen in the immediate context as addressing an electoral dispute, with the parties as main disputants. Also, SADC and the AU had been mediating between ZANU-PF and the MDC formations for years, so this was seen as a culmination. Civil society was engaged only through political parties and, unsurprisingly, accused them of not being sufficiently inclusive.

Far from representing consensus on the nature of the crisis and the way out, parties to the GPA appear to have been motivated by divergent strategic interests. For the MDC, following ZANU-PF’s violent refusal to hand over power, the GPA and GNU offered a soft path to reform (from within the state), creating conditions for free and fair elections and ultimately the peaceful transfer of power. As Tendai Biti, Minister of Finance during the GNU, points out, “It was the 2008 blood bath and social crisis” that forced MDC-T into the GPA (Interview 2017). For the MDC-T, “The crisis was about legitimacy and restoring the people’s lost mandate through an election, sooner [rather] than later” (Ncube, SAPES 2016). ZANU-PF saw the GPA as a come-back opportunity, to legitimise, reconfigure and reinvent itself, “a passive revolution” according to Raftopolous (2010) and, as one of ZANU-PF’s leading voices then, Jonathan Moyo, suggested, “to stop regime change” (Mazarire 2009, 110). Moyo later tweeted, “So you want us to reform ourselves out of power? You must be joking!” (@ProfJNMoyo, Twitter, 9:42 am 26 May 2015).

The GPA can be viewed as an agreement to disagree. “Each article contained therein represents an agenda item which was put by one or two political parties” (Welshman Ncube 2016, 25). The MDCs, however, could not get ZANU-PF to acknowledge role in the 2008 violence and concede on security sector reform. The GPA reflects ZANU-PF positions on land, the liberation struggle and sovereignty, while, as argued by Matondi, “Constitutional reforms, human rights, rule of law, impartiality of chiefs and organs of state and free political activity among others were specifically MDC positions” (Interview 2017).

The lack of real consensus was evident in the persistent disagreements in the implementation of the agreement. Though ZANU-PF had acceded to some civil and political reforms on paper, actual reform was met with fierce resistance. ZANU-PF pushed through the 2013 election without requisite electoral reforms and the security sector continued to act with impunity. Mugabe would defy the GPA and make unilateral appointments. The MDC parties, civil society and, to some extent, SADC lacked leverage to enforce effective implementation (Raftopolous 2010). It took three years for the parties to produce a draft constitution due to disagreements that sometimes turned violent. In the end, 98 percent of voters



supported its adoption – perhaps the best achievement of the GPA.

The GNU presented new strategy dilemmas for civil society and civic action about how to engage with the state.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, there was a sense that the GNU, though elite-driven, should be given a chance, which meant applying less pressure. To this extent, some worried that the GPA demobilised civil society (Crisis Coalition 2010). On the other hand, many CSOs saw their participation in the GPA as tokenism and some continued to press for democratic reforms and greater inclusivity (Chiroro 2013). The NCA, whom the MDC had historically partnered with and grew out of, for example, was vociferously critical and even mobilised for a ‘no vote’ leading up to the referendum. In the final analysis, however, reforms wrought by the GNU and 2013 Constitution, such as separation of powers, devolution, a maximum of two five-year terms for the president, a justiciable bill of civil, political and socio-economic rights, among other things, when weighed against demands of successive popular struggles starting with the late 1990s constitutional movement and the 2008 People’s Charter – further confirmed through surveys on a range of issues<sup>10</sup> – do resonate and suggest acceptance in the ‘everyday’ sphere.

### *Implementation, evolution and adaptation*

Reforms introduced by the GPA, at least on paper, had potential, but failed to progressively evolve and resolve the political question. Implementation was fraught with disagreements about exercise of power and conduct of the security services. Despite the compromise agreement to co-chair the Ministry of Home Affairs, which governs the police service, police continued to act with impunity and only took directives from the ZANU-PF-aligned minister. JOMIC, though successful in mitigating inter-party conflicts at provincial, district and community levels (Chikwanda, interview; Sachikonye, interview), failed to deal with persistent conflicts in the executive and Mugabe’s unilateralism. On the critical issue of elections, ZEC failed to reform and act impartially. The ONHRI meant to address past violence and human rights abuses, but failed dismally, as it lacked the capacity and will. Paradoxically, ZANU-PF headed the organ, yet never acknowledged its role in the Gukurahundi massacres and the 2008 violence. Communities were not represented in the organ process, and there was no consultation about the nature and scope of its work (i.e., ACCORD 2017). As a result of non-implementation due to lack of genuine consensus, “Four years later all the core issues remained intact. [...] We still have violence” (Biti, Interview, 2017). ZANU-PF, firmly in charge after the 2013 elections, stalled and even moved to reverse some of the reforms. Impunity continues, prompting one civil society leader to describe the new constitution as a “paper tiger that is becoming increasingly meaningless and ineffectual”.<sup>11</sup> The MDC has also been accused of being complicit, with some suggesting that the party got quickly corrupted by power and did not play a strong enough role in pushing for reforms.

It is not an entirely bleak picture, however. Civil society has been able to use the new constitution to challenge the state. Informal traders have approached the Zimbabwe Human Rights Council (ZHRC) and constitutional court, both set up under the new constitution to investigate abuses by the police. The 2016 ZHRC findings against the state for partisan distribution of drought relief and against police heavy-handedness in dealing with street protests were unprecedented. Celebrated as courageous and signalling what could be achieved without political interference, the number of complaints brought to the Commission have increased.<sup>12</sup> The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) has, for example, been able to make use of the now accessible Auditor-General’s audits of public finance to file cases of fraud with the police (Focus Group 4, Harare, 2017). Combined with positive

9. The concept of a strategy dilemma for civil society vis-à-vis the state (“participation or resistance?”) was first conceptualised by McCandless (2011) rooted in field research (2001-2004).

10. I.e., 68 percent of people polled in 2013-2014 supported term limits for the president while only 25 percent said there should be no constitutional limit (Afrobarometer).

11. ZLHR spokesman Kumbirai Mafunda.

12. <http://www.zhrc.org.zw/index.php/2014-07-02-07-41-38/press-releases/155-press-statement-on-public-protests-and-police-conduct>

court rulings, civil society's operating space is opening, having once been dramatically curtailed by such nefarious laws like the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which restricted public gatherings and demonstrations, and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), which criminalised access to information and speech, but is now annulled by provisions in the Bill of Rights. Any amendment to the Bill of Rights requires a referendum, while other amendments by Parliament can only be done by a secret ballot, thus protecting members of Parliament from intimidation. The Constitution's power to facilitate change must therefore be viewed over time.

This notwithstanding, the post-GNU period has presented the risk of legitimizing ZANU-PF regionally and internationally, without meaningful reform. The attempts in 2017 at amending the Constitution to give the president unchecked power to appoint judges is illustrative. Despite insisting on electoral reforms prior to the 2013 elections, ZANU-PF stubbornly forged ahead without them, and SADC and the international community accepted the outcome. With Zimbabwe on their agenda for nearly 20 years, fatigue was increasingly present. While the EU lifted the decade-long sanctions and started to pursue reengagement, the US retained sanctions on ZANU-PF officials, insisting on democratic reforms. Zimbabwe appeared far from the radar of the new Trump Administration, though. After Mugabe's forced 2017 resignation, the new government has been met with cautious optimism both within and outside Zimbabwe. It has prioritised normalisation of relations with the West and pledged "credible, free and fair elections" in 2018 and usher in democracy. However, without concrete reforms and movement to align undemocratic laws with the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, this remains mere talk.

## 3.2 Core conflict issue #2 – the land question

### *Quality of inclusion and consensus on process and issues*

Article 5.1 of the GPA notes that parties agreed on the land question as a core issue but differed on some of the modalities for redress. The MDC had preferred the Fast-Track Land Reform (FTLR) exercise to be revisited and emphasised the importance of maintaining productivity, while ZANU-PF considered this a closed chapter. The former was concerned about the violence and unfairness characterizing the FTLR. Agreement was found on the need for a land audit; the Land Commission (LC) and district-level committees were to ensure, fair, transparent and equitable distribution. By 2012, there was growing convergence on the "need for secure land rights, compensation (at least for improvements), and intensive land use planning" (Rukuni 2012), among other things. Public dialogues on the land question increased and became less emotive, partly owing to the work of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Land and Agriculture. In the end, MDCs took a pragmatic position that accepted the irreversibility of the FTLR.

However, some, including traditional chiefs, found some things problematic. "The new Constitution has totally relegated us to the fringes. Traditional leaders should be allowed to own and parcel out land fully without any hindrance. [...] We want our powers as they were before 1890," one traditional leader complained (Musonza, Interview, 27 January 2017). There remains a strong sentiment that the land question is far from settled. Critics, backed by evidence (Zamchiya 2011), point to how the process has privileged ZANU-PF supporters – a key rural voting constituency for ZANU-PF – and a reason ZANU-PF chose to hold onto the rural development portfolio in the GPA negotiations (Raftopolous, Interview, 27 December 2016). Fast-Track Land Reform also did not allocate fairly across ethnic, regional, tribal and gender lines (Matondi 2012). Audits in 2003 and 2006 identified several problems, lack of accountability, multiple farm ownership, unfairness, lack of security of tenure, challenges of financing of land compensation and low productivity. While redistribution has provided opportunities for new livelihood either by accessing own or husband's piece of land, only about 30 percent of land is controlled by women (Mutopo 2014).

It is the case that, despite concerns around fairness of process and results, overall, there is greater inclusiveness of results – that is, land ownership in Zimbabwe. However, the process (the violence and attack on ‘property rights’) has undoubtedly turned away the international donor community and lowered foreign direct investment, and declining farm productivity negatively impacted the agro-industrial economy, hurting development for all Zimbabweans (Mawowa 2011). This, too, needs to be weighed in thinking about the inclusiveness of results.

## *Implementation, evolution and adaptation*

Despite convergence among parties on the land question and this growing during the GNU, progress in implementation has been slow and new problems are emerging. The Zimbabwe Land Commission Bill to operationalise the LC was only gazetted in June 2016 and, by mid-2017, was yet to be law. The ZLC is hamstrung by lack of funding. The current resettlement model negates the need to expand existing communal areas. One chief complained that up to 7,000 people are on his land waiting list, preferring land in his area due to communal and family ties, rather than risk being moved to some distant place under the government land reform programme.

An indication that the Land Question is far from settled, the new government is pledging that the land reform will not be reversed and is calling on some white farmers who lost their farms to return. Sharp warnings are also being given that ‘illegal occupations’ will not be tolerated – part of a commitment to protect property rights and attract foreign direct investment. In his inaugural speech on 24 November 2017, the new president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, gave a commitment to compensate whites who lost land to the Fast-Track Land Reform. Such compensation is provided for in the constitution that the Mugabe government appeared reluctant to implement.

The land question has increasingly been entangled with the issues of mining, something the GPA and the 2013 Constitution were problematically silent about. ZANU-PF patronage has extended allocation of small-scale mining rights, leading to much contestation, sometimes violent. Clashes between small-scale miners (mining rights) and farmers (surface rights), both old and newly resettled, have been commonplace (Mawowa 2013). The law gives supremacy to mining rights over surface rights, leading often to the displacement of surface land rights holders once a mineral resource has been found. To pre-empt this, many farmers have moved into mineral resource extraction, securing mining rights, although politically connected figures regularly use their power to interfere. In areas where traditional authorities preside, they have at times joined forces with local communities in defending ‘the right (privilege) of locals’ to mine without such interference from ‘outsiders’, without guaranteed success. The military’s control of diamonds and lack of accountability have been problematic.

\* \* \*

This section has sought to consider how well two of Zimbabwe’s core conflict issues have been addressed through the latest political settlement and through related social contract-making spheres and mechanisms. Quantitative data can also provide further insight on the state of Zimbabwe’s peace during this period and after – offering another angle for insight into the resilience of this settlement.

From 2008 to 2016, Global Peace Index (GPI) scores for levels of political instability rated extremely high, indicating the fragility of the political settlement even at the elite level (averaging 3.5 out of 5 – ‘the least peaceful’ – and up to 4.5 in 2009 at the time of the GPA). Similarly, on the Fragile States Index (FSI), where 10 is the highest and most fragile, between 2005 and 2016, factionalised elites were at 7.9 in 2005 and remained steadily high (between 9.3-7) through the GPA period, peaking at a top score of 10 in 2014, following Mugabe’s electoral win. Zimbabwe averaged 9 on human rights and rule of law, peaking at 9.9 in 2009 at the start of the GPA, and only declining to 8.9 in 2012-2013 and to 8.4 in 2016. Group grievance saw a steady rise from 6.4 (2005) to 9.5 at the start of the GPA (2008), down to only 8.4 in 2013 and 7.5 in 2016. In 2016, these scores all remained high, notably with



factionalisation of elites at 9.8, suggesting that it is a key factor underlying the intractability of this process.

## 4.0 DRIVER 2 – Effective, Fair and Inclusive Institutions

By 2017, eight years post-GPA signing, the government was hardly able to provide basic services and pay civil servants, and corruption was rampant. Roads and public infrastructure were in a state of disrepair prompting government to declare a state of disaster (NewsDay, 15 February 2017). Acute cash shortages were threatening the financial and political stability. Millions continued to migrate to neighbouring South Africa and beyond. This was a major departure from the 1980s welfarist state, which built its legitimacy through expanding services, especially to the formally marginalised rural black areas, working collaboratively with civil society and churches and maintaining a strict anti-corruption stance, documented in the party's Leadership Code. All of this began to slide in the 1990s with the state's adoption of structural adjustment policies and consequent withdrawal from service provision, further fuelled by diminished fiscal capacity due to the economic crisis, a severe drought in 1992, and increased state predation and high levels of corruption.

Such facts do not bode well for a positive analysis of the second proposed driver of a resilient social contract in Zimbabwe: that institutions become more effective over time, producing more inclusive results, and able to perform key functions in ways that enhance state legitimacy.

### 4.1 Performance

Zimbabwe's institutions are not performing. From 2005-2016, Zimbabwe soared above the averages of all countries (and even this study's selection of conflict-affected countries) on ranked adequacy of service provision (between 8.5-9.4 out of 10). This peaked in 2009, the year of the GPA, though was still 8.5 in 2016 (FSI). With data starting earlier, Zimbabwe's governance effectiveness indicators plummeted between 1996 and 2015 – from 50 percent to 15 percent – while control of corruption declined from 45 percent to 15 percent (World Bank Good Governance Indicators 2016). Despite anti-corruption laws passed in the 2000s and the 2013 Constitution's establishment of an 'independent' anti-corruption commission, Zimbabwe still ranks very low on the Transparency International Corruption Index – 154 out of 176.

Across a host of sectors, they are challenged with basic functioning and the delivering services, let alone questions of fair and inclusive results for all Zimbabweans. They are challenges of capacity, misplaced priorities and rampant corruption and do not hold society trust, as indicators and interviewed Zimbabweans aptly reveal.

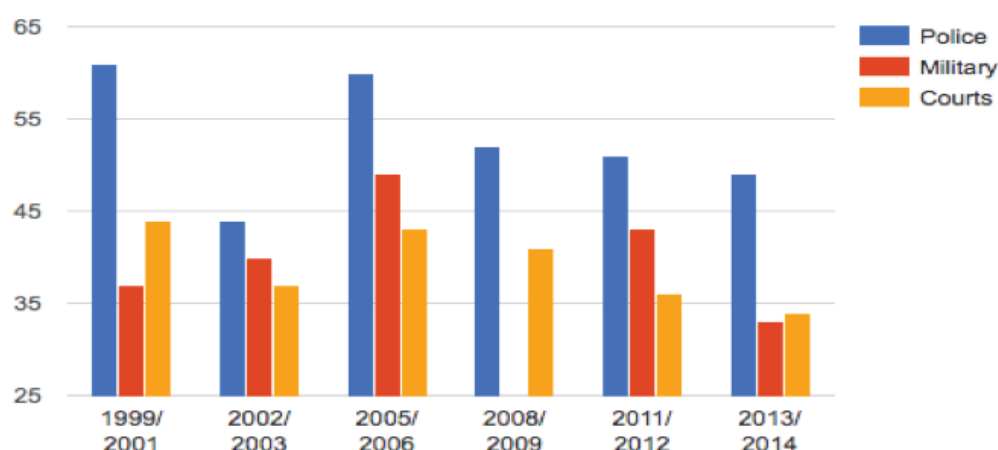
On delivery of key services, Zimbabweans regularly go without water, fluctuating between 33 percent and 45 percent without water "several times or always" in surveys between 2002-2014 (Afrobarometer). Brain-drain and failure to pay staff has fostered a grave shortage of medical personnel. Pregnant women are reportedly required to bring their own water to some government hospitals and clinics (FGD 4 Harare 2017). As one FGD reflected, without state capacity, socio-economic rights provisions in the 2013 Constitution (e.g., right to health) are meaningless.

Zimbabwe was celebrated for its post-independence education system producing some of the highest literacy rates in Africa and, as revealed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, education remains a top priority for Zimbabweans (The Independent, 30 June 2016). Crippled over time by ESAP, the crisis and brain-drain, the collapse in public school education is illustrated by Afrobarometer survey findings that, from 1999 to 2014, about 45 percent to 50 percent of respondents thought government handled

educational needs badly. Today, public schools are also politicised, with the liberation narrative and a ZANU-PF-centred history taught. In 2016, a national pledge in all schools was instituted amidst widespread resistance, which calls for children to swear allegiance to God, salute the national flag, pay respect to liberation war heroes and commit to hard work and honesty (The Herald, 4 May 2016).

In terms of safety and security institutions, while Zimbabweans generally feel safe in their communities,<sup>13</sup> fear of political intimidation and violence is strong, though promisingly this has improved in the post-GPA period: 91 percent in 2008/2009, 81 percent in 2011/2012 and 61 percent in 2013/2014 (Afrobarometer). Surveys from 1999-2014 show concerning levels of trust for the courts and military and even the police:

### TRUST - LITTLE TO NOT AT ALL



Focus group discussions supported these findings, as one respondent (Goromonzi) said, “Currently there is no justice; the police are being bribed and people can even go to prison without committing a crime.”

The security sector is accused of both failing to act against ZANU-PF violators and committing violence and intimidation against ZANU-PF opponents, especially during elections. Ibbo Mandaza (2016) has described Zimbabwe as a “securocratic State” in which popular legitimacy hardly matters. It is well documented how senior security officers have openly supported ZANU-PF and threatened opposition since 2000. The former Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, the late Vitalis Zvinavashe, in March 2002 and Major General Nyikayaramba in 2013, essentially said that the army would not accept someone without liberation credentials as president (Zimbabwe Independent, 23 June 2017). In 2008, the military spearheaded a violent campaign against MDC supporters after ZANU-PF’s electoral loss. The 2013 election, however, witnessed lower levels of violence owing partly to the work of the GNU and pressure from SADC (BBC, 2 August 2013).

High rates of unemployment, a perennial challenge since the mid-1990s, also illustrate the state’s inability to meet its core functions, 80 percent in 2005 and peaking at 95 percent in 2009 (CIA 2017). Meanwhile, since 2000, the informal sector has grown exponentially, employing 84 percent of the population in 2012 (ZimStat 2012). The state is accused of only wanting to collect revenue from the sector without providing any services – practices that are relaxed in the run-up to elections (FG 4, Harare, 2017).

13. The 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 surveys show that 61 percent and 73 percent, respectively, never felt unsafe in their neighborhoods. A small minority always felt unsafe (3 percent and 1 percent, respectively).

Budget allocations are often contested, compounded where perceptions of historical and regional marginalisation persist, i.e., in Matabeleland. In addition to the tight fiscal space, the government's lack of movement on devolution aligns with the underfunding of local authorities. As finance minister during the GNU period, Biti (Interview, 2017) rallied with limited success to redress the unequal distribution of resources of the Matabeleland. He also admitted pressures placed on him during the GNU period to allocate more money towards the military<sup>14</sup> – something Zimbabweans are concerned about in the socio-economic context (FG 3, Harare, 2017). He also tried, without success, to ensure that revenue from the military-controlled diamond sector was remitted to the national treasury (DailyNews, 17 April 2013). In 2015, Mugabe publicly stated that \$15 billion in diamond revenue was unaccounted for (Sowetanlive, 4 March 2016). At the same time, major sources of revenue (formal and informal) such as spot fines at roadblocks, access fees at artisanal gold mining sites and extraction of diamonds were controlled by the security sector (Mawowa 2014).

## 4.2 Expectations, grievance recourse, everyday resistance

While modest promises were made at independence for peace and state security, respect for rule of law, an end to racial, tribal, regional and political divisions, and economic growth (Mugabe, 4 March 1980), promises grew throughout the 1980s. They grew to include free delivery of services in education, health, housing, public infrastructure, Africanisation, fair wages, equality for women, socialism, one-party-based national unity and good foreign relations (Denis Kadima and David Pottie 2002). The about-turn of ESAP was met with popular resistance in the context of the welfare state expectations that had grown with promises.

Illustrative, the People's Charter (2008) called upon the state “to initiate public programmes” across all social service areas, with free and quality public health care and education, and pensions and social security allowances across vulnerable groups, and to provide “decent work, employment and the right to earn a living”. However, interviews suggested more nuance and acceptance of the reality. One student leader noted, “In the early 1990s students were demanding free education and state living allowances, now the demand is for access to loans and paid accommodation on campus” (Mlondolozzi, interview, 2017). As one focus group participant stated, the state has since stopped deriving legitimacy from meeting the needs of the people (FG 2, Harare, 2017).

At the same time, public concern and outcry is focused on lavish salaries, lifestyles and public spending by the elites. Senior civil servants earn up to US\$40,000 – head of the state broadcaster (The Chronicle, 10 December 2013) per month, while ordinary workers are on poverty-level wages as low as US\$200 per month and often go for months without being paid. Government ministers often simultaneously run several businesses (FGD 3, 2017). On 7 October 2016, the online protest movement #ThisFlag tweeted images of the newly acquired brand-new police vehicles with the caption, “Your child is on death bed, what do you do? a) Dial 911 b) Rush to emergency c) Buy a new car to show off to dying child. How ridiculous.” Yet still, most Zimbabweans believe taxes should be paid (57 percent in 2011/2012 and 52 percent in 2013/2014), though a surprising number think resources for development can come from other areas (39 percent in 2011/2012 and 43 percent in 2013/2014) (Afrobarometer).

Such displays of everyday resistance are consistent with apathy towards official platforms for civic policy engagement. The labour unions, traditionally a key player in fostering national dialogue on key issues, have declined with soaring unemployment. New forms of social organisation have emerged from the ever-expanding informal sector, including for new farmers, but lack the organizing capacity of trade unions. In this context, CSOs have served as key instruments for public participation.

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14. Two percent to three percent on average was spent between 2010-2014 (CIA 2017) – slightly higher than the global average. For a country struggling to feed its people, and without a war, concerns for overspending here are warranted.

Zimbabweans are interested in inclusive economic outcomes and inclusive processes, i.e., for “people-centred economic planning and budgets at national and local government levels that guarantee social and economic rights” (People’s Charter). In this GNU period (2011/2012), polls suggested divided views on the need for government accountability, though higher numbers 61 percent (2011/2012) preferred government being accountable to citizens over concern for the actual results, while 35 percent said they did not mind the government getting things done even without 55 citizen influence.

The GNU brought expectations for the transformation of institutions and improved services, but evidence of delivery suggests a mixed picture. Service delivery in the GNU period in health and education began to improve, notably with the help of donors. For example, in education, this enabled a student-textbook ratio of 1:1 (UNICEF, 14 September 2010). Perceptions on living conditions improved slightly (‘very bad’ declining from 21 percent at the outset 2008/2009 to 14 percent for the 2011/2012 period – the lowest since 1999) (Afrobarometer 2016). Yet approval ratings for GNU’s handling of the economy fell from 71 percent at inception in 2009/2010 (with 17 percent disapproval) to 49 percent approval (50 percent disapproval) in 2011/2012 in spite of the economic growth, suggesting that improvements fell short of expectations. It is difficult to speculate how this might have affected the 2013 ZANU-PF electoral win, even with allegations of vote-rigging and manipulation. The MDC, which suffered heavy losses, had controlled economic and welfare ministries during the GNU. Post-GNU service delivery declined, with doctors and other health care workers persistently striking.

Failure to build strong institutions and entrench devolution through the GPA, as provided by the 2013 Constitution, has resulted in a rapid reversal of gains that had begun to take hold in service delivery since the GPA, as seen by slowed growth and deteriorating education and health sectors. It is clear that the government has little legitimacy in terms of process and output, linked with effective delivery. ZANU-PF, however, has managed to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of a sizable population (in terms of ‘shared beliefs’ – rooted in a liberation narrative and disdain for international actors). This legitimacy may also be derived from fear or lack of faith in other alternatives. While the state appears incapable of and even unwilling to deliver services, it continues to enforce authoritarian rule – through corruption and patronage rents channelled towards the sustaining of the coercive apparatus. Analysis of this driver thus presents a paradox with respect to the resilience of the social contract: while Zimbabweans are deeply unhappy with state institutions and their delivery, ZANU-PF’s re-election in 2013 upheld Mugabe’s legitimacy at the political level.

Early signals from the new government are that it is seeking service legitimacy, with the restoration of service delivery and fighting corruption being key priorities. In his first speech to the ZANU-PF leadership, Mnangagwa further warned the party against relying on its liberation history.

## **5.0 DRIVER 3 – Broadening and Deepening Social Cohesion**

In what ways and to what extent is social cohesion deepening and broadening? We consider this now both horizontally (across citizens, between groups) and vertically (in the relations between citizens/groups and the state)? Here we reflect on this, bearing in mind key ‘domains’ of social cohesion: belonging and identity; trust and respect; and access, participation and representation.

### **5.1 Vertical social cohesion**

“Corruption has been so blatant [...] it’s like they become immune to what’s happening in Zimbabwe, people have become cynical about the political class, about the state, the bureaucracy and the parastatal heads and even the local councils. [...] Trust is lost.” (Sachikonye Interview, 2017)

## *Belonging and identity*

There can be little doubt that Zimbabwe's independence euphoria, combined with the state's delivery of services in the early years, helped initially foster vertical social cohesion, especially between the state and Mashonaland (majority Shona) regions, ZANU-PF's historical power base. At the same time, among Ndebeles, Gukurahundi left an indelible mark on any resilient sense of national belonging and the mention of the country's army invokes terror and anger (Murambadoro 2015). In addition to fostering, as Cameron (2017, 6) describes, "an atmosphere of fear and mistrust, which persists to this day" between the people of Matabeleland and the GoZ, Gukurahundi is "seen in largely tribal terms as a Shona vendetta" against Ndebeles for pre-colonial subjugation.<sup>15</sup> The economic and political slide of the 1990s to 2000 not only worsened this schism, but opened new fault lines. Mngangwa's presidency has been bogged by several protests, mostly from southern Zimbabwe calling on the new government to address the Gukurahundi violations.

Leader of opposition party Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), Dumiso Dabengwa's statement during a SAPES dialogue (2017) expressed common sentiment, revealing broader inter-ethnic issues.

We do have a nationality issue to be resolved, sadly so many years after our independence. [...] What is one is our country, Zimbabwe, while the citizens belong to several major ethnic groups that have specific and separate anxieties and demands from the national cake. [...] There is no way we can seek to resolve the national question and set up a democratic state without identifying and including all these ethnic groups and according then the same political, cultural, economic and religious rights.

As noted above, devolution was one of the key outcomes of the GPA and the 2013 Constitution, though, by 2017, it had not been implemented.

While there are myriad illustrations that the post-colonial state with its liberation narrative has failed to build a genuinely inclusive society, successive Afrobarometer surveys nonetheless indicate a strong and even increasing sense of national identity since the GPA. Zimbabweans prioritising national identity over ethnic identity grew: from 38 percent in 2008/2009 to 53 percent in 2011/2012, to 58 percent in 2013/2014. And while focus group discussions in Matabeleland North questioned most 'national symbols', going as far as stating, "This is not our flag" (rather, it is a ZANU-PF flag), and commonly expressed disillusionment and a pervasive sense of exclusion and marginalisation, strong expressions of national identity still prevailed – even in rural Bulawayo. Illustrative, participants agreed that ethnic codes on national IDs must be done away with.<sup>16</sup>

## *Trust and respect*

The 2001 Kadoma Declaration identified mistrust, political intolerance, selective observance of rule of law, and lack of respect for human rights among major problems facing the country. Illustrative of the low trust in the state following years of repression, elite corruption and undelivered promises, a 2014 survey found that 58 percent of Zimbabweans say that officials who commit crimes "often" or "always" go unpunished, while only 21 percent think that ordinary lawbreakers get the same treatment (Afrobarometer).

Panic withdrawals of cash following ZANU-PF's 2013 election victory are also illustrative. People feared the return of the Zimbabwe dollar, despite government assurances to the contrary. Previously,

15. The Ndebele ethnic group under Mzilikazi migrated from South Africa in the early 19th century to settle in southern Zimbabwe and established a hegemony and tributary system over scattered Shona groups across the territory of modern-day Zimbabwe.

16. Perceptions of marginalisation, however, differ on these topics according to region, ethnic and tribal groupings. The people from Matabeleland consistently express strong sentiments of exclusion.

the ZANU-PF government raided private bank accounts to finance operations (The Guardian Newspaper, 20 April 2009; The Herald, 5 November 2013). In short, “The state has disrespected its citizens badly” (Raftopolous Interview). Government’s 2016 introduction of ‘bond’ notes, a form of currency reportedly backed by a US\$200 million loan facility from Afreximbank (African Business, 28 November 2016) to ease cash shortages, met with wide resistance for fear government would over-print the notes and fuel inflation as in the past. In spite of the earlier reassurances, the government has since printed more notes, increasing circulation to US\$500 million, resulting in a loss of value of the notes and thus feeding further public distrust. Reports suggested a sharp increase Zimbabweans leaving the country for South Africa since 2013 (The Standard, 2 May 2014).

Chiefs have been an important cog in the post-colonial state’s attempts to cement vertical social cohesion, although the 2013 Constitution explicitly bars them from political activity and has weakened their role effectively to cultural leaders, leaving them vulnerable to abuse by whoever is in power. Their role in politics has always been controversial, at times seen as safeguarding and perpetuating a ruling status quo, in both colonial and post-colonial periods. This likely explains the limited trust they hold with citizens, with the greatest proportion of people trusting chiefs ‘somewhat/a little’:

	<b>2002/2003</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2013/2014</b>
<b>A lot</b>	26 percent	36 percent	31 percent
<b>Somewhat/a little</b>	54 percent	37 percent	50 percent
<b>Not at all</b>	11 percent	17 percent	12 percent

\*Older people (50+ age) tend to trust chiefs (44 percent “a lot”) more than do younger people (15-29 years) (31 percent “a lot”).

## *Access, participation and representation*

In 2014/2015 (Afrobarometer 2015), most Zimbabweans said they were not members of voluntary associations or community groups (75 percent) and had not gotten together with others in the previous 12 months to raise an issue (63 percent). While 70 percent consider it their duty to vote in elections and also to participate in national and community affairs between elections (Afrobarometer 2015), most Zimbabweans “never engage with their elected leaders to discuss important problems or share their views; on this indicator, citizen engagement is at its lowest level in a decade.” (Afrobarometer 2015). Higher levels of disengagement are captured for urban residents, and for women more than men. Afrobarometer analysts observe that a contributing factor may be the widespread public perception that members of parliament (MPs) and local government councillors “never” or “only sometimes” try to listen to citizens.

Another study found that the political tensions in the country have a negative effect on public participation as communities no longer speak with one voice. In addition, the lack of trust in the political system has led to participation apathy (NANGO 2011):

[M]ost citizens did not participate in local government because the local authorities did not react to residents’ concerns and complaints where service delivery was concerned. [...] The delivery of basic social services by the local authority had deteriorated regardless of whether citizens participated or not” (DIHR 2013, 28).

The same study confirmed that rural citizens more readily participate in public affairs, which was attributed to a communal culture, compared to a more individualistic culture in urban areas. While the government often conducts extensive consultation during the budget process, these hardly go beyond consultation.



Despite high levels of corruption and mistrust of the state, Zimbabweans believe in the importance of obeying government. In 2005/2006 and 2013/2014, Afrobarometer respondents (84 percent and 89 percent, respectively) agreed, “It is important to obey the government in power, no matter whom you voted for.” Correspondingly, there is low appetite for protests, 50 percent in Afrobarometer’s 1999/2001 survey saying they “would never do this” and 24 percent saying “no, but would do if had the chance.” The score for never going into the streets has risen – from 59 percent (2002/2003) to 65 percent (2005/2006) to 76 percent (2011/2012) and declining to 69 percent in 2013/2014. Public protests are often dealt with violently by political and military apparatuses, thus discouraging people. This suggests challenges for forging a more inclusive social contract, if the government is not offering pathways for this and people are willing, in large numbers at least, to make sufficiently influential demands.

## 5.2 Horizontal social cohesion

At the surface, Zimbabwe’s ethnic and tribal groups are well integrated, with very few manifest tensions. Though there is general distrust and stereotyping between groups, intermarriages across tribe and ethnicity are common (FGD 1, Bulawayo Rural 2016). There are also socio-cultural practices that bring people together, such as community funerals, burial societies and churches, no matter the differences. Ethnic differences, however, tend to manifest in policy choice questions, distribution of services and the allocation of positions in political parties. Tied to politics, conspiracy theories exist about a ZANU scheme to culturally “dilute” the Ndebeles but these could not be verified.<sup>17</sup>

During interviews and focus groups, notable stereotypes and use of “us” and “them” were present in reference to other social groups. Even within Zimbabwe’s civil society, such patterns are reflected. Local language terms such as “mubvakure” (those who came from very far) and “vauiyi” connote exclusion and mistrust. This is reinforced by idioms like “roorayi vematongo” (marry from within the local village). While not precluding social interaction and intermarriages, stereotypes exist, though often laughed at and seldom lead to actual conflict.

There is a sense, though, of prioritisation of certain groups over others. Marupi Omphilwe (Interview, 2017), a broadcaster and expert in language and social cohesion, for example, argues that, while language could facilitate greater social cohesion, this has not happened; it is generally accepted that Ndebele can/should speak Shona, and less the other way. Fault lines of distrust are not only along the Shona/Ndebele divide, but include smaller ethnic groups, Ndebele subgroups and various Shona tribes. These divisions often intersect with real economic grievances, e.g., Suthus (a Ndebele subgroup) complaining about industries/economic opportunities concentrating in Bulawayo to the exclusion of subregions. Politicians are accused of holding consultation in Bulawayo and concluding they have consulted “Ndebeles”. There is a sense that “Bulawayo is not Matebeleland” (source), just as “Harare is not Zimbabwe” (J Moyo), one may add, neither is it Mashonaland. According to one donor, in local development projects, they often have to manage these sensitivities.

At an interpersonal level, an overwhelming majority of Zimbabweans say they would “strongly like”, “somewhat like” or “not care” about living as neighbours of people of different religions (93 percent) and different ethnic groups (94 percent), suggesting that sentiments of ethnicity are almost always linked to other grievances. This, however, might vary across regions, for which we could not obtain data. For example, during focus groups, complaint about Shona nurses in clinics where Ndebeles are dominant, were specific to issues of language and effective communication or Shona acquiring land in Matebeleland with an actual demand for land and perceptions of partisanship.

17. An example is the so-called 1979 Grand Plan. It is alleged that Ushewokunze (a Shona ZANU doctor) administered sterility drugs on Ndebele men so that they could not have children and “impregnated many Ndebele ladies” (FG 2, Bulawayo, 2016). This, however, could not be corroborated by other sources.

Given the GPA's failure to address impunity and trauma from post-1980 violence, civil society groups have taken it upon themselves to champion peacebuilding and restorative justice at the community level. Yet such processes are largely donor-dependent. Due to rising donor fatigue, their capacity to mobilise resources and therefore to undertake their work has been much reduced and subdued. Focus group discussions suggested that there is some confidence in chiefs and headman uniting people. Chiefs are often accused of meddling in politics and of being biased against political opposition. This reinforces the conclusion that the main fault lines in Zimbabwe are predominantly linked to politics rather than socio-cultural. As well, while chiefs preside over rural constituencies, urban-rural ties remain strong and urban elites still identify with rural chieftainships – suggesting their power to play a role in strengthening social cohesion.

To conclude, Zimbabwean social cohesion embodies a mix of contradictions, with a strong societal sense of national identity and pride, on the one hand, and strong feelings of exclusion and disillusionment with the post-colonial nation-building project, on the other. In short, horizontal social cohesion is relatively strong, yet socio-economic and political grievances reveal areas of weakness. Ethnic groups are nicely integrated through intermarriages, common religious practices, residence and day-to-day interaction, making conflict between groups unlikely. Yet destructive stereotypes of the 'other' group exist, particularly at the community level. Vertical social cohesion between the state and almost all groups is weak, but especially with the people from the Midlands and Matebeleland regions. While the post-colonial state succeeded in fostering a relatively strong sense of national identity, the state's failure to deliver, perceptions of marginalisation of certain groups and region, and the state's failure to stop impunity and address past violations, have all undermined vertical social cohesion. It is notable that, under the new political dispensation and despite the early popularity of the coup, the question of redress of past violations has emerged as a topical grievance.

## 6.0 Analysis and Conclusions

In Less than a year post-Mugabe, Zimbabweans and external players alike are wondering: will this change the rules of the game that have underpinned Zimbabwean politics? On the one hand, the government, and in particular the president, are talking about economic revitalisation, fighting corruption, improving service delivery, political inclusion, international reengagement and democratisation. On the other hand, concerns are being raised about the militarisation of politics, intimidation of political opponents, control by government of supposedly independent institutions like the judiciary and elections management body (Zimbabwe Electoral Commission) and continued heavy-handedness by security forces in dealing with protesters. While action is visible more in economic realms, swift measures are yet to be seen in the areas of democratisation. In particular, the process to realign laws with the 2013 Constitution has been slow. Proposals for a unity government both after the ouster of Mugabe and after the 2018 elections have been dismissed by the new administration. To be sure, the new president appears keen to position himself as different from Mugabe, providing optimism for the broad consensus about the need for a new, inclusive politics. The question is whether those close to him, who also served the old regime, will support this vision. Inclusive politics would be critical in the context of Mnangagwa's narrow victory against the opposition's Nelson Chamisa and the heightened political polarisation among Zimbabweans post the elections.

Reflecting overall on the resilience of Zimbabwe's social contract, and the explanatory value of the three drivers discussed above, some conclusions can be drawn and these may be instructive as Zimbabwe seeks a new beginning post the election.

While the political settlement and related processes and commissions of the GPA and GNU were elite-driven and deeply challenged, broad support of the 2017 military coup and both language and action of the new government (and the public reaction thereof) reflect considerable societal consensus on



where Zimbabwe should head. The GPA was a major achievement, given how deeply polarised the populace had been on key issues. The new constitution received an overwhelming 98 percent ‘yes’ vote in the referendum.

However, as noted above, consensus on Zimbabwe’s needed reform path has not consistently or sufficiently translated into implementation. On the political question, devolution, the GNU period commissions related to human rights and reconciliation and an independent judiciary, among other things, have been achieved on paper, but have yet to be fully realised in practice. This is one of the major challenges for the new government. The signing into law by the new president of the Peace and Reconciliation Commission (PRCC) Bill in January 2018 allowing the Commission to start its work may signal a new willingness to implement. Key to moving the political question forward in line with societal consensus will be ending impunity by addressing Gukurahundi and violations of the distant and recent past.

On land, a Land Commission now exists, but contradictions and challenges persist, including not least perceptions that opposition supporters were excluded and ongoing land occupations and even threats by ZANU-PF youths to occupy farms owned by some senior ZANU-PF politicians. The land question is not settled, notably around issues of title and a facilitating environment, including support, for new farmers to succeed – arguably a core issue stymying the transformation of the economy. Poor GPA implementation gravely missed opportunities to utilise the land issue to redress grievances around fairness of process and results and to illustrate that institutions can deliver in ways that respond to society’s expectations and build trust, and ultimately to build social cohesion between groups that feel marginalised through the process.

Like many transitional contexts illustrate, this political settlement is messy and unresolved – with political elites often acting in ways that are incongruent with agreements. Illustrative, ZANU-PF has capitalised on its 2013 electoral win not only to block implementation, but also to reverse some of the GPA gains, i.e., a July 2017 constitutional amendment giving the president power to unilaterally appoint top judges. The failure of the GPA to ultimately deliver on promises highlights the requirement of an official balance of power committed to enforcing agreements in settings where power is shared – to move beyond the power dynamics operating outside the agreement. At the same time, constitutionally guaranteed restrictions requiring either a two-thirds parliamentary majority or national referendum, offer hope that implementation can occur with a shift in political power towards the reformers either within or outside of ZANU-PF. Several civil society lobby groups have emerged to support and consolidate gains and have secured some court victories. There has also been a push to protect the independence of the GPA and independent institutions spawned by 2013 Constitution.

The GPA should have provided a new political context to revitalise institutions, ensuring their effectiveness and focus on delivering fair, inclusive results. Economic stabilisation and facilitating effective devolution would be key priorities – but this is yet to happen in practice. Though Zimbabweans have shown incredible resilience in seeking out economic livelihoods through the informal sector, the economy remains a major threat to sustainable peace. Other than pushing citizens to the brink, it also placed limits on the state’s ability to pay civil servants. It has also resulted in some ways in apathy towards the state. At the same time, given the failure of state institutions to deliver, despite the consensus revealed in GPA and the Constitution on how to resolve the political question and despite surveys suggesting Zimbabweans support democracy,<sup>18</sup> ZANU-PF’s win in the 2013 election is perplexing. Even more, the overwhelming public support for the military coup suggests that Zimbabweans were not necessarily happy with the status quo, feeding suspicion that the 2013 election result was manipulated.

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18. They also show strong preference for democracy as a system of rule 70 percent in 1999/2001 and 73 percent in 2013/2014. Yet, the majority of Zimbabweans have not been “very satisfied” or even “fairly satisfied” with democracy in Zimbabwe (Afrobarometer).

It has always been known that ZANU-PF's power derives in part from its control of the security services, and their role in the overthrow of Mugabe has made this apparent. Tied to the political question but also the challenge of virtuous movement on all three drivers, one of the greatest failures of the GPA was missing an opportunity to establish a professional and non-partisan security service. The source of fear in society is not horizontal but vertical: people are more anxious about police brutality than a house burglary. Transforming the security sector and addressing impunity across government and its institutions are key priorities for making progress across all drivers.

Despite its weaknesses, the GPA demonstrated the potential of a “consensus state” and “disabused of the notion that only ZANU-PF can run the state and the opposition are sell outs” (Biti, interview). Arguably, trust among the ZANU-PF and MDC elites from across political divide in fact improved during this period, a key domain of social cohesion (Interview, chair of Zimbabwe's war veterans, Chris Mutsvangwa). This is also evidenced by contestation over the budget decreasing during this period. The GNU thus offered temporary stability, a key concern for South Africa and SADC, but gains were not consolidated. International actors (on the whole) did not step up at what was arguably the most important time (as per agreed wisdom in peace-making) – ensuring the implementation of this political settlement – which lies at the core of forging a resilient social contract, where demands and interests are mediated over time, through different mechanisms and in response to contextual factors, whatever they may be.

Considerable analysis on Zimbabwe has focused on the roles of international actors. While this study has strongly focused on national actors, this is not meant to downplay the way that international actors, norms and demands have influenced Zimbabwe's ability to forge a resilient national social contract. The deeply destructive and lasting effects of colonialism and imposed structural adjustment on most African countries, as well as on other developing countries globally, are well documented. We fully recognise the challenging contradictions of the very notion of a ‘national’ social contract in the global political economy context, particularly in the case of Zimbabwe, where these factors have been deeply embedded in historical and contemporary polarisation. A national resilient social contract includes and ultimately embraces these contradictions – not just in Zimbabwe, but globally, given that the drivers of conflict and fragility are rarely bordered.

Zimbabweans have deep, endogenous resilience capacities and more attention should focus on how to orient these towards peace and towards forging a resilient national social contract. This means harnessing the strong loyalties that Zimbabweans feel to their national identity – and building and channelling them in peaceful ways. It also means developing a new narrative that speaks to all Zimbabweans – rooted in the areas of consensus that have emerged and respecting the differences that are reflected in the citizenry. Zimbabwe's thriving informal sector needs to be engaged and empowered to address the deep disjuncture between the formal and informal structures of the state, i.e., through the development of formal mechanisms that incorporate these informalities, and to harness the resilience capacities they represent.<sup>19</sup> Civic activism, a historical capacity of resilience in Zimbabwe, also needs to be revitalised and re-empowered, having lost space and support through the GPA process as its aftermath – when precisely the opposite was needed. In the run-up to the 2018 elections as this publication is being finalised, civic movements are drumming up inputs for ‘a citizens’ manifesto’, albeit mainly urban-based, parallel to manifestos of political parties. Such initiatives have the potential to build both horizontal and vertical social cohesion, and notably vertical accountability, so desperately needed.

In the final analysis, how resilient can we say Zimbabwe's social contract is, and what does this suggest for achieving and sustaining a more positive, sustainable peace? All totalled, this analysis

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19. Thinking inspired by Dr. De Soto (2000), who argues that the formal should evolve from the organic and informal.

suggests that this goal is still distant. While Zimbabwe appears to have enjoyed relative political stability over the years, reinforced by a strong unitary state, the situation can best be described as one of negative peace, as the data shared at the end of section 3.0 illustrates. At the same time, there is room for hope. First, the political settlement in Zimbabwe must be seen over the long haul, with close attention to implementation and ownership by society. As suggested above, the GPA, and especially the new Constitution and independent institutions that emerged through these processes, still offer an important basis to build a resilient, inclusive social contract. They broadly reflect high levels of societal consensus around what is needed and desired. While violence is very much a part of Zimbabwe's history, consistently in the post-colonial era, the prevalence is political violence, perpetrated by the state towards opposition. The lack of inter-group violence (other than between supporters of political parties in and around elections) further illustrates the existence of significant horizontal cohesion between ethnic groups that needs cultivation. Related, there is a strength of national identity that is difficult to explain, given the depths of political polarisation and resentment of the state by some groups.

The end of Mugabe's rule has also been met with hope. Though the military has a tainted reputation, the public was prepared to support it during the coup. Even though the new government is characterised by those who have worked closely with Mugabe, there seems to be a preparedness to forge a common future. The question is whether Zimbabwe's fragile transition will suffer the deeply polarizing election, tap into the common quest for change to build a truly inclusive society and forge a stronger social contract.

The main fault lines in Zimbabwe are political and, while they must be addressed politically, the primary focus on political reform, managed by elites, simply has not worked. Our analysis suggests the need for catalytic action that engages different levels, from different angles, i.e., that support the resilience for peace capacities in Zimbabwean society and that fuel catalytic movement and interactions across the three drivers.

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