The Political Economy of Political Regimes and Trade Flows: A Case of Zimbabwe 2005-2020

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ABSTRACT

This thesis delves into the intricacies of the political economy of trade within the context of Zimbabwe. Similar to numerous other developing African nations, Zimbabwe experienced a persistent trade deficit from 2005 to 2020, thus being categorised as a net importer due to consistently higher import volumes compared to exports. Presently, Zimbabwe grapples with one of the most severe crises among countries in the Global South. The economic and political crises situation actually calls into question the fact that Zimbabwe had a Government of National Unity (GNU) between 2009 and 2013 aimed at serving as a transitional authority overseeing the economic and political governance of the nation. This study examined the interaction between political regimes and trade flows in Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2020 and how political regimes affect economic policies, institutions and economic management. This study contributes to extant literature by deepening an understanding of the relationship between politics and trade in the Zimbabwean context.

The study was organised into three periods, and was intended to answer the three research questions: What was the state of political relations in Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2020? What was Zimbabwe's trade-flow level between 2005 and 2020 and why? Ultimately, what are the characteristics of the import and export concentrations in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2020? The first period covered the years 2005 to 2008, i.e. the period before the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). The second period analysed the years 2009 to 2013 - A period under GNU. The third period covered the period after the dissolution of GNU, the years 2014 to 2020. The study was premised on an exploratory design; this mixed-methods research relied on secondary data to investigate the above three research questions. To answer the first research question, the study relied on documentary and historical data analysis to determine the status of political relationships in Zimbabwe. To answer the second research question, the study deployed descriptive analysis to describe the evolution of trade flows, taking into account the underlying theoretical frameworks of the political economy namely neopatrimonialism and political settlement framework. Finally, the third research question was based on time trend analysis. The study concludes that political instability had a huge impact on the economy as Zimbabwe faced political and economic challenges for several decades, which negatively affected its trade with other nations. These challenges can largely be attributed to the political and economic decisions made by the ruling ZANU-PF elites. This study also contends that the heterodox economic planning of the ruling government from 2005 to 2020 led to a mix of redistributive and indigenisation policies on the one hand and the acceptance of neoliberalism on the other, which has negatively impacted on trade. Zimbabwe's political environment has also been characterised by severe restrictions on political freedoms as evidenced by the dominant political relationship themes between 2005 and 2020. Some of the identified themes in this study are political tensions, economic challenges and power struggles, factions within the ruling ZANU-PF, protests, and post-election violence, to name a few. All these factors were an obstacle to attracting investors and gaining access to more trading partners. For example, export growth was rather weak during the period analysed. The export basket exhibited reduced diversification and heightened reliance on a limited array of products, indicating a decline in both diversification and technological sophistication of exports. This study attributes the causes of this poor performance of the trade sector to various political economy challenges such as poor economic governance, neopatrimonialism, weak political settlement in the form of GNU that created an unfavourable climate for private investment and trade, and industrial policies (especially indigenisation policies) that undermine investor confidence and discourage private investment. While trade volumes recovered from the deep recession of 2007-2008, this cannot compensate for other worrying longer-term trends unveiled in this study.

With regard to recommendations, the good news from this study is that the rectification of these policy deficiencies rests within the hands of the Zimbabwean government. To achieve significant transformation in trade, the Zimbabwean government should consider collaborating with international partners and stakeholders to redefine itself as a major player in the global economy. However, this will pose a significant challenge to the Zimbabwean government as research reveals that democratic governance promotes economic growth and prosperity, while autocratic regimes stifle progress, with China being an outlier in this case. Further to that, literature suggests that authoritarian governments are reluctant to reduce distorting red tapes and other unofficial trade barriers. Another recommendation is that Zimbabwe needs to adopt effective policies to leverage and harness its abundant natural and human resources for increased production and export earnings. The current focus on raw materials exports needs to shift to value-added goods and services. The government should actively attract local and foreign investors to set up production facilities in Zimbabwe that cater aiming for both the domestic and international markets. It is important that the government does not make abrupt policy changes to gain political advantage, as this creates uncertainty and deters investment.

KEYWORDS: Political economy, political regime, trade, institutions, government of national unity, imports, exports, democracy, authoritarian, Zimbabwe.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It is submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, for consideration toward a Doctor of Philosophy. It has never been turned in for a previous exam or degree at this university or any other university.

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I thank the Almighty Lord for having fulfilled my wish. I also thank Him for granting me the ability to accomplish this study.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Cosmas Mufandaedza, my late mother, Shylet Mazivisa, my late grandmother, Magreth Mufandaidza-Mugwagwa and finally my late sister, Lee Raviro Mildred Kudzotsa. I hope this will make you smile down on me as you continue to look through the windows of heaven.

I also dedicate this thesis especially to my sons, Blessing Takudzwa and Bennett Tazvitenda and hope that you will be inspired by this work.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFCFTA -African Continental Free Trade Area

ASGM- Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining

COMESA- Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

COPAC- Committee of Parliament of the new Constitution

CZI- Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries

ESAP- Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

EU- European Union

FTLRP- Fast-Track Land Reform Programme

GATT- General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

GNU-Government of National Unity

GPA- Global Political Agreement

KPCS- Kimberley Process Certification Scheme

IMF- International Monetary Fund

ISI- Import Substitution Industrialization

JOC- Joint Operations Command

LDCs- Least Developed Countries

LEP- Look East Policy

MDC- Movement for Democratic Change

MFN- Most Favored Nation

MTP- Medium Term Plan

NEDPP- National Economic Development Priority Programme

NGO- Non-Governmental Organization

OECD- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PDP- People’s Democratic Party

PST-Political Settlement Theory

RBZ- Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

SADC- Southern African Development Community

SAP- Structural Adjustment Programmes

STERP- Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme

UANC- United African National Council

UDI- Unilateral Declaration of Independence

UNCTAD- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Education Fund

WTO- World Trade Organization

ZANU- Zimbabwe African National Union

ZANU-PF - Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front

ZAPU - Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZBC- Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

ZCTU - Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

ZCTU- Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union

ZEC- Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

ZEDS- Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy

ZHRC- Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission

ZIDERA - Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act

ZIMAASSET- Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation

ZIMRA- Zimbabwe Revenue Authority

ZIMPREST- Transformation Agenda Social and Economic Development of Zimbabwe

ZIPRA- Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

ZMDC- Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation

ZUD - Zimbabwe Union of Democrats

ZUM - Zimbabwe Unity Movement

ZWD- Zimbabwean Dollar

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1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND DISSERTATION OUTLINE

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Trade integration is a major driver of economic growth (Blavasciunaite, Garsviene, & Matuzeviciute, 2020; Raghutla, 2020; Canh, Schinckus, & Dinh Thanh, 2021). In many developing countries, democratisation preceded and was accompanied by trade liberalisation (Murshed, 2021a). As a result, economic and political liberalisation has become the focus of a burgeoning body of literature by economists (Milner, 1999; Toke & Gassebner, 2010; Makochekanwa, Hurungo, & Kambarami, 2012; Makumbe, and political scientists (Moore & Hamalai, 1993; Tordoff, 1994; Sokhey & Yildirim, 2013). Numerous studies focus on the impact of the gravity model segments on global trade (Bernard, Redding, & Schott, 2009; Melitz & Ottaviano, 2008;Cantore & Cheng, 2018;Baniya, Rocha, & Ruta, 2020). In this international trade model, the volume of trade between two countries is proportional to their economic mass and measures their relative frictions (Caporale, Sova, & Sova 2022). This thesis focuses on the political economy of political regimes and trade flows in Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2020. This study examines the interaction between trade flows and political regimes in Zimbabwe. It does so by analysing the impact of different political regimes, which differ in terms of political stability, governance, and institutional structures, on the patterns and dynamics of international trade. This study aims to improve our understanding of the processes through which political variables influence Zimbabwe's trade performance by examining the political economy of trade flows.

A political regime is defined as a system of laws, customs and agreements that govern the interaction between state and society in a particular nation (Limberg, 2022). Trade flows refer to the movement of goods and services across international borders, encompassing the import and export activities between countries (Orinya,2023). Political regimes in Zimbabwe offer some insights into the political landscape of Zimbabwe by identifying key political regimes that have influenced the shape of the country's government. The study looks at the transition from colonial control to independence as well as later periods that were characterised by different political regimes including authoritarian rule and democratic governance. This study further examines how political regimes influence policy, institutional structures and economic management. Country-specific studies on the relationship between political regimes and trade flows remain limited. On the other hand, trade flows in Zimbabwe include trade patterns along with its major trading partners, the composition of its exports and imports, and historical trends. This study also examines the industries that significantly affect international trade and addresses Zimbabwe's trade-related difficulties, including trade deficits, low export diversification and trade barriers.

In the global context, the ongoing war in Ukraine after the Covid 19 pandemic has affected the trade flows of several economies at the international level (Tosun & Eshraghi, 2022). Research has shown that the volume of imports and exports (trade flows) has decreased due to the political tensions in Ukraine (Guenette, Kenworthy, & Wheeler, 2022). The political conflicts have disrupted the supply chain for various products such as energy, wheat, fertilisers, and some metals, which has led to an increase in prices and thus affected the value of imports from other economies (Guénette et al., 2022). This has also had a negative impact on Ukraine, as the European Union is Ukraine's most important export market (Wolfang, & Lorenz,2022). In Asia, an increase in political tensions has a negative impact on trade flows (Gawarkiewicz & Tang, 2017). A similar finding was established in the context of the Sahara Region in Africa (Khan & Akbar, 2013; Boungou, Osei-Tutu, & Zongo, 2024). Research has shown that conflicts and political crises in some African economies have resulted in the value of imported and exported goods and services being limited (Shaw & Reitano, & Exchange, 2014). Zimbabwe is no exception when it comes to the impact of political regimes on trade.

Economists have focused on explaining trade flows and why certain countries export or import goods to other countries (Mena, Karatzas, & Hansen, 2022). Neoclassical economics submits that an optimal allocation of resources in an economy is achieved when the state does not intervene in the market (Aharon & Siev, 2021). Engel (2010) cites that according to (Bates,1981), this theory focuses on the interventionist role of government and its impact on trade and economic performance. Furthermore, free trade between countries or regions is based on the conventional wisdom of international trade, which assumes that market forces of supply and demand play a role once an economy has eliminated government distortions (Adu, Litsios, & Baimbridge, 2022). This theory also advocates the need to remove quantitative restrictions on imports, reduce or abolish import tariffs, eradicate bureaucratic red tape and other impediments to foreign direct investment, and improve customs procedures (Rodrik, 2011). However, within the framework of institutional and post-Keynesian political economy, the perspectives of the world and the economy immensely differ from those of neoclassical economists.

According to Saygili (2015), Institutionalists such as Veblen (1893) believe that the economy and markets are social institutions. Post-Keynesians regard markets as social institutions that reflect society (Harvey, 2010). Consequently, the government can limit international integration because further global economic integration may not be of interest to some or most people in a country (Mussa, 2000). Tang et al., (2021) also point out that liberalising the markets inevitably creates new competition for domestic producers, which naturally generates resistance to trade. Moreover, trade liberalisation often seems to create new protectionist trade policies as people, industries and interest groups use their political weight negatively to lobby for protection (Amassaghrou, Gutiérrez-Hita, & Zhukova, 2022). This study focuses on the political economy of the political regime and trade flows in Zimbabwe. It focuses on the changes in the political regime and trade flows in the political economy of Zimbabwe. What are the causes of the changes in Zimbabwe's trade basket and trading partners when trade outcome is considered as the dependent variable? What has been detrimental or beneficial and how does the political economy and the functioning of the political regime influence changes in the trade basket and trading partners?

The economic structure of Zimbabwe is predominantly dependent on the mining and agricultural sectors, which are integral to the nation's economy, influenced significantly by both state-owned and private enterprises. The agricultural sector constitutes a significant element of the Zimbabwean economy. The agricultural sector contributes 10 to 15% to the country's GDP, as reported by the Ministry of Finance (Chawarika et al., 2022). Additionally, approximately 70% of the population relies directly or indirectly on the agricultural sector. The strong linkages between agriculture and other sectors of the economy, including employment, manufacturing, and trade, underscore the sector's central role in the economy. On the other hand, mining constitutes a significant contributor to Zimbabwe's GDP and foreign exchange earnings. The mining sector, especially gold mining, has transitioned towards Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) in response to economic challenges, whereas the agricultural sector has undergone considerable transformations due to land reforms. These sectors are dominated by different groups, with ASGM leading in mining and a mix of commercial and semi-subsistence farming in agriculture.ASGM has become the dominant force in Zimbabwe's gold mining sector, largely due to the decline of industrial mining amid economic difficulties. This shift has been driven by both local and global factors, with ASGM production increasing significantly during economic crises (Matingo,2023).

Additionally, the mining industry faces challenges such as illegal mining activities, which have environmental impacts and are difficult to regulate. Some of the largest players in the mining sector include Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC), a state-owned entity involved in mining activities, particularly in gold and coal**.** Also, several foreign firms have major stakes in platinum, gold, and diamond operations. Notable companies include Impala Platinum**,** Zimplats (subsidiary of Impala), and Rio Tinto, which are active in the platinum and coal sectors (Chakuya et al., 2023).The agricultural sector is dualistic, with commercial farms producing a significant portion of output, especially in tobacco, cotton and maize which are a major export. However, semi-subsistence farming in communal lands also plays a vital role (Matandare,2017). Nyikahadzoi et al. (2022) posits that The Fast Track Land Reform Program(detailed in chapter 2) has led to structural changes in agriculture, affecting production and commercialization patterns. This has resulted in a mix of different farming models, influenced by state practices and capital accumulation (Shonhe,2017).

This study aims to examine the interaction between political regimes and trade flows in Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2020. Put simply, the study examined how political regimes affect economic policies, institutions and economic management. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between politics and trade. The study significantly contributes to understanding how a country's political environment affects its trade performance and overall economic wellbeing. This study makes a significant contribution to scholarship in the field of political economy in terms of helping us understand how the theatre of politics within a country can impact on the country’s trade performance and its overall economic wellbeing (empirical contribution). In addition, by examining the interplay between political dynamics and the formulation of trade policy, this study sheds light on the complex factors that shape trade policy at both the national and international levels. Despite the breadth and depth of the existing literature on political economy and trade, there is still a need for further research and analysis through synthesizing existing research and analysing key theoretical frameworks that provides a comprehensive understanding of the political economy of trade.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Many years ago, David Ricardo, a British political economist, formulated the principle of comparative advantage and pointed out the economic advantages of trade integration. Ricardo's practicality has stood the test of time, as trade integration plays an important role in uplifting economies out of poverty in the contemporary world. Liu (2023) notes that trade integration is an important driver of economic development.According to UNCTAD (2016), as shown in Figure 1 below, China and Germany hold their main global trade surpluses. In comparison, the United States and the United Kingdom have maintained significant deficits. On the other hand, the trade imbalances of many African and South Asian developing countries are large compared to their GDP (Shaw& Reitano, 2014).

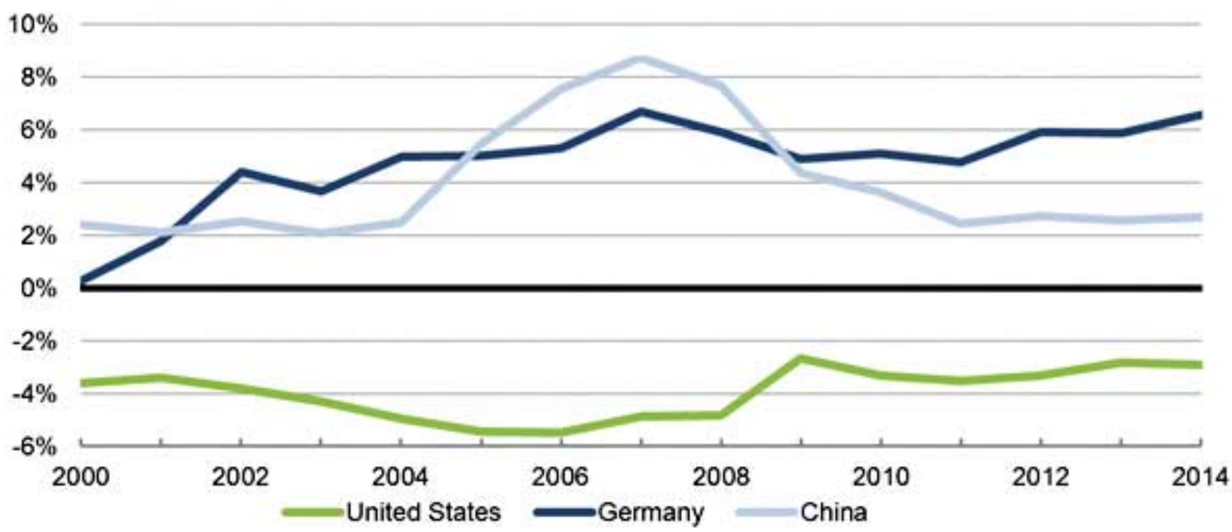


FIGURE 1: TRADE SURPLUSES (PERCENTAGE OF GDP)
Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

Because of their economic plight, many developing countries in Africa, including Zimbabwe in the 1990s, turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. However, part of the price they had to pay was a prescription for trade liberalisation (Milner, 1999). Following this development, most African countries participated in the Franco-African Summit held in Biarritz in November 1994. This summit placed democracy at the centre of economic development (Paris, 2009). As a result, African countries attending this summit, including Zimbabwe, were persuaded to accelerate democratisation efforts (the implementation of democratic systems or principles) in order to formalise trade with the Global North and promote trade. As a result, many political leaders around the globe have altered their views on trade policy decisions. Some governments opted for full liberalisation in the 1990s, which was a radical approach (Milner, 1999). Milner argues that developing countries embarked on aggressive economic reforms that contemplated trade liberalisation. Moreover, most leaders in developing countries were in favour of economic reforms that included trade liberalisation. In contrast, the leaders of the advanced industrialised countries undertook large-scale multilateral efforts to reduce trade barriers. In this context, it is worth noting that regime change towards democracy was linked and intertwined with trade liberalisation (Milner & Kubota, 2005).

In the 1990s, the Zimbabwean government supported the manufacturing and agricultural sectors. These two sectors were the main drivers of economic growth in Zimbabwe. Saunders (2008) noted that over time, Zimbabwe has become heavily dependent on mining and agriculture. Zimbabwe's economy was at its peak in 1996/1997 and the main trading partners were developed countries, such as the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, and the United States. In the 1990s, 60% of the country's major trading partners were developed countries such as Germany, the United States of America, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Japan. More importantly, after the year 2000, there was a significant shift in exports and imports from the European Union (EU) to neighbouring countries, particularly South Africa and Zambia. During this period, the economy recorded net exports amounting to US$ 2.54 billion (World Bank, 2022). It is also worth noting that Zimbabwe's trading partners have changed significantly since the turn of the millennium. Zimbabwe's major trading partner for imports and exports is South Africa, which accounts for more than 75 percent (Saungweme, 2013). How can these drastic changes in trading patterns between 1990s and the period after the turn of the millennium be explained? Furthermore, the Zimbabwean economy has moved from being almost self-sufficient in the 1990s to being import-dependent in the early 2000s. It is true that Zimbabwe, one of the breadbaskets of Southern Africa, has undergone a radical transformation (Groves, 2009).

The global economic crisis of 2007-2010 was also a major factor that hamper Zimbabwe's recovery process in the 2000s. In 2007, Zimbabwe recorded a low export value of US$2 billion compared to imports of US$ 3.81 billion (World Bank, 2022). Saungweme (2013) points out that the period 1990-2010 was characterised by contrasting differences in trade patterns and increasing political instability during this same period. There were serious fluctuations in trade volumes during this period. In 1990, Zimbabwe recorded US$1,73 billion worth of exports. Similarly, Zimbabwe imported to the value of US$2.28 billion in 1990, the value was higher than the export value (World Bank, 2022). The value of US$2.54 billion in 1997 was the highest ever recorded in the 1990s. Unfortunately, the value of exports fell to US$1.93 billion at the end of 2000, with a record US$ 2.40 billion for imports (World Bank, 2022).

Makochekanwa et al., (2012) argue that the regulation of foreign trade has been a defining feature of the Zimbabwean economy. Looking back at the period from 1980 to 1989, the Zimbabwean government controlled imports through licences, quotas, extensive bans, high tariff protection and various non-tariff barriers. The manufacturing sector was one of the most heavily protected. The invisible hand was therefore not in play when an anti-trade liberalisation policy was chosen. However, this policy proved not to be worthwhile in the early 1990s when Zimbabwe ran into economic difficulties. There was an urgent need to transition from protectionism to liberalisation.

Milner & Kubota (2005) posit that the process of democratisation fosters trade liberalisation due to the transfer of political power to a voter constituency that advocates for the principles of free trade. In response to the challenges encountered during the initial decade of independence, the Zimbabwean government embarked on a period of trade liberalisation from 1991 to 1995 under the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). The primary objective of ESAP with regard to trade was to facilitate comprehensive trade liberalisation, characterised by the complete elimination of quantitative restrictions and the reduction and harmonisation of tariffs and duties, as indicated by Makochekanwa et al. (2012).Immediately before the ESAP period, Zimbabwe recorded an economic growth rate of 3.2% (Saungweme, 2013). However, the post-ESAP was characterised by a reversal in trade policies. Saungweme (2013) shows how the economic contraction and political development in the early 2000s affected Zimbabwe's real economy, which manifested itself in shrinking production capacity and affected the value, volume and source of trade.

For a long time, Zimbabwe had a negative trade balance(deficit), which means that the country's imports were always higher than its exports. Zimbabwe is therefore a net importer (Siyakiya, 2018). The situation in Zimbabwe can best be related to the dependency theory, which was first put forward by Raul Prebisch in the 1950s. This theoretical framework seeks to explain the economic underdevelopment of certain countries by emphasising the perceived constraints imposed by the global political and economic order.

According to this theoretical framework, the condition of underdevelopment primarily arises from the peripheral positioning of the affected nations within the global economic landscape. These underdeveloped nations typically provide inexpensive labour and raw materials in the global marketplace, which are subsequently procured by more economically advanced nations with advanced economies that possess the capabilities to process them into finished manufactured goods.As a result, the underdeveloped countries are forced to buy back these finished goods at high prices, consuming and depleting capital that could otherwise have been used to enhance their production capacities. This creates a vicious cycle that reinforces the division of the global economy into the rich core and a poor periphery.

Years later, since the 1994 Franco-African Summit, trade in Zimbabwe is underdeveloped and one can only wonder whether the democratisation process emphasised at the summit has worked in Zimbabwe. Olaleye, Karume, & Kabemba (2014) posit that the democratisation process has stalled owing to ZANU-PF's inability to transform itself into a function and democratic regime. It is also worth noting that democracy in Zimbabwe would be far-fetched without competing parties, especially before 1999 (the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change, MDC).

1.3. Research Problem

Trade liberalisation and its economic impact have long been the subject of debate among researchers in developed and developing countries (Osakwe, Santos-Paulino &, Dogan, 2018). Trade integration of a nation is one of the key drivers of economic development (Murshed, 2021b). Milner (1999) argues that since the 1980s, many countries have implemented trade liberalisation (the removal or reduction of restrictions on the free exchange of goods between nations) at bilateral, regional, and multinational levels. Makochekana et al., (2012), in relation to Zimbabwe's experience with trade liberalisation during the period 1980-2004, note that the Zimbabwean government has been inconsistent in its approach to trade policy implementation. However, there is a dearth of literature that examines the impact of Zimbabwe's political roots, regime type, quality of governance, and policy stability on trade performance. There is a lack of studies analysing trade flows and political relations in Zimbabwe over the years.

There is a growing desire to understand the relationship between politics and economics in the wake of ever-changing political events, shrinking commodity baskets and economic stagnation in Zimbabwe. Some of the works that have looked at the interplay of trade, politics, regime types and their effects are (Makochekanwa et al., 2012; Saungweme, 2013; Rwodzi, 2019). In contrast to other studies such as Mansfield & Reinhardt (2003); Milner & Kubota (2005); Frye & Mansfield (2003). and Azu & Muhammad (2020), which focused on a pair of countries, Aidt & Gassebner (2010) examined the political regimes of one country and trade flows with the rest of the world in a given period. This research complements and extends, Fankem (2018), Milner & Kubota (2005), and Azu & Muhammad (2020) by examining a specific country, Zimbabwe. Gassebner & Lassmann (2008) used various indicators for democracy, from Polity IV and Freedom House, as proxies. Hemed (2019) argues that economic growth is generally lower when a political system changes from democratic to autocratic. However, this research (Hemed, 2019) focuses on economic growth and political system changes in African economies, including Zimbabwe, and covers a different time period from 1996 to 2017. There is a yawning research gap as no research has focused on trade and political regimes in the period 2005-2020. Furthermore, Hemed (2019) focuses largely on economic growth and few studies have looked at the relationship between trade flows and political regimes. Zimbabwe went through various transitions in terms of political regimes from 2005-2020, which affected trade flows.

This study analysed the period from 2005 to 2020 to obtain a chronology of trade flows for Zimbabwe. Given the changes in trade flows and the political environment, the study incorporates the political dynamics of governance, democracy and autocracy. The period from 2005 onwards was characterised by some interesting political movements, from the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 2008 to the formation of the GNU in 2009 and the military coup of 2017 (Chigora & Guzura, 2011). The period 2009-2013 becomes interesting as there was a new event in the political sphere, the formation of the GNU. In the post-GNU period, another event took place in November 2017 (a military coup), which saw President Mugabe ousted from office and a new president sworn in. In its initial stages,the GNU boosted confidence and increased capacity utilisation levels to rise to 40–50 percent (Tumbare,2014). However, this trend levelled off in 2010 as the Global Political Agreement was not fully implemented. This study examines how different political regimes, including transitions, stability and policy changes, affect Zimbabwe's international trade dynamics by considering factors such as trade agreements, policy reforms, and economic performance.

This study is premised on the conjecture that there is a need to thoroughly explore the complicated and under-researched subject of Zimbabwe's political economy with its political regimes and trade flows. Zimbabwe has undergone significant political and economic changes. In-depth studies on the relationship between political regimes and trade are scarce. The number and manner in which political regimes in Zimbabwe affected trade flows between 2005 and 2020, as well as the underlying mechanisms and variables that accounted for this relationship, have not been explored in depth. Therefore, this study aims to understand the relationship between political regimes in Zimbabwe as defined by changes in institutional structure, political leadership, and public policy. This study offers insights into the basic mechanisms and elements underlying these relationships by tracing how political regimes influence trade. This topic deserves to be explored in depth in order to gain detailed knowledge on how political issues affect Zimbabwe's trade performance, which will help to influence policy decisions and promote sustainable economic growth in Zimbabwe.

1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To review and describe the status of political relationships in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2020.
2. To investigate the state of trade flow in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2020.
3. To analyse the characteristics of import and export concentrations in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2020.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What was the status of the political relationships in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2020?
2. What was Zimbabwe's trade-flow level between 2005 and 2020 and why?
3. What were the characteristics of the import and export concentrations in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2020?

1.6. RESEARCH MOTIVATION AND SIGNIFICANCE

Adam Smith's analysis of specialization and the discourse surrounding import substitution versus export-led growth highlight economists' interest in the relationship between trade and its impact on economic growth and development (Gwaindepi, Mazanai & Dhoro, 2014). The connection between trade and economic growth remains a central focus in debates surrounding trade and development economics. Countries that engage in higher levels of trade tend to exhibit elevated growth trajectories, with some of this growth being ascribed to trade activities. Gwaindepi et al. (2014) examined the long-run relationship between various trade and macroeconomic variables in Zimbabwe from 1975 to 2005. The research utilizes the cointegration method to determine the presence of a long-term relationship between economic growth and trade variables. The study's results demonstrate that trade and economic growth are cointegrated, with the relationship being reinforced by stable macroeconomic policy. Negative macroeconomic factors, such as rising inflation, can hinder economic growth. Openness to trade is considered essential, as the reduction and elimination of trade barriers foster trade expansion and, consequently, economic growth (Gwaindepi, Mazanai & Dhoro, 2014). The relationship between trade and economic growth is reinforced by stable macroeconomic policies that promote trade openness and minimize barriers.A study by Matarure (2019) empirically examined the relationship between trade liberalisation and economic growth in Zimbabwe, utilizing annual time series data from 1980 to 2017. The findings demonstrated a positive long-term relationship between trade liberalization and economic growth. The study concludes that policymakers and government negotiators in Zimbabwe should implement policies that enhance openness by removing trade barriers and promoting exports to foster overall economic growth (Maturure, 2019).

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, trade integration serves as a significant driver of economic growth (Blavasciunaite, Garsviene, & Matuzeviciute, 2020; Raghutla, 2020; Canh, Schinckus, & Dinh Thanh, 2021). In many developing nations, the process of democratisation occurred prior to and alongside trade liberalisation (Murshed, 2021a).Trade is essential for Zimbabwe's economy, acting as a key driver of economic growth, income generation, and employment opportunities. Zimbabwe has been praised for its abundant natural resources and significant agricultural potential. Newfarmer and Pierola (2015) assert that trade in Zimbabwe has significantly contributed to economic growth, increased incomes, and the empowerment of its citizens by enhancing living standards and offering improved employment opportunities. Since 1980, increases in exports have consistently correlated with increases in national income, regardless of economic fluctuations. The country's economy has encountered considerable challenges in recent decades, characterized by elevated unemployment rates, decreasing industrial output, and a substantial informal sector. Trade, both domestic and international, is a critical factor in reviving Zimbabwe's economy and promoting sustainable growth. Mukoka (2023) asserts that Zimbabwe encounters difficulties, including insufficient diversification in its export portfolio and reliance on a limited array of mineral and agricultural commodities. Notwithstanding these challenges, trade is essential for mitigating certain problems the country faces and promoting economic stability (Chitauro & Khumalo, 2020).

This study connects research on political regimes and trade by expanding works by Aidt & Gassbner (2010); Milner & Kubota (2005), Azu & Muhammad (2020), Ncube1(999); Kanyenze et al., 2011); Makochekanwa et al., (2012); Saungweme (2013) who made significant and widely recognised contribution to this subject area. This study brings to the fore, new and recent insights to scholarship on political regimes as well as trade flows. Given the changes in trade regimes and the political environment that followed 2004, the study will analyse the period from 2005-2020. It aims to enrich extant literature on the dynamic relationship between political economy and trade flows.

1.7. THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY:

1.**Economic Transformations:** Zimbabwe's economy has undergone major changes during the study period. Researchers and policy makers can assess the impact of the various policies implemented in Zimbabwe and the changes in the country's economy if they have a thorough understanding of the political economy of trade during this period. This helps to determine the variables that aid or hinder economic transformation.

2.**Trade Policies and Agreements:** During this period, Zimbabwe's trade policies and agreements significantly shaped international trade relations with other nations. The years under review witnessed trade dynamism owing to the Look East Policy (LEP) introduced in 2003. Mukoka (2023) is of the view that Zimbabwe made many costly mistakes when negotiating the terms of trade co-operation with the Eastern Bloc, particularly China, under the LEP. According to Ojakorotu & Kamidza (2018), close economic and political ties with China served the interests of Zimbabwe's ruling elite at the expense of its citizens. Ojakorotu & Kamidza (2018) are of the view that the Zimbabwe LEP was created to counter the economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by Western countries. Examining the political economy of trade helps to analyse the effectiveness of these policies, their impact on domestic sectors and its compliance with international trade norms.

3.**Regional Integration:** Zimbabwe participates in regional trade consortia such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).In order to understand Zimbabwe's participation in regional integration initiatives and their impact on the country's economy, balance of trade, and competitiveness, it is necessary to analyse the political economy of trade.

4. **Sectoral Analysis:** During the period 2005-2020, Zimbabwe's trade patterns have evolved and researching into the political economy allows for sector-specific analysis. It is of utmost importance to examine the performance of many sectors, including agriculture, mining, manufacturing and services, in relation to trade policies. The analysis in this study identifies various sector-specific challenges, opportunities and potential areas for development.

This study is invaluable for economic policy makers as it focusses on the importance and impact of the nature of political regime on trade flows. In addition, to the above justifications, assessing the impact of political regimes on trade flows would strengthen trade promotion policies in Zimbabwe. The researcher anticipates that the government will benefit from this study to better understand how its policies and governance affect trade integration. Policy makers can learn from the political economy of trade in Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2020 and use these lessons to develop new policies to improve trade competitiveness and economic growth, effective trade strategies and institutional frameworks by taking into account the successes, failures and difficulties of past policies and reforms.

In light of all this, Zimbabwe is an interesting case study because trade patterns have not been consistent over the years. The country has been running deficits in the Balance-Of-Trade (BOT) for a long time. Meseguer & Escribà-Folch (2011) argue that authoritarian regimes (in this context, the Zimbabwean government) exhibit a higher degree of doctrinal rigidity; they demonstrate a lack of openness to the trade liberalisation efforts observed in neighbouring countries, even during periods of economic hardships. Zimbabwe has experienced political and economic hardship since the late 1990s. Finally, this study aims to contribute to academic knowledge and serve as a reference for subsequent research.

1.8. Periodisation of the Study

The study was divided into three periods. In order to comprehensively understand the dynamics of trade in Zimbabwe, this study analyses the period 2005-2008 (The Pre-GNU period), 2009-2013 (The GNU period), and 2014-2020 (The post-GNU period). One might question the rationale for this timeframe. I selected this period due to significant developments in the political landscape, attributed to the emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999, which inspired optimism among Zimbabwean citizens. The political climate intensified as the opposition successfully confronted the ruling ZANU-PF. The establishment of the Government of Unity in 2009 and the military coup of 2017 were two other noteworthy events that occurred during this period under study. These events piqued my interest in the era, as I became eager to comprehend the potential impact on trade flows during that time.

1.8.1. The Pre-GNU Period (2005-2008)

At the end of 1999, an opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), was formed under the leadership of the late Morgan Richard Tsvangirai. The MDC attracted millions of Zimbabweans, mainly white commercial farmers, who were dissatisfied with the ZANU-PF government and yearned for a democratic government after many years of one-party rule. Makumbe (2009) argued that in the early 2000s, ZANU-PF opted for violence to gain political support in the face of strong opposition in the early 2000s. This is similar to the present situation. Despite elections being held regularly in Zimbabwe, it is taxing to classify the political system operating in the country as democratic. Many scholars believe that the absence of a major opposition party in Zimbabwe from independence until 1999 could have reversed democracy and democratisation. To some extent, the poor political climate in Zimbabwe has had a negative impact on the economy's trade flows. In 2009, for example, Zimbabwe recorded a low export value of US$1.88 billion (World Bank, 2022). From 2000 to 2010, the economy recorded an extremely low value of trade flows, averaging US$1.88 billion (World Bank, 2022). It is worth investigating whether the intense political unrest is related to these low trade volumes.

1.8.2. The GNU Period (2009-2013)

The year 2009 brought a new twist in the Zimbabwean political arena with the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) as a tool to promote, cultivate and nurture democracy as a remedy to the nation's economic and political ills. Literature points out that the GNU creates the conditions or environment necessary for the introduction of democracy and various studies have revealed that GNU is known as a tool for conflict resolution (Tumbare,2014). Of course, power sharing presents its own challenges, but that is beyond the scope of this study. In terms of trade flows during the GNU period, Zimbabwe recorded a high export value; in 2011, the highest recorded export value was US$4.91 billion (World Bank, 2022).

The political events of the 2000s revealed that ZANU-PF exacerbated the violence. In the 2008 elections, it purportedly manipulated the results in favour of Robert Gabriel Mugabe. ZANU-PF abused the instruments of governance to deny the MDC victory. During the reign of Thabo Mbeki, South Africa provided sustained support to the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe by sending a delegation to assist in endorsing the 2008 elections, which was labelled as rigged and fraudulent by independent sources (Friedman, 2008). The events during this period led to the formation of the GNU in 2009 and although the GNU has laid a foundation for democracy in Zimbabwe, it could not guarantee lasting solutions to the political, economic and social ills. In recent years, Zimbabwe has further strayed from democracy. Makumbe (2009) is of the view that a nation's crisis over the years is essentially leadership.

1.8.3. The Post-GNU Period (2014-2020)

The post-GNU era saw the new President Emmerson Mnangagwa sworn in after a military coup in 2017 and ushered in a purported new era (post-Mugabe era). In terms of export value, Zimbabwe recorded a decline in export value of US$3.46 billion shortly after the coup. However, before the coup, the country had a high export value of US$4.91 billion in 2011 (World Bank, 2022). Such fluctuations occurred in the economy as the nation transitioned from one political regime to another. Rwodzi (2019) stated that military intervention, as occurred in Zimbabwe, is inherently undemocratic. This is another step away from democracy as Marinov & Goemans (2014) argue that coups are responsible for 75% of democratic failures. Military theory also contradicts what happened in November 2017 by postulating that in any modern democratic state, the military must subordinate itself to the decisions of the civilian leadership (Maringira & Masiya,2017).

1.9. Development of trade and exchange rate policies 2005-2020

This section discusses different trade and economic policies that were introduced during the period under study. It is important and informative to understand these policy statements with a view to understanding the political dynamics behind these policies and ultimately their effects on trade patterns which will be shown and deliberated on in the empirical results chapters 5,6, and 7.Following Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, its currency was renamed the Zimbabwean dollar. Officially, it was pegged to a basket of currencies, but in practice the monetary authorities targeted the US dollar (IMF,2020). The Zimbabwe dollar was initially valued above the US dollar but saw significant depreciation during the 1990s and early 2000s due to falling and unpredictable output growth, policy instability, and monetary financing of public sector deficits. As drought and the fast-track land reform program deepened the economic decline, monetary financing accelerated in the mid-2000s, eventually leading to triple-digit monthly inflation rates starting in early 2007 and culminating in prices doubling almost every day by November 2008 – one of the largest hyperinflations ever recorded as alluded to by (Hanke & Krus,2013).

During the Pre-2009 Era, specifically from 2005 to 2008, Zimbabwe had significant economic instability, characterized by hyperinflation reaching unprecedented levels.Munro (2006) states that in the early 2000s, the nation experienced a profound economic crisis marked by hyperinflation, a contraction in GDP, and declining living standards. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) persistently issued currency to finance governmental shortfalls, significantly undermining the Zimbabwean dollar (ZWD) and precipitating substantial economic turmoil. The period was also marked by a fixed and controlled exchange rate. The ZANU-PF government maintained a fixed exchange rate, which was largely unsustainable. Parallel market exchange rates flourished, reflecting a much weaker currency than the official rate. The trade policies were restrictive, marked by high tariffs and import controls aimed at protecting local industries, but these measures further constrained economic productivity (Adekoye & Kondlo,2020).In 2016, the RBZ introduced bond notes pegged to the US dollar, initially intended as an export incentive. However, the bond notes became a quasi-currency, leading to a loss of confidence in the monetary system. Further to that by 2017, Zimbabwe faced severe cash shortages, prompting further controls on the use of foreign currency. The parallel market for foreign exchange re-emerged, and the gap between the official and unofficial exchange rates widened. Trade imbalances continued (further discussed in chapter

7), driven by heavy reliance on imports, particularly fuel and food, while exports remained low compared to demand.

Similar to numerous other developing nations, the economic prosperity of Zimbabwe is contingent upon global dynamics and the macroeconomic strategies implemented by the government of Zimbabwe (GOZ). The aforementioned crises precipitated a series of novel developments. Matsika (2019) indicated that in 2009, Zimbabwe abandoned the ZWD due to hyperinflation and adopted a multi-currency regime, legalizing the use of foreign currencies, primarily the US dollar and South African rand. This move stabilized the economy, reduced inflation, and improved trade conditions as further explained in chapter 6 below. Also, during this period, It is important to note that the GOZ undertook measures to liberalize trade, promoting both imports and exports, as indicated by (Chimhore & Chivasa, 2021). Nevertheless, the significant reliance on imports continued, especially for essential goods. In 2016, the RBZ introduced bond notes pegged to the US dollar, initially intended as an export incentive. However, the bond notes became a quasi-currency, leading to a loss of confidence in the monetary system. Further to that by 2017, Zimbabwe faced severe cash shortages, prompting further controls on the use of foreign currency. The parallel market for foreign exchange re-emerged, and the gap between the official and unofficial exchange rates widened. Trade imbalances continued (further discussed in chapter 7), driven by heavy reliance on imports, particularly fuel and food, while exports remained low compared to demand.

In 2019, Zimbabwe introduced the RTGS dollar (later renamed the Zimbabwean dollar, ZWL) to replace bond notes and coins. The exchange rate was initially pegged but later allowed to float, although exchange rate volatility persisted. The government implemented a series of reforms aimed at stabilizing the currency, including the introduction of an interbank foreign exchange market (Zimbabwe - Market Challenges, 2024). However, lack of confidence in the ZWL and ongoing economic challenges undermined these efforts. Trade policy focused on import substitution and promoting exports, but challenges remained due to inconsistent policies, currency instability, and low investor confidence. The period post the 2017 coup, under the new dispensation, the government moved toward a more market-driven exchange rate system in an attempt to manage currency depreciation and attract foreign investment, but trust in the financial system remained weak (Zimbabwe - Market Challenges, 2024).

It is true to say that during the period under study, the government of Zimbabwe's frequent pattern of introducing and re-introducing ad hoc trade restrictions, such as exchange controls and local content policy to protect inefficient domestic producers, makes business difficult for the private sector. The government frequently changes policies and applies them inconsistently, often based on political or personal grounds, challenging business planning. Zimbabwe's regulatory environment remains complex, and businesses face hurdles registering and operating in the country. High levels of corruption, lack of rule of law, and Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe quasi-fiscal activities have all contributed to Zimbabwe's macroeconomic instability. Endemic corruption presents a serious challenge to businesses operating in Zimbabwe and U.S. firms have identified corruption as an obstacle to foreign direct investment, with many corruption allegations stemming from opaque procurement processes. Zimbabwe ranked 157 out of 180 countries on Transparency International's corruption perception index for 2022(Chimhore & Chivasa,2021). Overall, Zimbabwe's trade and exchange rate policies from 2005 to 2020 reflect a series of drastic measures taken in response to ongoing economic crises. Policies were heavily influenced by the political agenda of the ruling party. Efforts to control and stabilize the economy were often compromised by political considerations, leading to a cycle of crisis and reform. The period reflects a complex interplay between economic management and political power dynamics, where short-term measures often undermined long-term economic stability.

1.10. Structure of the Study

Chapter One acts as an exordium for this study and provides the reader with a contextual understanding of the study, its relevance to the field, the research aims, and a succinct articulation of the research problem. Chapter Two provides an overview of the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980 and provides a comprehensive analysis of these two crucial aspects. The theoretical and empirical literature review, the theories of political economy, and trade theories from the theoretical literature are discussed in Chapter Three. The literature review chapter provides the reader with a solid foundation of relevant knowledge. The fourth Chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the research design and methodology used, highlighting both their advantages and disadvantages. Chapter Five presents the empirical results and an analysis of the findings for the three research questions, focussing on the pre-GNU(period one of the study). Chapter Six continues with the presentation of the empirical results and an analysis of the findings for the three research questions, focusing on the GNU period (period two of the study). Chapter Seven presents the empirical results and an analysis of the findings for the three research questions, but this time focuses on the post-GNU period (period three of the study). Chapter Eight serves as the concluding section of the study, summarising the key findings and making recommendations for Zimbabwe's trade policy. This provides readers with a clear understanding of the implications of the study for policy makers and stakeholders in Zimbabwe.

2. CHAPTER TWO: ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed background to the study and stylised facts about the political and economic development in Zimbabwe since its independence in 1980. This overview of Zimbabwe is crucial as it forms the basis for this study. The political, social and economic situation in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980 requires proper framing and historical contextualisation in order to understand the various transitions that Zimbabwe has undergone since independence. Zimbabwe even today, at the time of writing this thesis, has a complex political culture as articulated by (Campbell, 2003). According to Campbell, this culture is the result of African nationalist patriarchal models of liberation. Put simply, Campbell's articulation in simpler terms, it refers to a way of thinking about the movements for independence and freedom in Africa. This is particularly true in the context of power dynamics and gender. Campbell argues that there was a tendency in African independence movements to maintain conventional gender norms that placed men in positions of authority. Thus, it is not only about the liberation of countries from foreign rule, but also about how these liberation movements shaped indigenous power structures. The time periods in this chapter are organised according to the various transitions in the country. Beginning with the transition to decolonisation in 1980, this was followed by economic liberalisation, the dismantling of white supremacy, agricultural transformation, democratisation and the military-backed transition. It is noteworthy that the above transitions are political in nature, while others are economic.

2.2. DECOLONISATION TRANSITION

Colonial Zimbabwe, known as Southern Rhodesia until 1965 and then Rhodesia until its independence in 1980, came into being in 1890. The people who lived in colonial Zimbabwe had a particular view of the indigenous African population. They saw them as children in need of guidance, protection and civilisation. Mlambo (2017) noted that the policies formulated and implemented by the settler state, whether in the area of politics, constitution making, governance, education, economics, land and labour policies, social relations or residential policy, were rooted in this belief in racial superiority and an unwavering determination to prioritise the interests of the white population at the expense of the non-white population. This notion of racial superiority was deeply ingrained in the colonial project and permeated every aspect of society, be it in sports, hotel facilities or even the use of public amenities (Mlambo, 2017). White racism in colonial Zimbabwe was also characterised by a sense of fear due to the fact that the white population was significantly outnumbered by the African majority throughout the colonial period. They were therefore constantly haunted by the fear of being overwhelmed. This anxiety played a crucial role in their determination to exert control over the African population and ensured that they remained submissive. According to Mlambo (2017) attempts to promote racial partnerships in the 1950s achieved little. State-sponsored white racism ended with Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

Colonisation had a profound impact on the minds and bodies of the colonised Zimbabwe people. This led to a sense of inferiority when compared to the traditional lifestyle of the colonisers (Masaka, 2016).According to Asadullah (2021), the are two important legacies that contributed to Zimbabwe's post-colonial state: First, it is the direct successor of harsh and tyrannical settler colonialism. Secondly, it is the result of prolonged violent nationalist conflict. These two historical realities profoundly defined its post-colonial character (Masaka,2016). Kriger (2003) notes that throughout the post-colonial period, guerrilla veterans and the ZANU-PF collaborated and manipulated each other to build power and privilege in the army, the police and among workers. It is also worth noting that geopolitical factors in Southern Africa further compounded these influences. Southern Africa was a region characterised by intense geopolitical rivalries and ideological struggles, particularly in the context of decolonisation and the struggle against apartheid.

The case of Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia, as explained in Chapter Five) and its struggle for independence provides an insight into the complex dynamics of the time (Adelman & Bender, 1978). It is worth noting that South Africa was a major player in the region under apartheid rule and had a significant impact on the political landscape. The apartheid government vehemently rejected socialist ideologies, seeing them as a threat to its capitalist and racially discriminatory policies. Furthermore, the white minority government of Rhodesia, led by Ian Smith, resisted the demands for independence by the black majority. Western powers, including Britain and the USA supported the Rhodesian government as a bulwark against perceived communist influence in the region. The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the main guerrilla groups fighting against the Rhodesian government, were ideologically very different, but also included socialist-orientated factions. Neighbouring countries such as Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Angola supported the liberation movements in Zimbabwe. These states were more inclined toward socialist ideologies and provided bases and support for the freedom fighters (Adelman & Bender, 1978). In summary, geopolitical factors in Southern Africa during the Cold War created a complex environment in which the ideological orientation of the Zimbabwean freedom fighters, especially the socialist-oriented ones leanings, was abhorred by the Western powers, apartheid South Africa and the Rhodesian government.

The struggle for Zimbabwean independence was caught up in the general dynamics of the Cold War and the regional power struggles of the time. The end of the guerrilla war in Zimbabwe in 1980 was a golden opportunity and an ideal chance to build democratic institutions that put the people at the centre and promote human security. Zimbabweans had higher expectations, including a break from nationalist violence, the expansion of democratic spaces and the protection of human rights once majority rule was achieved (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003). Following Mkandawire (2020), the transition to decolonisation in of 1980 was expected to produce a sovereign Zimbabwe inhabited by free citizens who would reclaim the land stolen by the white settlers. At the time of independence, there were four major political parties. These were: The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) under the leadership of led by the late Robert Gabriel Mugabe, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) under the leadership of the late Joshua Nyongolo Nkomo, the Rhodesian Front (RF) under the leadership of the late Ian Douglas Smith and the United African National Council (UANC) under the leadership of the late Abel Muzorewa. The main difference between the two major parties was that ZANU was mainly supported by the Shona and ZAPU by the Ndebele, as noted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003).

ZANU won the 1980 elections as shown in Figure 2 below. ZANU had a dictatorial and regimental character rather than a democratic one (Olaleye et al., 2005). Several factors can be blamed for ZANU's dictatorial and regimental approach, especially under the leadership of Robert Mugabe. The early years of Mugabe's leadership were characterised by a desire to consolidate power and create a one-party state. According to Gusha (2019), Mugabe wanted to consolidate his supremacy through political consolidation and the suppression of any form of opposition. This led to political pluralism and dissent being nipped in the bud. Another factor worth mentioning is the land redistribution, which was a major issue in post-independence Zimbabwe. In addition, ethnic tensions between the two major ethnic groups, the Shona (Mugabe's ethnic group) and the Ndebele (aligned to rival political leader Joshua Nkomo), complicated the situation and led to a dictatorial and regimental approach by ZANU. Joshua Nkomo, who had been Mugabe's rival during the liberation struggle, became part of the new government after independence. However, the tensions between ZANU and ZAPU continued. In 1982, as indicated by Gusha (2019), Mugabe dismissed Nkomo from the cabinet and accused him of plotting to overthrow the ruling government. The conflict between ZANU and ZAPU culminated in Operation Gukurahundi. This military campaign was aimed at suppressing perceived dissidents, but disproportionately affected the Ndebele people. This event exacerbated tensions and led to a crackdown on perceived dissidents in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces, where Nkomo had strong support. More than 20,000 people died in the Gukurahundi massacres (1983-7) as the party-state and party-nation were established (Ndlovu-Gatsheni,2009).

Party	**Votes**	**White roll**		**Votes**	**Common roll**		**Total**
		%	**Seats**		**%**	**Seats**	**Seats**
Zanu	-	-	-	1,668,992	63.0	57	57
Zapu	-	-	-	638,879	24.1	20	20
Rhodesian Front	13,621	83.0	20	-	-	-	20
United African National Council	-	-	-	219,307	83	3	3
Zimbabwe Democratic Party	-	-	-	53,343	20	0	0
National Front of Zimbabwe	-	-	-	28,181	1.1	0	0
National Democratic Union	-	-	-	18,794	0.7	0	0
United National Federal Party	-	-	-	15,056	0.6	0	0
United People's Association of Matabeleland	-	-	-	1,181	0.0	0	0
Independents	2,781	17.0	0	-	-	-	0
Invalid/ blank votes		-	-	52,746	-	-	-
Total:	**16,402**	**100**	**20**	**2,702,275**	**100**	**80**	**100**

FIGURE 2: ZIMBABWE 1980 GENERAL ELECTIONS RESULTS

Source: African elections database

Madyara (2022) posits that decolonisation is an undoing of colonial processes designed to demonise indigenous traditions, cultures, and race by entrenching colonial ideologies of race purity and institutionalising imperialist value/belief systems through the police and the courts to destabilise the masses. Colonisation can be partly achieved by turning the colonised against themselves and their culture, and keeping them poor through the attendant socioeconomic exclusion. To understand the complex political transitions that occurred in Zimbabwe, it is of paramount importance to unpack and unmask decolonisation. The Asadullah framework posits that decolonisation can be broken into two main interrelated segments, the micro-decolonisation and macro-decolonisation (Asadullah, 2021). Micro-decolonisation entails the recouping and revitalising of indigenous languages and cultural practices, as well as the restoration of the mental and physical faculties of the colonised people. On the other hand, macro-decolonisation is concerned with the broader and far-reaching institutional as well as structural changes that must be implemented. These include the enjoyment of self-governance, equitable redistribution of wealth, and the reformulation of policies on the traditional mechanisms of law enforcement and court proceedings in a country. It is critical to acknowledge that decolonisation not only denotes the dismantling of colonial power to attain economic and political independence, as is the case of Zimbabwe, but also implies a comprehensive deconstruction of the practices and processes that were originally instituted upon the principles and norms of the old colonial regime. Therefore, decolonisation necessitates a multifaceted and profound transformation that challenges the foundations of colonialism and strives to establish a more just and egalitarian society (Madyara, 2022).

Zimbabwe's transition to majority rule was also hampered by various elements and was inherently centred on systemic security. Makombe, Kufakurinani, & Chimhete (2023) exhibited that Zimbabwe in 1980 was an extraordinarily complex and fluid environment that required complex solutions from multiple institutions and individuals. The ZANU-PF government attempted to implement an authoritative yet robust solution. President Robert Mugabe was elevated from head of state to a leader with wide-ranging, flexible and unfettered powers to ensure the security of the system. This included, for example, giving him unlimited powers to intervene in the appointment cycles or steer them in favour of the decision-making parties (Makumbe & Compagnon, 2000). The intention was to remove the constraints on power that once hampered its exercise and create an "imperial administration" in Zimbabwe. ZANU-PF utilised the framework of the one-party political state as its main strategy for retaining power in the 1980s and 1990s. It is worth noting that the gagging of resistance is one of the many tactics deployed by ZANU-PF to stay in power, especially from around 1980 when political developments in Zimbabwe were rejected by ZANU-PF. To come to power in the 1980s, ZANU-PF also deployed freedom war tactics and violent military operations in Matabeleland and Midlands - tactics it then deployed against its rivals to stay in power in that decade - it deployed both freedom war tactics and military operations to bring Matabeleland Province and Midlands Province under its control. To stay in power during this era, the Mugabe regime also constantly changed the constitution, centralised control of state organisations and brutally threatened and terrorised its political rivals. In response, the late Edgar Tekere founded the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) in 1989. The main purpose of the ZUM was to oppose the one-party state by becoming politically active throughout Zimbabwe. However, as with ZAPU, ZUM's allies were hounded, harassed and murdered by ZANU-PF apologists and supporters. Patrick Kombayi, for example, was shot by a state specialist without warning (Malunga, 2022). At the time of his slaying, he was the National ZUM Organising Secretary. There were conflicting reports on his shooting, with ZANU-PF and even the then President Mugabe accusing Kombayi of instigating violence (Kadungure, 2009).

ZANU-PF also deployed yet another effective intimidation strategy against its opposition by concocting accusations against resistance leaders (Reeler, 2003). In the 1980s, for example, Dr.Dumiso Dabengwa and Post Masuku were imprisoned on dubious charges of conspiring to overthrow ZANU-PF-held state power. Dr. Dumiso Dabengwa, erstwhile director of the intelligence apparatus within the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) during the insurgency period, found himself embroiled in legal contention subsequent to the nation's emancipation in 1980. In 1982, amidst political turbulence, he and Lookout Masuku, erstwhile commander of ZIPRA, alongside four other associates, faced charges of treason. Subsequently exonerated in 1983, Dr. Dabengwa encountered renewed legal entanglement under the auspices of emergency regulations. Tragically, Lookout Masuku passed away in 1986, ostensibly due to cryptococcal meningitis, although the circumstances surrounding his demise remained shrouded in suspicion. Notably, ZIPRA, the military arm affiliated with Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), primarily garnered allegiance from the Ndebele-speaking populace in the Southern regions of Zimbabwe.

Various opposition initiatives in the 1990s, such as ZANU Ndonga under the leadership of Ndabaningi Sithole, the Democratic Party, the Forum Party and the Zimbabwe Democratic Party Alliance, failed in their endeavours to form national constituencies that would provide a grassroots democratic alternative to ZANU-PF. Furthermore, they were unable to build or maintain an effective infrastructure in the face of official repression and an electoral system that gave these parties little hope of winning elections (Makumbe & Compagnon, 2000). As Nkala (2019) suggests to, the transition to decolonisation in Zimbabwe in 1980 was a complex process involving various actors and dynamics. This led to the destruction of traditions, language and culture by the British settlers. This still affects the governance of the continues to impact the country today and hinders the decolonisation process. However, the transition also saw the emergence of a securocratic state in which the military played a central role in shaping the political system and influencing the rise and fall of leaders (Ruhanya & Gumbo, 2023). Nyandoro & Muzorewa (2017) also argue that the transition from a state-led growth points policy led to a liberal urban development approach, with partnerships between the private and public sectors playing a crucial role in promoting urban development. Zimbabwe's political culture, influenced by both colonial and anti-colonial politics, has also impacted the transitional politics of the country, with challenges and false starts in achieving real change as noted by (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya, 2020). It is worth noting that corruption and looting of funds meant for the welfare of citizens has been rife since 1980. For instance, President Mugabe amassed fat Swiss bank accounts and with other assets through embezzlement and looting during his reign (Mudyara, 2022). This contributed to the challenges Zimbabwe faced on its road to recovery and decolonisation.

According to Madyara (2022), Zimbabwe suffers a significant loss of about 5% of its annual economic output, which amounts to a staggering 300 million. This loss can be directly attributed to the pervasive problem of corruption that incessantly plagues the government and society as a whole. Furthermore, the cost of corruption in government alone is estimated at a staggering 482 million US dollars per year. The misappropriation of public funds in Zimbabwe not only exacerbates the existing poverty in rural and underdeveloped areas that was deeply entrenched during the colonial era as (Konadu-Agyemand & Shabaya, 2005) point out, but also perpetuates a system of inequality and injustice. During the colonial era, the concept of the Rule of Law was virtually non-existent for the colonised population in Zimbabwe(Masaka, 2016). It was the white colonisers who enjoyed preferential treatment and rights under the constitution. This stark contrast in treatment sheds light on one of the major obstacles in the fight against corruption in the post-independence era. Madyara (2022) argues that colonial systems were inherently designed to avoid accountability and responsibility towards the masses, making it incredibly challenging to establish a corruption-free society.

In short, the political environment in Zimbabwe has been dominated by ZANU-PF since 1980 to date. Moreover, post-independence governments in Zimbabwe have shown little initiative to move away from the past and dismantle the deep-rooted systems that perpetuate corruption (Masunungure, 2020). One of the reasons for this reluctance could be the benefits that those in power derive from maintaining the status quo. For example, the task of reforming the police and court systems originally established during colonialism would require extensive effort and resources. While traditional courts already exist in Zimbabwe, their effectiveness is hampered by a lack of awareness and understanding of human rights issues. In particular, customary law practices that discriminate against women pose a major challenge to the enforcement of justice and equality. It is therefore, it becomes imperative for Zimbabwe to update and educate these traditional courts on human rights. To truly address the root causes of corruption and inequality, Zimbabwe needs a comprehensive transformation where the underlying infrastructures of the colonial system imposed by the colonisers are undone and rebuilt (Madyara, 2022). This process, commonly referred to as decolonisation, aims to redress the injustices and imbalances that have persisted in the post-independence period. As part of this transformation process, Zimbabwe can also focus on repairing and amending those aspects of its customary and traditional laws that are considered illegal due to their violation of human rights principles.

In summary, Zimbabwe has been struggling with the devastating consequences of corruption from decolonisation to the present day. These consequences not only hinder economic progress but also perpetuate poverty and inequality in Zimbabwe. The challenges of fighting corruption are deeply rooted in colonial systems that were designed to serve the interests of the colonisers and not the masses. To overcome these challenges, Zimbabwe needs to embark on a comprehensive process of decolonisation that involves restructuring the existing institutions and laws to bring them in line with the principles of accountability, responsibility and respect for human rights. It is only through such transformative efforts that Zimbabwe can hope to create a society that is free from corruption and upholds the values of justice and equality for the benefit of its citizens.

2.3. Economic Liberalisation

McGillivray & Morrissey (1999) argue that economic liberalisation is a process of reducing the distortions that government creates in the economy so that the economy can better respond to market-based price incentives. Kwon & Salcido (2019) further define liberalisation as the process of introducing policies that encourage the use of prices and market processes for economic development, often with the intention of reducing government interference. Mahtaney (2021) agrees with McGillivray & Morrissey (1999) and Kwon & Salcido (2019) but claims that liberalisation has little impact on the earnings of the top 1.0%, top 10% and bottom 90% of the national economy and instead predominantly helps a relatively tiny group of elite earners such as the top 0.1%. In my view, economic liberalisation is a complex and context-dependent process that should be pursued selectively. This should be accompanied by the development of a regulatory and institutional framework to monitor the market and intervene when necessary.

According to Drylie (2021), it can be observed that the roots of liberal economic theory are steeped in classical economic thought, with Adam Smith being regarded as the foremost figure in classical liberalism. In his seminal work published in 1776, Smith advances a policy recommendation that advocates for limiting the involvement of the state in economic affairs to activities such as public works, regulatory frameworks, and law enforcement. He argues that excessive government intervention, particularly in areas such as ownership, production, and sale of goods and services, could lead to inefficiencies in economic operations and management. Furthermore, it is worth noting that liberal economic theory is closely linked to liberal political philosophy. According to Mamo-Bekana (2011), over the years, neoliberal economic philosophers have consistently championed noninterventionist policies as a means to alleviate poverty and advocate progress in developing economies. This approach emphasises the need for both political and economic liberalisation. However, a pragmatic analysis of economic operations has revealed the significance of government intervention in certain situations.

Government intervention can be an important tool to address market failures and correct imperfect market processes. It can also help to minimise the concentration of monopoly power, which can be detrimental to the functioning of the economy as a whole. Furthermore, government intervention is indispensable when it comes to challenges related to technological progress, weak institutional frameworks and structural deficiencies. These factors underscore the need to strike a balance between liberal economic principles and the pragmatic realities of economic management. Chang (2003) argues that while liberal economic theory and non-interventionist policies are advocated as a means of promoting development and progress, the role of government intervention must not be ignored. There are instances where market failures and imperfect operations require corrective action, and government intervention is inevitable to ensure a fair and efficient economic system. In addition, challenges such as monopoly power, technological advancement and institutional weaknesses require proactive government intervention. Therefore, a nuanced approach that combines liberal economic principles with targeted government intervention is crucial for sustainable economic growth and development. Since the attainment of independence, the Zimbabwean economy was a highly regulated system until the economic reforms adopted in 1991(Nyawata & Mumbegegwi, 2002).

The first years of the 1990s were characterised by the erosion of the rule of law and political instability. The government's disregard for property rights, the independence of the judiciary and the lack of a stable political environment deterred domestic and foreign investment and almost led to the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy during this period. As Munangagwa (2009) argues, rampant corruption and economic mismanagement were also pervasive during this period. The government engaged in patronage politics, which led to inefficient distribution of resources and public funds. State-owned enterprises became inefficient and contributed to the economic decline. In response to the economic crisis, Zimbabwe eventually had to adopt Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAPs) under pressure from international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The reforms themselves included various measures such as the liberalisation of the economy, the privatisation of companies controlled or owned by the government and the reduction of investment in social services and also the liberalisation measures such as currency reforms, fiscal discipline, and market-oriented policies. To overcome the economic challenges, the government implemented these liberalisation measures in the 1990s. These included the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), which aimed to open up the economy, promote foreign investment and implement market-oriented policies. Although the adoption of liberalisation measures in the 1990s was essential for economic recovery, it also marked a significant change in the country's economic policies (Mlambo, 1997). The first phase of the programme, known as the Structural Economic Adjustment Programme (ESAP), lasted from 1991 to 1996, while the second phase, the Transformation Agenda Social and Economic Development of Zimbabwe (ZIMPREST), lasted from 1996 to 2000.

Masaka (2013) elucidates that the Zimbabwean government was compelled to discard its socialist-oriented development strategy and instead embrace market-based reforms which necessitated the uplifting of trade restrictions. The objectives of ESAP were to mitigate economic disparities, diminish government intervention in the economy, and foster the advancement of the private sector. However, the implementation of ESAP encountered numerous challenges, limiting its effectiveness to a modest level. Some of the notable challenges are that the intended objectives were never fully realised. This was mainly due to inadequate funding from the World Bank and the IMF (Sachikonye, 2002). There was also drought in 1991 and 1992 which further weakened the largely agriculture based economy. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya (2020), this transition to neoliberalism had negative consequences as it undermined the progress in the education and health sectors. Furthermore, this transition sparked protests from both workers and students who were severely affected by the combination of job cuts and the withdrawal of subsidies.

Prior to the implementation of ESAP, the government's trade policies had already changed by extending an open general import licence to more products. Mashakada (2013) notes that since July 1990, the government has offered exporters the Export Retention Programme which entitles them to retain up to 7.5% of their revenue from exports depending on the type and amount of money used to make the sale. The proceeds can then be used to finance strategic imports such as capital goods or raw materials. The Zimbabwean dollar was devalued by 12% between 1989 and 1990 (Mashakada, 2013). Following the 8% devaluation in 1989, the government began to remove many products from the list of price controls in October 1990 - with the exception of real food products, which remained subject to such controls. In its budget statement published in July 1990 and the accompanying general policy statement, the government sent a clear signal that it was changing its political stance. The ESAP was intended to promote trade reform through the elimination of quantitative controls and harmonisation of tariffs and duties, with the abolition of export incentives and the termination of import licensing among the specific components. An annual export growth of 9 percent by 1995 was targeted. Rattso & Torvik (1998) note that, to their surprise, the government opted for on full trade liberalisation - more radical than what most developing countries were adopting at the time - to join the international trend towards economic liberalisation reforms while being assured by Bretton Woods institutions that this would unlock funding.

The ZANU-PF-led government of 1980 introduced a corporatist policy framework inherited from its antecedent administration, supplemented by additional redistributive measures (Brett, 2005). Subsequently, in 1991, a swift transition to liberalisation ensued, only to be substantially reversed between 1998 and 1999. The emergent ZANU-PF-led regime inherited a meticulously regulated economic structure from its predecessor, maintaining pre-existing controls over pricing mechanisms, resource distribution, and investment. So, the transition from corporatist to liberal economic policy regimes in Zimbabwe resulted in the crisis that Zimbabwe faced in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The shift from one policy regime to another was not a smooth sail, as both the corporatist and liberal economic policy reforms had their own underlying principles, motives for implementation, significant accomplishments, and shortcomings. Sachikonye (2002) posits that ESAP and ZIMPREST had disastrous consequences to the economy of Zimbabwe. To add to what the current researcher noted above, there was an optimistic anticipation that Zimbabwe's export-oriented and labour-intensive manufacturing sectors would experience rapid expansion once the country liberalised its economy, however, these expectations were not realised. Sachikonye further advances that the economic reforms actually led to a widespread deindustrialisation in Zimbabwe.

Contrastively, Brett (2005) suggests that the fiascos of these reforms could have been avoided if it were not for certain political conditions that influenced these outcomes. Brett further argues that the shortcomings were primarily caused by political variables rather than economic factors. Brett (2005) advances that had the ZANU-PF regime imposed greater discipline on the state apparatus and given the business community better incentives, as the "developmental states" in East Asia had earlier done, it could have maintained its hegemonic political position without a major shift in strategy. Also ZANU-PF’s continuing need to pay its political debt made it impossible to reduce the budget deficit coupled with external factors and the complex and conflictual nature of the economic policy changes it had to make. The Zimbabwean economy was significantly weaker by the end of these reforms in the early 2000s than when ESAP was introduced. This seems to be an intriguing possibility. After the implementation of reforms, the state of the economy deteriorates. This raises the question of whether the alleged reforms were ever worthwhile. Moreover, Dashwood (1996) points out that the much-vaunted market reforms proved to be flawed in the second decade of independence.

2.4. Dismantlement of White Dominance

State-sponsored white racism ended with Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. In the third phase of transformation, the ruling ZANU-PF regime in Zimbabwe effectively dismantled the prevailing white dominance in the country's economy. This significant change involved the implementation of affirmative action policies, the indigenisation of the economy and the deracialisation of the various sectors (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya, 2020). It is important to note that these transformative measures were implemented in a difficult environment characterised by constraints. These constraints were primarily rooted in an unwritten policy of reconciliation and were determined by the regulatory framework set out in the 1979 Lancaster House Constitution. Throughout the pre-independence period, commercial tobacco growing in Zimbabwe remained an exclusively white enterprise (Pilossof, 2014). The introduction of majority rule in 1980 brought about little change in the situation; a small number of large-scale white farmers continued to dominate tobacco growing and commercial agriculture in general. But when the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) was implemented by Robert Mugabe's government in 2000, things drastically changed. The tobacco farming industry in Zimbabwe almost collapsed as a result, with almost all white farmers losing their farms. Due in part to the success of both small-scale and commercial contract farming operations, the nation's tobacco farming industry has now recovered somewhat. White farmers in Zimbabwe and their families moved into other sectors of the tobacco industry as a result of the collapse of white farming after the FTLRP.

Pilossof & Ncube (2022) are of the view that the FTLRP, introduced by the Mugabe regime in 2000, led to the elimination of white supremacy in Zimbabwe. Prior to this, commercial tobacco farming and agriculture in general was predominantly controlled by white farmers (Pilossof, 2014). According to Pilossof & Ncube (2022), the FTLRP led to the loss of the farms of almost all white farmers, resulting in the collapse of the tobacco industry. Subsequently, many white farmers and their families moved into other areas of the tobacco industry, such as subsidiaries of large leaf buyers, tobacco auction floors, and small-scale contract farming operations. Makina (2009) argues that the Zimbabwean government-controlled newspapers have also played a role in the symbolic annihilation of white-Zimbabwean identity in the twenty-first century. Academic studies on white Zimbabweans have provided insights into their histories, attitudes, and experiences, but have also raised concerns about homogenised and essentialised representations (Pilossof, 2014; Makina, 2009). Overall, the FTLRP significantly impacted white dominance in Zimbabwe.

The rebellious idea of taking up arms to drive the white settlers off the Zimbabwean land was not the best way to encourage inclusion and decolonisation. Rather, an approach including the development and implementation of an integrated micro and macro plan aimed at transforming the situation might have worked better. As if the armed struggle was not enough, the Zimbabwean government also drove out the white settlers through their Land Reform Programme of 2000 in which they specifically targeted and repossessed farms that were performing well. Citing the premise that colonial settlers had acquired the most arable and fertile land, the rationale for post-colonial land redistribution policies is substantiated (Mlambo, 2005). Remarkably, Kenya faced a parallel predicament post-independence, inheriting British colonial legacies of wealth distribution. Both Zimbabwe and Kenya adopted a rudimentary transitional approach encompassing five key facets: firstly, the preservation of overall production levels; secondly, the redistribution of existing surpluses; thirdly, the implementation of structural reforms within select sectors; fourthly, the eradication of discriminatory practices; and fifthly, the consolidation of state authority through Africanization initiatives (Gordon, 1981). Notably, these shared strategies encompassed advocacy for liberalised foreign investment and the augmentation of budgets for African public welfare provisions, including education and healthcare. However, despite the similarities in strategic approaches between the two nations, their outcomes markedly diverged. The contrasting trajectories primarily highlight disparities in land reform efforts, land distribution policies, and inherent economic disparities. Much of these disparities significantly hindered Zimbabwe's progress towards decolonisation (Gordon, 1981).

The dismantlement of white dominance in Zimbabwe has had significant ramifications on the country's trade dynamics, as alluded to by Newfarmer & Pierola (2015). Also, Moyo (2013) submits that with the attainment of its independence in 1980, Zimbabwe embarked upon a series of transformative reforms that aimed to transform the economic landscape from one predominantly controlled by white individuals to a more capitalist system. Nonetheless, it is essential to concede that the trade paradigm shift dynamics have not been entirely devoid of challenges or adverse consequences. Buigut (2015) argues that although trade volumes have demonstrated a commendable recovery subsequent to the recession experienced during 2007-2008, disconcerting longer-term trends are evident, including a decline in agricultural exports, and a less diversified export basket. These trends can be partially attributed to an array of policy concerns that have plagued the nation, encompassing poor macroeconomic policy, an unfavourable investment climate, and competition-stifling policies.

2.5. Agrarian Transformation

The Zimbabwean citizens begrudged colonisation, racism, and the mistreatment of the black population during the colonial era and post-independence. Inequalities in land access were equally resented, and this exacerbated tension between the black population and the whites farmers. Gaidzanwa (2020) asserts that following independence, white farmers retained dominion over prime urban residential property, agricultural land, water resources, and other key assets. Historical antecedents reveal the British South Africa Company's subjugation of the Ndebele in 1893 and the Shona in 1897-1898, subsequently coercing them into designated "native reserves" (Palmer, 1971). Zamchiya (2022) contends that grievances stemming from the dispossession of native lands were pivotal in fomenting the struggle for national liberation, ultimately culminating in Zimbabwean independence in 1980. Advocacy for land reform was championed by various black advocacy groups, prompted by perceived disparities in land ownership particularly prevalent in rural Zimbabwe. As the pace of reform lagged and failed to redress the glaring land disparities, black war veterans began occupying white-owned farmland. Racially stratified land ownership endured until 2000, when demands for a new constitution precipitated the drafting of a document enabling the state to compulsorily acquire land from predominantly white large-scale commercial farmers. The land occupations by war veterans precipitated a sharp decline in agricultural output, exacerbating the precipitous economic downturn experienced by Zimbabwe.

The land reform programme that began in 2000, took place under the banner of the third Chimurenga (third war for liberation) (Gatsheni-Ndlovu & Ruhanya, 2020). Third Chimurenga and ‘hondo yeminda’ (land war) refer to the widespread unsystematic occupation of land previously held by white farmers which was part of a political wave driven by injustices from the colonial past that had remained unresolved post-Zimbabwean independence. The skewed nature of land distribution that was in favour of a few white commercial farmers at independence triggered the onset of the FTLRP in 2000. The aim was to transform the rural economy through delivering the land to Zimbabwe's landless black people because land is regarded as an economic growth engine. This also envisioned the expansion of agricultural production as well as the enhancement of agriculture's contribution to national food security and industrial development (Roth & Gonese, 2003).

Under the FTLRP, the Zimbabwean government implemented two models, the A1 Scheme and the A2 Schemes. According to Shonhe (2017), the A2 Model is a commercial model in which the land sizes range from 30 to 2000 hectares and are contingent upon the agro-ecological region. The A1 Model was a smallholder variant in which the beneficiaries were assigned 3 to 6 hectares exclusively reserved for arable purposes. Those who could mobilize their own resources were the target audience for the A2 Model. The Phase One Land Reform Model, which was implemented under the A1 Model, was merely an adaptation of the original Model (A) that the Zimbabwean government had adopted after independence. Following Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the government implemented a socialist-oriented economic model, commonly known as Model A. This model was founded on the principles of state-led development, emphasizing the government's central role in the economy (Muchetu,2020). The objective was to rectify historical inequalities, enhance the welfare of the majority population, and diminish the influence of private, particularly foreign-owned, enterprises in strategic sectors. The key aspects of Model A included land reform as a fundamental component. The government sought to transfer land ownership from white commercial farmers to Black Zimbabweans. According to Muchetu (2020), due to the Lancaster House Agreement, the government was required to postpone comprehensive land reform for a decade, resulting in a slower than expected redistribution process.On the other hand, the A2 Model was designed to be a commercial model that would enable a new group of farmers to engage in commercial farming with their own resources. According to Roth & Gonese (2003), twenty percent of all A1 Model allocations were set aside for veterans of the liberation struggle.

Despite its overarching objectives, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) achieved significant success primarily in its efforts to allocate land to socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals. An impressive expanse exceeding 14 million hectares was expropriated and subsequently distributed among a substantial cohort exceeding 230,000 households (Mkodzongi,2013). The land redistribution initiatives facilitated the transition of numerous individuals into small-scale landholders, thereby engendering novel avenues for livelihood sustenance. While a notable proportion of the redistributed land was allocated to political elites, the predominant beneficiaries were small-scale farmers. Remarkably, less than 5 percent of the newly established landowners possessed affiliations with the political elite (Mkodzongi,2013), yet they obtained a disproportionately sizable allocation of 32 percent of the redistributed land, underscoring a marked skew towards ordinary Zimbabweans who received a majority share of 68 percent. Despite the attendant controversies enveloping this land reform initiative, it unequivocally facilitated access to land and engendered new livelihood prospects for a considerable segment of previously landless individuals (Mkodzongi, 2013).That way, land reform redressed historical equity and social injustice issues steeped on race, social status, gender, and political affiliation. Mkodzongi (2020) further advances that despite the challenges faced by the newly resettled farmers in Zimbabwe, the land reform offered access to land and other natural resources to the landless and land-short peasants which were previously enclosed to them under a bi-modal agrarian structure inherited from colonialism.

Race- and class-based confrontations occurred between the state and white farmers over land, and the farmers were aggressively dispossessed of the land they held and worked (Chavunduka, Dipura & Vudzijena, 2021a). It is worth noting that some elements of the population felt marginalised in the process. They strongly felt, and rightfully so, that the ZANU-PF regime had treated them unfairly by taking over their land without proper compensation. Resultantly, production in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors dwindled. Unemployment rate soared as more people lost their jobs. A mass exodus was witnessed and migration escalated after 2000 as Zimbabweans departed to search for greener pastures elsewhere. During that period, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), established in 1999 as the primary opposition political entity, experienced a surge in support and garnered popularity particularly in urban areas where ZANU-PF encountered challenges in establishing a foothold. This phenomenon stemmed from the prevailing inadequacies in urban housing provision attributed to the scarcity and high cost of residential land. ZANU-PF's inability to address the issue of land redistribution in urban centers, compounded by the fact that such initiatives fell within the jurisdiction of local authorities, resulted in a lack of incentivisation for the party to appeal to the urban working and middle-class (Gaidzanwa, 2020).

Mkozongi & Lawrence (2019) assert that the principal aims of land policy encompass addressing equity concerns and rectifying social injustices, with a specific emphasis on ameliorating historical disparities rooted in racial, social, gender, political, and other delineations. Moreover, the objectives extend to ensuring that the redistributed land is utilized exclusively for agricultural purposes, catering to domestic food requirements and facilitating raw material procurement for the manufacturing sector. Notwithstanding these delineated goals, Zimbabwe's land policies, through agrarian transformation initiatives, have demonstrated notable success in fostering equity via land redistribution and resettlement programs. However, the attainment of objectives related to land use efficiency and environmental management has been comparatively limited.Evidently, this had repercussions on agricultural productivity (in the form of low productivity of farmland), economic stability, and environmental sustainability as seen by the plunging of the Zimbabwean economy in the early 2000s. The results from the study by Chavunduka, Dipura & Vudzijena (2021) reveal that reform beneficiaries' investment and adoption of technology remained low. Trade and the agrarian transition were also hampered by low public investments in services and infrastructure. As a result, Zimbabwe's yield of food crops, particularly maize and wheat, decreased (Moyo, 2007). Zimbabwe has suffered from a cereal deficit since 2001, mostly in the staple grains of wheat and maize. As a result, it had no choice but to rely on imports from nearby countries, primarily South Africa, Zambia, and Malawi, whose cereal production had been rising (FAO, 2016). There hasn't been any excess to go up the value chain and be processed in the manufacturing sector into higher value goods, which is the dilemma with the grain deficit (EU, 2009). Agrarian transformation was impeded by the crop deficit and the unfavourable terms of trade between rural and urban areas, which also restricted the flow of agricultural output to the manufacturing sector (Chavunduka et al.,2021).

Furthermore, Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya (2020) also argue that the outcome of agricultural transformation in Zimbabwe led to the collapse of the national economy. An event that can be partly attributed to the chaotic implementation of land reform. This chaotic implementation in turn led to Zimbabwe being isolated by the international community as the country was subjected to fierce criticism and ostracism. The process of land and agrarian transformation in Zimbabwe was influenced by a variety of factors that create a complex picture. One of the main drivers of change was the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme, which aimed to eliminate the unequal distribution of land by replacing large white-owned farms with black family farmers. This change in agrarian structure was not only intended to not only redress historical injustices, but also to promote food security, income generation and general economic growth in rural areas.

2.6. DEMOCRATISATION

The few years following Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 can be explained as a phase characterised by the emergence and dominance of a one-party state. This situation arose after the merger between ZAPU and ZANU-PF, which occurred during the Unity Accord of 1987, a significant agreement between the former President Mugabe and the former Vice President Joshua Nkomo. It is imperative to highlight that the Unity Accord was prompted by the unjustifiable meting of controversial tribal atrocities against the inhabitants of Matabeleland, which can be likened to the genocide widely known as Gukurahundi discussed in Section 2.2. As noted by Darnolf & Laakso (2016), there was absolutely no democracy to talk about during this era. Zimbabwe has been taught for so long that access to top leadership is a privilege and a haven exclusively for individuals with credentials from the independence struggle. The gun continues to precede the politics of the day in Zimbabwe. During the peak of a political crisis, 2000 to 2008, the army's senior leadership indicated that they would not salute anyone devoid of military credentials (Magure, 2009). Owing to this, it became difficult for anybody to aspire to hold a prominent role in national leadership, especially the presidency.

Makaye & Dube (2014) argue that Zimbabwe inherited an undemocratic institution and an authoritarian state. In fact, Rhodesia (formerly Zimbabwe) was characterised by harsh laws, especially those pertaining to law and order that were carefully crafted to exclude the Black majority. These were bequeathed but only changed when the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) emerged in the political arena in the late 1990s, heating the political environment in Zimbabwe. Makaye & Dube (2014) argue that:

> The continued existence of repressive laws governing public order, access to information, and the heavy-handedness of law enforcement agents against opposition members, human rights activists, government critics, and members of the media fraternity is a clear demonstration of Zimbabwe's failure to democratize.

Events in the early 2000s revealed that ZANU-PF, under the leadership of President Robert Mugabe was intensifying violence and that period was characterised by a series of events that culminated in political unrest, economic decline, and instances of violence. The ZANU-PF regime was accused of suppressing political opposition and stifling dissent. This was a reaction to the new opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change that had been formed in 1999. The opposition was gaining momentum and support, especially from the cities. The ZANU-PF regime opted for violence to retain their support as most Zimbabweans were fed up of this party. Opposition parties and civil society organisations faced harassment, intimidation, and violence. The government's control over the media further limited the free expression of alternative views.

In the 2008 elections, ZANU-PF manipulated the results in favour of Mugabe. ZANU-PF deployed the instruments of governance to deny the MDC victory. During the reign of Thabo Mbeki, South Africa offered sustained support to the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe by sending a delegation to certify elections that independent sources labelled as rigged (Rwodzi, 2017). The events of this period led to the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009. Chapter 6 of this study details further the processes that set up an opportunity for a new political settlement (GNU) where much focus is on the period between 2009 and 2013(the GNU period). Although the GNU created a foundation for democracy in Zimbabwe, it could not warrant lasting solutions to the political, economic and social ills. In recent years, Zimbabwe has moved further away from democracy. Makumbe (2009) points out that the country's crisis is largely due to the leadership over the years. Makumbe (2009) is also of the view that it is generally accepted that Zimbabwe has taken several leaps backwards in terms of the democratisation process since the year 2000. This seems to be true considering how the Fast Track Land Reform Programme of 2000 was implemented. The policy seemed to be good for the majority of landless Zimbabweans. But the implementation was chaotic and undemocratic. Shora (2019) notes that property rights and laws were violated unabated and deaths were recorded, with most of them being racially motivated.

Shora (2019) further argues that Zimbabwe's democratic movements must have sprung from the sufferings brought about by the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), which was covered in section 2.3 above.

> The hardships caused by structural adjustment were accompanied by a revival of civil society, making the role of the trade unions and civil society important.

The proliferation of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU) is attributed to the emergence of Richard Morgan Tsvangirai as a prominent figure, subsequently leading the foremost opposition political party following the demise of ZAPU in independent Zimbabwe. This development infused a renewed sense of optimism among Zimbabweans, fostering anticipation for an impending democratic resurgence. The fifth transition discussed in this chapter pertains to the process of democratization, spearheaded by the labour movement embodied by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, alongside the National Constitutional Assembly and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) under the leadership of Morgan Richard Tsvangirai. Gatsheni-Ndlovu & Ruhanya (2020) contend that this transition was characterized by overarching principles centered on democracy, constitutionalism, and the promotion of human rights. The reforming of the ruling ZANU-PF party and the recognition of the opposition by revolutionaries also played a role in the democratisation process (Shora, 2019). The Inclusive Government of 2009-2013 was the culmination of this transition. During this period, a "power-sharing" government was at the helm. This period was described by Aeby (2015) as "Zimbabwe's gruelling transition."

One may wonder why Aeby (2015) uses the term “gruelling” to describe the period of the Inclusive Government, considering that it was a time when Zimbabweans thought they would be saved from all the political and economic ills they were facing. The period was characterised by with political complexity as the ruling ZANU-PF regime tried to outmanoeuvre the main opposition party (MDC) behind the scenes. Although violence declined and the economy slightly stabilised, power did not shift away from ZANU–PF. On the contrary, ZANU-PF used the five years of the government of national unity to regain and consolidate its power. It is true that the transition to democratisation in Zimbabwe has been hampered by various factors. One of the biggest challenges is the entrenchment of military power in the political system, which has led to a securocratic state (Ruhanya & Gumbo, 2023). Over the past 43 years, the military and ZANU-PF nexus in Zimbabwe has continued to wield decisive power to determine the transition and possible democratic breakthroughs and undermine the role of elections. The military has been an architecture for ZANU-PF elites to consolidate power at most critical moments in the history of Zimbabwe's transition.

The civil-military theory postulates that the military in modern democratic states must t subordinate itself to the civilian choice of leadership (Maringira & Masiya, 2017). The military can be seen as a force of order as its mandate is to protect the civilian population from any threat and not the ruling regime (Maringira & Masiya, 2017). In most cases, however, the only client of the military is the state, as in the case of Zimbabwe. This underscores the militarisation of politics, as exemplified by the stance of army generals in the Middle East who consistently assert that governance affairs are too important to be entrusted solely to civilian authorities (Maringira & Masiya, 2017).Major General Chedondo in Zimbabwe has claimed that:

> As soldiers we will never be apologetic for supporting ZANU-PF because it is the only party. A National Defence Force the world over is there to protect national politics, national integrity, the Executive and other systems that form part of the Government. By virtue of this, defence forces automatically become a political animal. (The Zimbabwe Daily, 9 May 2012).

As articulated by Ruhanya & Gumbo (2023) pointed out, at the heart of the problems of this transition lies in the military factor, which has become an omnipresent and omnipotent linchpin of the political system in Zimbabwe. The military therefore plays an important role as a central factor in the problems of democratic transition in Zimbabwe. To put it in the exact words of Ruhanya & Gumbo (2023), the security state is hindering the democratic transition in Zimbabwe.

2.7. MILITARY ASSISTED TRANSITION

The military-backed transition in Zimbabwe pertains to the sequence of events surrounding the military coup of November 2017, resulting in the removal of President Robert Mugabe, who had held power since 1980. On 14 November 2017, Zimbabwe and the global community were shaken by reports indicating the mobilization of heavy military equipment in strategic locations within Harare, the nation's capital. Initially disseminated through social media platforms, these reports speculated on the likelihood of a military coup (Asuelime, 2018). Subsequently, the then Major General Sibusiso Moyo cautiously articulated the announcement of the military intervention, aimed at assuaging the escalating political, social, and economic turmoil while reinforcing the authority of the president and upholding his constitutional responsibilities (Raftopolous, 2019).
General Moyo speech that went thus:

> We wish to assure our nation, His Excellency, the president of the republic of Zimbabwe and commander in chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, comrade R G Mugabe and his family, are safe and sound and their security is guaranteed. We are only targeting criminals around him who are committing crimes that are causing social and economic suffering in the country in order to bring them to justice.

The speech seemed to me to be a diplomatically formulated declaration of a coup d'état that was labelled a military intervention. From then events spiralled out of control, culminating in Mugabe's decision to resign rather than face the humiliation of impeachment by parliament, which would have been intolerable for a man regarded in Zimbabwe and across Africa as a figure of liberation.

According to Raftopolous (2019), the Central Committee made a number of decisions, one of which was the official expulsion of twenty members of the Generation 40 (a faction and splinter group within the ZANU-PF party). Along with removing Mugabe from office as State President and First Secretary of the party, and advising his resignation, this also relieved President Mugabe's wife Grace of her position as Women's League Secretary. If that wasn't enough, they also removed Phelekezela Mphoko from his vice presidential position, welcomed back into the party all those who had been kicked out by the G40, and, lastly, proposed Mnangagwa, who had served as the party's minister of defense from 2009 to 2013, to lead ZANU-PF in an acting capacity and to run for the position of state president. On November 20, 2017, the ZANU-PF Parliamentary Caucus started moving the process of Mugabe's impeachment forward in parliament. The following day, the process was set in motion in parliament. Mugabe was forced to write a letter of resignation on November 21. This made it possible for Mnangagwa to take office as the new State President on November 24, 2017.

The Lacoste (another splinter group and faction from ZANU-PF party) supported Mnangagwa. This group wanted Mugabe to be succeeded by Mnangagwa who was by that time one of the two Deputy Presidents of Zimbabwe. The allegiance of the G40 faction regarding Mugabe's successor remained ambiguous. As articulated by Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya (2020), the G40 faction comprised what could be characterised as the 'Young Turks' within ZANU-PF, representing a younger cohort of politicians lacking tangible liberation credentials yet effectively encircling Grace and Robert Mugabe. Notably, Professor Jonathan Moyo emerged as its most vocal critic of Mnangagwa, effectively assuming the mantle from Mugabe. Grace Mugabe publicly aligned herself with the G40 faction. In the immediate period preceding the November 2017 military coup, Professor Moyo openly advocated for Sydney Sekeramayi, a senior figure within ZANU-PF, as the preferred successor to Mugabe.

The military coup marked an important turning point in the political trajectory of Zimbabwe. According to Ruhanya & Gumbo (2023)the military factor played a significant role in the Zimbabwean political system by ushering in the rise and fall of leaders (the rise and fall of Mugabe and the assumption of power by Mnangagwa). The military also played an important role in the establishment of a security state after it took over the ruling party (see section 2.6 above). During the armed struggle, military dominance in Zimbabwe became entrenched and the ZANU-PF government contributed to this development. According to Asuelime (2018), the international community's acceptance of the military intervention was based on self-interest rather than international norms and ethics. The whole world was celebrated the fact that Mugabe would finally step down as the President of Zimbabwe after thirty-seven years in power.

One could suggest a link between Mugabe and Mnangagwa, especially with regard to politics in Zimbabwe after the military coup. Mugabeism is the direct descendant of the Mnangagwa government. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) asserts that Mugabeism embodies a patriarchal ideological framework characterised by a multifaceted amalgamation of political controversies, behavioral patterns, ideological tenets, verbal expressions, rhetoric, and actions, all of which coalesce around the persona and political trajectory of Robert Mugabe. Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya (2020) are of the opinion that Zimbabwe's complex political culture is based on a combination of colonial and anti-colonial politics. They also believe that without a genuine shift away from the "Chimurenga aristocracy"(liberation war aristocracy), there will be no real transition in Zimbabwe. So the transition from Mugabe to Mnangagwa lacks real change -talk about the issue of Mugabeism. One cannot help but wonder what this means for the people of Zimbabwe, especially those whose hopes for a better Zimbabwe were revived on 17 of November 2017.

Following the coup, the inescapable logic of Mugabeism profoundly influenced what became known as the "Second Republic." Mnangagwa is Mugabe's political protégé. The conflicting antithesis of the political narratives of Operation Restore Legacy justifying the military coup in November 2017, and the catchphrase "Zimbabwe is Open for Business," which claimed to outline a new politics based on neoliberalism and market-determined economic logic, are perfect examples of this Mugabe-Mnangagwa entanglement (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya, 2020). Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ruhanya advance that there are at least ten clearly visible, connected, and overlapping coordinates for the ZANU-PF Mugabeism matrix of power in the period post the 2017 coup. These are summarised as follows:

1.The conceptualization and institutionalization of a 'party-state' and 'party-nation' paradigm (Kriger, 2003).

2. The propagation of pedagogical 'Chimurenga' nationalism intertwined with the construction of a fabricated 'patriotic history' (Ranger, 2004).

3. The reduction of electoral processes to mere rituals aimed at legitimising entrenched power structures.
4. The perpetuation of an assumed warrior ethos derived from the anti-colonial liberation struggles, with the gun revered as the ultimate safeguard of acquired authority.
5. The manifestation of executive lawlessness epitomised by the concept of 'kutonga' denoting arbitrary rule rather than principled governance.
6. The perpetuation of a neo-traditional patriarchal political culture characterised by gerontocratic leadership norms.
7. The normalization and institutionalization of governance through violence and coercion.
8. Practices involving the use of sorcery, witchcraft, and poison as means of neutralising adversaries and competitors.
9. The fetishisation of academic qualifications as a means of bolstering claims to political office.
10.The entrenchment of securitization, plutocracy, and predatory state practices rooted in primitive accumulation dynamics (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019).

The above summarised is the political terrain on which the Mnangagwa regime emerged and became entangled. And one can only wonder where the potential for people’s freedom lies. Has the Second Republic or the new dispensation brought any positive changes to the Zimbabwean economy and ultimately to Zimbabweans, most of whom live in abject poverty. For the Zimbabwean populace, who endured over three decades of Mugabeism, the military coup and subsequent assumption of power by Mnangagwa instilled a sense of optimism for positive change. Mnangagwa endeavored to portray his regime as a catalyst for transformation. In his inaugural address as president, Mnangagwa outlined several commitments, as elucidated by (Raftopolous,2019). Firstly, he pledged to steer Zimbabwe towards economic recovery by fostering a market-oriented economy conducive to attracting foreign investment and ensuring its security. Indeed, changes were made to the indigenisation laws. Secondly, Mnangagwa aimed to redress the grievances of white farmers who lost land during the radical land reform program of 2000 through compensation. Thirdly, his administration aimed to re-engage Zimbabwe with the international community. Fourthly, Mnangagwa articulated his aspiration to be a president for all Zimbabweans, emphasizing nation-building and national reconciliation. Finally, he vowed to take resolute action against corruption (Raftopolous, 2019).

The main impediment for Mnangagwa when he came to power was gaining full legitimacy as the State President through a call for national elections. Notably, his advantage lay in the disarray within the opposition, which was beset by factionalism subsequent to the demise of Morgan Tsvangirai on 14 February 2018 (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya, 2020). Conversely, ZANU-PF itself was mired in internal turmoil, presenting a significant disadvantage. As Raftopolous (2019) asserts, Mnangagwa found himself compelled to orchestrate elections as a means to transcend the shadow of the coup and establish a new legitimacy through a perceived peaceful and credible electoral process. The elections were conducted in July 2018, with Mnangagwa contending against the youthful Nelson Chamisa of the MDC Alliance in the presidential contest. Mnangagwa emerged as the victor with 50.6 percent of the vote, while Chamisa secured 44.3 percent. Although the campaign period was relatively tranquil, on 1 August 2018, the military intervened, resulting in the fatal shooting of six protesters in Harare demonstrating against the delayed announcement of presidential election results, reminiscent of experiences under the Mugabe regime. Additionally, Chamisa and his party contested the presidential election results, presenting a case that was heard at the Constitutional Court. However, the courts, purportedly captured by the ZANU-PF regime, upheld Mnangagwa's victory. Nonetheless, Chamisa's challenge underscored the enduring question of political legitimacy that has plagued Zimbabwe since 2000.

The Mnangagwa regime was desperately seeking international engagement; however, its reputation was significantly marred by the army's involvement in the lethal suppression of civilians in Harare. This incident led to the inference that the inception of the 'second republic' was tainted by an adverse stigma from its outset. Moreover, the lack of transparency regarding the deployment and authorisation of military intervention during a civilian political demonstration exacerbated the situation, raising questions about whether the 'second republic' operated as a military junta, wherein political disputes were invariably settled through violent military intervention. Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya (2020) contend that Mnangagwa was compelled to establish a Commission of Inquiry to address the public perception of his regime in the aftermath of the disturbances on 1 August 2018. Nevertheless, akin to previous government-appointed commissions, the outcomes of this inquiry were unsatisfactory and its efficacy dubious, primarily serving as a public relations maneuver. Much like its predecessor under Mugabe, the Mnangagwa regime finds itself besieged and haunted by an array of challenges.

The promise to put Zimbabwe on an economic recovery and growth path based on a neoliberal framework has sparked social unrest that precipitated itself in a second round of public protests in 2019. Once again, the military was compelled to intervene utilising its customary tactics of violence, particularly following a surge in petrol prices. Concurrently, the healthcare sector remained plagued by strikes. The regime's monetary policies and overarching macroeconomic recovery strategy appear to echo the Structural Adjustment Programme implemented by the previous regime (Raflotopus ,2019). Another significant challenge arises from the regime's inability to effectively reintegrate Zimbabwe into the international community. Instances of violence and intolerance towards political dissent have escalated since Mnangagwa assumed power (as identified by the themes in Chapter seven), with democratic reforms remaining elusive. Additionally, persistent factional conflicts within ZANU–PF, reminiscent of the tumultuous dynamics that characterized the Mugabe era, continue to pose a serious challenge. Of particular concern is the pervasive discord within the security sector, compounded by the lingering repercussions of factionalism as highlighted by Raflotopus (2019) following Mugabe's ouster.

It seems evident that Mnangagwa is primarily focused on consolidating his personal power and has thus far refrained from embracing a comprehensive reform agenda, contrary to the pledges made in his first inaugural national address as President. Zimbabwe continues to grapple with remnants of Mugabeism, with Mnangagwa's leadership often likened to a subpar emulation of Mugabe's governance style. By directly involving the military in civilian political structures, Mnangagwa has not only failed to demilitarise the state but has exacerbated militarisation, officially integrating the military into the nation's political fabric. Consequently, the recurrent issues witnessed during the Mugabe era persist under the Mnangagwa regime, indicating a lack of substantial deviation from past governance patterns.

This research would argue that at the time of writing this thesis, the situation in Zimbabwe is best described as from the gutter to the sewer. The Mnangagwa regime has made the situation worse for the citizens of Zimbabwe. Despite the holding of elections in 2018 and 2023, the political landscape in Zimbabwe remains tumultuous, characterised by intricate power struggles and counter-plots within the ruling party, ZANU-PF. The prevailing political culture has evolved into a labyrinthine and violent milieu, surpassing even the tumultuous nature witnessed during Mugabe's tenure. It is evident that the Mnangagwa regime is an outgrowth of Mugabeism, with the so-called Second Republic failing to effectuate a definitive departure from the Mugabe era. Mnangagwa's decision to retain veteran politicians who served as Mugabe's loyalists for over three decades at the ZANU-PF headquarters to oversee party administration and strategise its future political trajectory underscores the absence of genuine democratic reforms within the Mnangagwa regime. Economically, the embracement of a crude neoliberal framework reminiscent of the controversial Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1980s and 1990s signifies a sense of desperation and capitulation to the notion of market forces as the panacea for economic revitalisation and growth. Moreover, the Mnangagwa government's handling of political and social dissent has been largely counterproductive, resulting in self-inflicted setbacks on the political front.

2.8. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter summarised the political and economic transition in Zimbabwe since its independence in 1980. Zimbabwe has undergone remarkable political and economic changes since its liberation from British colonial rule in 1980. The first years after independence were characterised by optimism and progress. However, the nation also faced a plethora of hurdles, including political instability, economic decline and social unrest. Over time, the political environment became increasingly repressive. One cannot help but say that ZANU-PF as a whole has failed to meet the needs of Zimbabwean citizens. Zimbabwe continues to struggle with economic hurdles, political volatility, policy gaps, misgovernance, corruption, soaring inflation, unemployment and the need for sustainable reforms. The transition from colonialism to post-colonialism was characterised by violence and politicised identities, leading to false starts and repetition in the political landscape. Furthermore, the land reform programme in Zimbabwe, commonly known as the Fast Track Land Reform Programme of 2000, was a controversial affair. The political culture in Zimbabwe is murky and complicated and its roots deeply steeped in a combination of anti-colonial and ccolonial politics. Until there is a genuine break from the "Chimurenga (liberation struggle) aristocracy," a real transition to democracy in Zimbabwe will remain elusive. The next chapter presents an overview of the theoretical and empirical literature on political economy and trade.

3. Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1. Introduction

This chapter undertakes a comprehensive examination of the theoretical and empirical literature underpinning the intricate interlink between the political economy and trade. The initial section of this Chapter delves into a meticulous review of the theoretical underpinnings of the political economy. Specifically, it dives into an in-depth exploration of Political Settlement Theory, the New Institutional Economics Framework, and Neopatrimonialism Theory. Providing a nuanced appreciation of the complex dynamics that characterise the political economy. Building upon this premise, the subsequent segment is dedicated to a theoretical analysis of key trade theories. Within this section, a review of mercantilism, traditional trade theories, and new trade theories is advanced, shedding more light on diverse perspectives and frameworks through which trade is understood and analysed. The third section of this chapter details the empirical and extant literature, specifically focusing on the nexus between politics and trade. Through a rigorous analysis of extant literature, this section unpacks the various avenues through which political factors influence trade patterns, economic outcomes, and policy decisions. This comprehensive review aims to provide a complete synthesis of the empirical evidence, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted interlink between politics and trade.

In addition, this chapter concludes with a concise but insightful discussion of the political economy of trade policy. By examining the interplay between political dynamics and the formulation of trade policy, this section sheds light on the complex factors that shape trade policy at both the national and international levels. Synthesising existing research and analysing key theoretical frameworks provides a comprehensive understanding of the political economy of trade policy. Finally, this chapter concludes by identifying the yawning gap in extant literature. Despite the breadth and depth of the existing literature on political economy and trade, there is still a need for further research and analysis.

3.2. Theoretical Literature Review: Political Economy

3.2.1. Political Settlement Theory (PST)

Political settlement analysis surfaced in Mushtaq Khan's work which emerged in the 1990s (Kelsall et al., 2020). Political settlement literature is preoccupied with power and institutions through a range of approaches within the field of the political economy. A growing body of contemporary scholarly discourse emphasizes the pivotal role of political settlements in the developmental trajectory. As articulated by Ingram (2014), the political settlements approach underscores the significance of both formal and informal negotiations, bargains, pacts, and agreements among elite actors as pivotal determinants shaping locally effective institutions and policies, thereby either catalysing or exacerbating the pursuit of sustainable growth, political stability, and socially inclusive development. The framework of political settlements elucidates how clientelism, characterized by the exchange of goods and services for political allegiance, often entailing implicit or explicit quid-pro-quo arrangements closely associated with patronage politics and vote-buying, collaborates with accumulation to engender divergent economic trajectories. Khan & Gray (2006) contend that political settlement analysis necessitates a comprehensive mapping of power wielders in society, encompassing both elite and non-elite factions, underscoring that power distribution cannot be solely discerned through an examination of elite politics. Notably, prior research into political settlements, which predominantly focused on the role of intermediate-class organizations rather than elites as primary political organisers, underscore the palpable class-theoretic foundations underpinning the political settlement framework. Khan's typology of patron-client factions in political settlements, which is frequently cited, stands on four legs of ideal types: competitive clientelism, weak authoritarian coalitions, susceptible authoritarian coalitions and potential development coalitions. Khan postulated the political settlement method to better understand the distribution of power in societies and how this has transitioned over time, bearing in mind that these dual concepts are sometimes at odds with each another.

According to Khan, the starting point for any analysis of political settlements is that capitalism has changed institutions and the distribution of power throughout the world over a long period of time. Even though the political structure of a state differs at different levels, understanding the overall political structure of the state is necessary to understand the importance of particular institutions and power structures at the local level. A political settlement analysis goes further and provides particular insights into issues related to political and economic change. This component of the PSF is intriguing for this research because it allows the researcher to rely on the framework as a foundation for understanding the political regimes and trade flows in Zimbabwe. The researcher is better placed to comprehend the nexus between political order and change by deploying political settlement analysis, where the distribution of power, formal and informal institutions and the accumulation of incentives may all exhibit different effects on economic progress in Zimbabwe.

The political settlement paradigm assumes that it is crucial to understand how organisational power is distributed in order to understand how institutions and policies influence both the economy and politics (Khan, 2018). Furthermore, the political settlement framework outlines that resources are distributed according to institutions and policies, which can have different effects on different types of organisations (Khan, 2018). Political settlement can be characterised as a representation of the power dynamics within institutions that is relevant to the study of a particular institutional or policy issue (Vila & Villanueva, 2022); (Khan, 2018). Many political theorists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as Pareto (1901), Michels (1911), Mosca (1923), and Gramsci (1929–1935), argued that power dynamics within and between rival elites are essential to comprehending the structure and operation of political regimes (Laws, 2012).

Behuria, Lasbuur ,& Gray (2017) are of the opinion that the phrase "political settlement" appears in most scholarly works on African countries today and is often used intuitively to refer to the prevailing political orders or peace agreements. Studies on political settlement typically concentrate on political violence, informal capitalist accumulation processes, the phenomenon of political clientelism, and the use of state resources to establish and maintain state legitimacy.However, the political settlement analysis approach also has a much more precise meaning as a discrete political economics analytical framework that offers a new perspective on the causes and effects of current socio-economic developments (Khan, 2018). PST essentially consists of a set of institutions and powers that can coexist peacefully and sustainably, both in terms of political and economic sustainability.

Zimbabwe experienced diverse power dynamics between 2005 and 2020 and these had an impact on the flow of trade. Political settlement is studied under the presumption that power is rooted in history. To develop and gain an understanding of how power is generated from overlapping and historical sources is crucial for developing a deeper appreciation of political settlements. Power frequently lies outside of government positions. According to Michalopoulos & Papaioannou (2013), formal political institutions are frequently inherited from colonial states in contemporary low-income countries.The existing capitalist economy in most low-income countries produces a relatively low surplus, constrained by the lack of transformation in the productive capacities of the economy, and Zimbabwe is not spared. The political settlement framework asserts that, depending on their goals and capacities, organisations may support, oppose, or distort specific institutions or policies (Khan, 2010). According to Khan (2018), the distribution of organizational power can therefore influence the policies and institutions that have the greatest chance of being developmental as well as long-lasting. This framework is pivotal in this study in the examination of the relationship between politics and trade flows. The Zimbabwean political economy introduced diverse policies that affected trade flow and the political events in Zimbabwe equally affected trade flows.

This research argues that the political settlement paradigm emerged to solve two significant conundrums encountered in institutional analysis. First, institutions and policies appear to poorly perform in certain circumstances, but well in others. Secondly, various institutions and policies appear successful in resolving comparable issues in other situations. Thus, the political settlement framework proffers solutions to these conundrums by articulating what institutions are likely to develop in certain settings and how successful particular institutions will be in accomplishing particular economic and political goals. Khan (2018) advances that the political settlement framework offers a method for assessing the viability of the institutions and policies that the institutions develop, but it is unable to anticipate the particular institutions and policies that do so.

Unlike Khan, Acemoglu and Robinson are of the view that there are two different types of political institutions: "extractive" institutions, where a "small" set of people try their best to utilise the rest of society in the Marxian sense, and "inclusive" institutions, where "many" people are involved in the political process of governing and the exploitation process is either attenuated or absent (Boldrin, Levine, & Modica, 2012). They contend that for any commercial endeavour to succeed, political institutions must be sufficiently centralised to deliver fundamental public services such as law enforcement, contract enforcement, and education (Boldrin et al., 2012). Zimbabwe's political setup has been cantered on the governing party, which has impacted the volume of imports and exports.

Khan suggests three elements of power sharing in political settlement theory, as cited by Behuria, Lasbuur, & Gray (2017). Of particular focus is the manner in which a political settlement is financed, the horizontal distribution, as well as the vertical distribution of power. Khan further points out that it is critical to observe how the relationships between ruling coalitions and various business entities change since they may be indicators that the current balance of power in political settlements is in danger. The "power of excluded factions, compared to the dominant coalition," is referred to as the "horizontal distribution of power." He contends that when excluded coalitions are weak, the ruling coalition is more likely to behave in a way that considers a longer time horizon; however, when excluded coalitions are strong and the ruling coalition may act in a way that ensures its short-term survival or may not survive in the long run.

The vertical distribution of power, which refers to "the relative power of upper compared to lower groups within the ruling coalition," is the second dimension of power in political settlement theory. Khan further argues that a coalition's capacity for implementation and enforcement is inversely correlated with the relative strength of the upper factions over lesser factions. It is critical to discuss legitimacy while examining how the vertical distribution of power has transitioned over time. It is challenging to determine which political systems have been accepted more throughout history. According to Khan, financing political settlements is the third component of power in political settlement theory. It is useful to ascertain the link between the economic actors and the ruling coalitions to examine the financing of the political settlements.

Political settlements typically occur in low-to-middle-income countries, where there is often a lack of transparency regarding participants and the functioning of governmental organisations (Kelsall, 2016). Political settlement is a tacit understanding or agreement reached by influential people from the political, social, or business spheres. It can have a variety of effects on the way state institutions are governed and how they deliver services. This definition implies that political agreements contribute significantly to the shaping of developmental trajectories. Political agreements are the express manifestation of a shared understanding of how power is organised and exercised, and are often created by elites. They consist of formal institutions that regulate political and economic relations, such as elections, peace accords, parliaments, constitutions and market rules. However, they also contain unofficial, sometimes unspoken agreements that support political systems, such as bargains between elite, on the division of spoils.

Understanding the way in which power is constituted in a given context - in this context, Zimbabwe requires Political Settlement Analysis (PSA). While PSA and political economic analysis are closely connected, PSA is primarily focused on analysing the formal and unofficial power ties that exist among and between elites and between elites and the groups that they lead. Ingram (2014) asserts that PSA strategies provide something complementary, but slightly distinct. This thesis examines how Zimbabwe's political environment has affected trade reforms. The deployment of political settlement analysis may aid in elucidating trade flow patterns and uncovering the political motives underlying them. Therefore, rather than being studied in isolation from the political environment, trade flows must be understood in the context of politics.

Within the literature on political settlement analysis (PSA), various typologies of political settlements have been delineated, alongside propositions linking distinct types of political settlements to factors such as political will, state competence, the efficacy or failure of diverse policy endeavors, and ultimately, to development outcomes. Predominantly, most PSA work to date has been manifested in the form of small-scale comparative case study analyses, wherein cases are selected to illustrate different political settlements and contextualise their ramifications within the realm of development. The underlying rationale behind this approach is to allow decision-makers with the capacity to extrapolate insights and draw lessons from successful political settlements in analogous policy contexts. Despite the inherent challenges associated with generalisation and extrapolation owing to the intricate nature of each political agreement, PSA endeavors to offer decision-makers a decent starting point for informed decision-making. Kelsall, Hart, & Laws (2016) advocate for a comprehensive understanding and engagement with political settlements, premised on an analysis of three primary characteristics: the degree of inclusion, the objectives of those in power, and the type of governance.**Degree of inclusion** – This would include whether a small group of elites dominate the trading system or whether there is room for the opinions and involvement of more stakeholders in relation to trade flows. **Aims/motivation of those in power** – This involves the question of whether elites are driven by rewards, a portion of them, or a shared objective.**Type of bureaucracy/governance** – This focuses on the values that those in positions of authority hold, which can include meritocracy and nepotism on the extreme end of the spectrum.

Kelsall & Hau (2020) say that just like other researchers such as Acemoglu and Robinson, they believe that the way institutions (like rules and organisations) and power are connected is important. They think that when there's a risk of things going wrong socially and economically, it can push institutions to change. They think that political and institutional systems can strengthen themselves over time. But unlike other ideas, they explain more clearly how different kinds of power affect whether institutions stay the same or change. They talk about how groups with certain skills can either start or survive violent conflicts, which is the organisational capabilities of groups (Khan,2010). Unlike Acemoglu and Robinson, they don't talk much about "de facto power" (power that's based on what actually happens, not just what's written in rules). This has led some interpreters to the conclusion that getting the right political institutions, we'll automatically get the right economic institutions, which would support good governance policies.

Political settlement analysis, a cornerstone of post-institutionalism, aims to integrate political factors into the study of development. It delves into the relationship between political regimes and the distribution of power within a society. Research such as Acemoglu & Robinson's (2006) studies on the economic origins of democracy lay the groundwork for the idea that democratisation, when other factors remain constant, broadens the societal base of a settlement. One rationale behind this argument is that democratisation, through the provision of formal citizenship rights like voting, transforms the potential disruptive capacity of social groups included in the settlement. Even marginalised groups, previously lacking significant 'disruptive resources' under authoritarian regimes, can become viable electoral challengers in democratic systems.

This section discusses the PSA. After all that has been said about the theory of political settlement, it is important to emphasise that policies and institutions that are most likely to endure, as well as those that are most likely to evolve, are determined by the allocation of organisational power. The political settlement approach begins with an attempt to comprehend the disparities in power distribution among nations. However, it is pertinent to acknowledge that scrutinising political settlements in a developing country such as Zimbabwe often entails macro-level investigation, necessitating an exploration of power distribution. Typically, elites formulate narratives to justify their actions. In many African nations, notably Zimbabwe, the fight against corruption served as a catalyst for transitioning from single-party regimes to military rule in the 1970s, and subsequently from military rule to democratic governance in the 1980s. This thesis leverages insights from existing literature to elucidate how a comprehensive grasp of power dynamics can facilitate a nuanced understanding of political settlements in Zimbabwe and their impact on trade.

3.2.2. Neopatrimonialism

The neopatrimonialism literature traces its origins to the writings of Max Weber dating back to 1968, which were subsequently republished a decade later (Weber, 1978).Neopatrimonialism is a concept often used to analyse state politics, particularly in Africa. Neopatrimonialism is widely acknowledged as a prevalent characteristic of developing countries in Africa and is considered a fundamental aspect of political dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Bonga (2021), neopatrimonialism can be conceptualized as the simultaneous presence of legal-rational domination and patrimonial domination within the state apparatus. Its manifestations vary across different nations, exerting varying degrees of influence over African states and yielding different outcomes. Studies by De Sousa & Cuadrado (2023) indicate that neopatrimonialism has been associated with both beneficial and detrimental effects on development and democracy. De Sousa and Caudrado further argue that regulated neopatrimonialism can promote development, while predatory neopatrimonialism hinders it. It's true to conclude that the influence of neopatrimonialism on democracy is characterized by ambiguity, as it possesses the capacity to both facilitate and impede processes of democratisation.

Neopatrimonialism entails a hierarchical distribution of resources, giving rise to patron-client networks revolving around a dominant individual or party, as outlined by Francisco (2010). These regimes have superseded colonial institutions, serving the interests of a select few individuals. Presently, neopatrimonialism holds significant sway, impacting nearly all sub-Saharan states to varying degrees. Interestingly, it is not perceived as corrupt behaviour by the populace, who often rely on this system for their own sustenance. Of worth is to note that neopatrimonialism significantly influences policy formulation, particularly in development projects, and is associated with the misallocation of aid and state resources, as noted by Harnois & Gagnon (2023). Their findings suggest that neopatrimonialism frequently intertwines with corruption and state capture, especially in nations heavily reliant on international development aid. This aligns with the view advanced by Laws (2012) that mere transfer of technical expertise, funds, and resources by donor organizations to aid-dependent countries is insufficient to drive developmental objectives in the absence of locally contextualised institutional frameworks (Di John & Putzel, 2009). Additionally, Kareli (2023) contends that neopatrimonialism exerts a profound influence on the operations of political parties, often contributing to the dominance of the ruling party.

Weber introduced the concept of patrimonialism to differentiate traditional modes of political authority, domination, and legitimacy from modern forms. Specifically, he distinguished between legal and patrimonial (traditional and charismatic) authority and elucidated the characteristics of the corresponding forms of political administration: bureaucratic (legal-rational) and patrimonial. Weber's work has been instrumental in comprehending the evolution of the modern states and serves as a valuable theoretical framework for understanding contemporary African politics. In the early 2000s, the concept of neopatrimonialism gained widespread currency among social scientists, particularly political scientists, policymakers, and development practitioners, as they sought to gain an understanding of governance, social, economic, and political dynamics in regions beyond the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), as noted by Von Soest (2022).

The concept of neopatrimonialism finds application across various political regimes, including multi-party democracies, single-party systems, personal dictatorships, and military oligarchies. While instances of neopatrimonialism have been observed in regions such as Latin America, the Middle East, and Southern Europe, its prevalence and widespread recognition are particularly pronounced in Africa, as highlighted by Bonga (2021). In Central Asia, mobilisations for democratic transitions have been recorded as weak, leading to the accumulation of power in a few elites and the establishment of neopatrimonial authoritarian regimes (Izquierdo-Brichs, 2021). In Africa, the basis of neopatrimonialism derives from the experience of colonialism combined with the pre-colonial style of administration (Kassaye Nigusie & Ivkina, 2021). The study of Africa has a long philosophical history that includes neopatrimonial ideas. In particular, both theories assert that the poor economic performance in Africa is linked to the prevalence of neopatrimonial politics in Africa. One might ask why neopatrimonialism has become the dominant form of state and governance in Africa. Neopatrimonialism is capable of putting public resources at the service of private interests rather than enlightened interests. Mkandawire (2015) argues that within neopatrimonial systems, the distribution of resources is consistently driven by the patron's imperative to maintain their incumbency.

There exists a substantial consensus within the literature indicating that the emergence of neopatrimonialism was a response to the political and economic challenges posed by modernity to pre-modern societies. According to Chabal(2016), post-colonial African societies grappled with two primary forces: firstly, the imperative to establish a modern nation-state, entailing the creation of centralised power and administrative structures. Secondly, the impacts of capitalism's global dissemination and the infiltration of the market economies. The inherent structural features of post-colonial African societies rendered them inadequately prepared to navigate these dual forces of modernity, as highlighted by Chabal (2016).

One important aspect to note is that scholars have long wondered on the relationship between neopatrimonialism and the classical typology of political regimes. Erdmann & Engel (2006) note a prevailing consensus that neopatrimonial rule is typically associated with authoritarian regimes. Democracy, on the other hand, is intricately intertwined with the rule of law, thereby relying on legal-rational bureaucracy and its accompanying regulations. Legal-rational domination is most logically manifested within a democratic framework. According to Erdmann & Engel (2006) it is crucial to recognise that only the most pristine form of legal-rational bureaucratic domination can seamlessly accommodate democratic governance. For instance, Germany during the second half of the nineteenth century was predominantly operated under a legal-rational bureaucracy and the rule of law, albeit devoid of human rights and democratic principles. Consequently, authoritarian rule may coexist with legal-rational domination and does not inherently equate to neopatrimonialism (Erdmann & Engel,2006).

Extant literature has also revealed that neopatrimonialism is inherently anti-democratic (Erdmann & Engel, 2007, Van de Walle, 2007). This system prioritizes the stability of authoritarian regimes while undermining political participation and competition (Van de Walle, 2007), thus posing a challenge to liberal democracy, which hinges on principles such as pluralism, checks and balances mechanisms, and the rule of law. Bratton & Van de Walle (1997) argue that neopatrimonialism combines clientelism, strong presidential power, and the utilization of state resources for political legitimization, thus further reinforcing its adverse impact on democratic governance. Sigman & Lindberg (2019) employ empirical methods to evaluate the prevalence of neopatrimonialism in African political regimes and its hindrance to democratic progress. Their findings suggest that while sub-Saharan Africa as a whole exhibits a lesser degree of "exceptionally neopatrimonial" characteristics than previously suggested, there are significant variations among countries, with some scoring lower (e.g., Cape Verde, South Africa, Botswana) and others higher (e.g., Chad, Eritrea) on the Neopatrimonialism index. Moreover, clientelistic regimes tend to correlate with higher levels of corruption, although exceptions exist, such as Burkina Faso, Zambia, and Senegal, where moderate levels of political patronage coexist with elevated corruption levels (Sigman & Lindberg, 2019). Von Soest (2022) further contends that neopatrimonialism presents a significant impediment to the realization of democracy, emphasizing its incompatibility with democratic principles.

Another interesting aspect in neopatrimonial regimes is that leaders operate largely outside the bounds of legal accountability and are not subject to the checks and balances that democratic leaders in mature democracies are subjected to (Van de Walle, 2007). In an ideal democratic setting, dissent is permissible without fear of reprisal, and public services are dispensed according to institutionalised regulations. However, certain heads of state may prefer to exert control in accordance with their personal ideologies and allocate state resources at their discretion. Patriarchal discourses are often used to legitimise and justify such actions. Von Soest (2022) has highlighted a growing consensus that neopatrimonialism does not constitute a distinct regime type. Due to the fundamental uncertainty surrounding the behaviour of state officials engendered by patrimonialism, the rule of law is suspended, rendering neopatrimonialism incompatible with the principles of liberal democracy. Therefore, neopatrimonialism predominates in hybrid or autocratic regimes (Erdmann & Engel, 2007), although it should be noted that an autocratic system is not necessarily synonymous with neopatrimonial strategies. Indeed, neopatrimonialism transcends traditional regime typologies and aims to elucidate power dynamics and governance practices in hybrid and autocratic regimes. Several critiques have been levied against the concept, particularly regarding its application as a heuristic, descriptive, or analytical tool for understanding governance, especially in non-OECD states (Mkandawire, 2015).

A fundamental aspect of pure patrimonialism is the absence of differentiation between the private and public spheres (von Soest, 2022). All political interactions are personalized, directly linked to the ruler. In contrast, neopatrimonialism encompasses formal rules, albeit with inconsistent adherence, as "the patrimonial penetrates the legal-rational system and distorts its logic, functions, and effects" (Erdmann & Engel, 2006). Consequently, we observe a dual system wherein modern bureaucratic structures coexist with elements of personalistic rule. As argued by Erdmann & Engel (2007), "Public norms under neopatrimonialism are formal and rational, but their social practice is often personal and informal." Moreover, Erdmann & Engel (2006) posit that the concept of neopatrimonialism proves highly valuable and can be further substantiated for four key reasons. These four key reasons are presented in the next paragraph.

This section has explored the theory of neopatrimonialism and will conclude with a summary. The concept of neopatrimonialism proves highly valuable and can be substantiated for four key reasons which are; firstly, neopatrimonialism is grounded in a universal perspective. Secondly, the concept facilitates comparative analysis by enabling the examination of various forms of power dynamics, transcending conventional regime typologies ranging from democracies to autocracies. Its universal applicability further permits comparative analyses across diverse global regions (von Soest & Stroh, 2018). Thirdly, neopatrimonialism systematically links politics with the exercise of power, a central theme in political science. Fourthly, despite conceptual ambiguities, numerous studies utilizing the concept have yielded far-reaching significant conclusions. However, conversely, the concept and its application exhibit notable analytical and normative deficiencies (Erdmann & Engel, 2007).The researcher concludes this section by emphasising Patrick Chabal's critique of neopatrimonialism, with which this researcher firmly agrees. He argues that the concept lacks substantive analytical content and has no predictive value in terms of economic policy and performance (Kareli, 2021; Mkandawire, 2015). Chabal argues that while neopatrimonialism describes the exercise of authority and socio-cultural practises in African states, it cannot explain the reasons for Africa's comparatively poor performance relative to other developing regions (Bonga, 2021). Chabal also contends that while neopatrimonialism is a convenient and versatile term, it lacks the depth required to provide meaningful insights into African economic development (Mkandawire, 2015). Furthermore, he challenges the assertions made by the neopatrimonialism school regarding the causal links between neopatrimonialism and economic performance, arguing that the concept fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate complexities pertaining to African governance and development. Therefore, Chabal's critique therefore highlights the limitations and inadequacies of neopatrimonialism as a theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of African governance and economic growth. The next section discusses the theoretical literature on trade.

3.3. Theoretical Literature Review: Trade

3.3.1. Mercantilism

Prior to 1500, intergroup trade in both economic and political groups was infrequent and costly, hence it was primarily limited to luxury goods. However, the advent of regular trade patterns within Europe and between European nations and their colonies emerged with the onset of European conquests and colonization pf the rest of the globe around the early 16th century. European governments undertook colonialism engagements to secure access to natural resources and markets worldwide. Mercantilism served as the guiding economic and political doctrine throughout this time of growth. Military power and political governmental wealth were viewed under mercantilism as two sides of the same coin (Viner, 1948).

Chijioke, Aloysius, & Obi (2021) posit that imperial governments created monopolies that regulated trade during the era of mercantilism, which generally extended from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. World history from the 1500s to the late 1800s provides some clues as to why mercantilism was so successful at that time. During the 16th century, new nation-states emerged, characterized by leaders endeavouring to strengthen their countries through the establishment of stronger military forces and political institutions. These rulers pursued strategies aimed at enhancing national wealth and resources, primarily through the expansion of trade and exports. Import restrictions emerged as a tactic employed by several of these nascent nations to boost their export industries. This economic strategy, known as protectionism, remains relevant and utilized in contemporary times.

Looking back at mercantilism's history, one cannot help but note how strongly it is related to trade and other economic activities. The mercantilist doctrine supported government regulation and centralisation of economic activity, especially international trade, and had a strongly nationalistic viewpoint. The mercantilists believed that a country's gold and silver reserves in particular, are a good indicator of its wealth and prosperity. They contended that the government should undertake comprehensive measures to increase exports while decreasing imports. The overarching objective of each nation was to achieve a trade surplus, a scenario where the value of exports exceeds that of imports, while avoiding a trade deficit, where imports surpass exports (Freenstra, 2015). Essentially, mercantilism advocated for countries to strive for net export status. However, given the finite availability of gold and silver at any given time and the impossibility for all nations to concurrently maintain an export surplus, one nation's gain was perceived to come at the expense of other nations, thus according to mercantilists. In essence, mercantilist ideology viewed trade as a zero-sum game, where one party's gain equates to another party's loss.

Thomas 1965 (as cited by Martin, 2015) alludes that most European monarchies instituted laws and policies that warranted their access to their colonies' resources at low prices under mercantilism.Trade between colonies and states other than the colonial power was prohibited. For example, Thomas (1965) estimated that trade restrictions imposed on the thirteen North American colonies resulted in an annual loss of approximately $2,255,000 for the colonists. This was primarily due to the artificially suppressed prices the colonies received for their exports of tobacco and rice to Britain. The next significant era of international trade spanned from 1815, following the end of the Napoleonic wars with the defeat of France by Britain and its allies, until 1914 and the onset of World War I. This period witnessed a surge in economic exchange among European powers, marking the initial phase of what we now identify as globalisation (Todaro & Smith, 2012).

Based on the aforementioned discussion, it can be inferred that mercantilism represents one of the earliest attempts to establish an economic theory, persisting as a relevant concept in contemporary discourse. According to Chacko (2021), presently, countries such as Japan, China, Singapore, Taiwan, and Germany continue to prioritise exports while discouraging imports, employing a form of neo-mercantilism characterised by protectionist measures, trade restrictions, and domestic industry subsidies. Nearly every nation has, at some juncture, implemented protectionist policies to safeguard key sectors of its economy (Krugman, 2018). For instance, proponents of the infant industry argument within classical international trade theory contend that emerging industries require protection from international competitive pressures until they attain maturity and competitiveness. Although export-oriented companies typically endorse protectionist policies favouring their sectors, other businesses and consumers bear the brunt of protectionism. Taxpayers subsidize select exports through elevated taxes, while import restrictions result in higher consumer prices for foreign goods and services. Advocates of free trade underscore its universal benefits for global stakeholders, while mercantilism’s protectionist strategies only benefit select industries, at the expense of both consumers and other companies.

Like any other theory that eventually comes under criticism, the mercantilist ideas were heavily criticised in the 18th century by economists such as David Hume, Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Adam Smith, for example, criticised mercantilists on the grounds that they falsely equated money with wealth (Blanc & Desmedt, 2014).Another limitation of mercantilism lies in its perception of trade as a zero-sum game, as previously discussed above. This perspective was challenged by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, who demonstrated that trade is a positive-sum game wherein all participating nations can derive benefits, even if some nations gain more than others.

This section examined mercantilism and identified three key inquiries within the field of international trade that mercantilists failed to adequately address: **Gains from trade:** The first concern here is the benefits accrued from international trade. Do nations experience advantages through engaging in international trade? Furthermore, where do these gains originate, and how are they distributed among trading nations? **Structure of trade:** The second pertinent issue pertains to the structure, direction, or pattern of international trade. This encompasses inquiries into the types of goods exported and imported by each trading nation. Additionally, what fundamental principles govern the international allocation of resources and the flow of trade? **Terms of trade:** The third significant question relates to the terms of trade, specifically examining the prices at which exported and imported goods are exchanged. In other words, at what prices are exported and imported goods exchanged? Despite the criticisms levelled against mercantilism, it is noteworthy that mercantilist policies hold political appeal for certain businesses and their employees, as they benefit specific members of society. Modern proponents of such policies are often referred to as neo-mercantilists or protectionists, with protectionism being often seen as a key feature of mercantilism (Chen, 2022). The subsequent section will delve into traditional trade models.

3.3.2. TRADITIONAL TRADE THEORIES

According to Grossman (1992), traditional models of international trade delineate comparative advantage within the framework of perfectly competitive markets, presuming the absence of market failures such as externalities, public goods, or information asymmetries. These models identify numerous potential sources of competitive advantage. Irrespective of the origin of comparative advantage, the prevailing welfare proposition posits that free trade confers efficiency upon a country. Relative to autarky (no trade), the gains accruing to winners exceed the losses incurred by losers (Hillman, 2019). This proposition is particularly applicable to "small" countries, defined as those lacking the capacity to influence the terms of trade (Samuelson, 1939).Traditional trade theory incorporates concepts of perfect competition, homogeneous goods, and constant returns to scale in production. This encompasses trade theories formulated by Smith, Ricardo, Heckscher, and Ohlin, along with modifications or extensions of the Heckscher-Ohlin theory, as summarised in the next paragraphs.

Adam Smith's theory of absolute advantage: According to Smith's perspective, trade facilitates a more extensive utilization of the division of labour within the production process, thereby serving as a vital catalyst for economic growth (Krugman, Cooper & Srinivasan, 1995). Consequently, economies of scale in production represent the foremost prerequisite for engaging in trade. The theory of absolute advantage posits that a country specializes in producing goods for which it possesses an absolute advantage and trades these goods for items in which it lacks such an advantage. In an ideal Smithian framework, resources are efficiently allocated under a laissez-faire policy, with production specialized solely in the product where the country holds an absolute advantage (Krugman et al., 1995).

Ricardian model of comparative advantage: In a Ricardian framework, trade dynamics are contingent upon the relative efficiency of production rather than absolute efficiency (Golub & Hsieh,2000). Unlike the theory of absolute advantage, it can be demonstrated that each country has an incentive to engage in trade, as each country identifies a product for which it holds a comparative advantage. Consequently, this would result in a specialization of production, and given that the trading nations encounter identical relative prices, there would be a specialization in distinct goods, facilitating exchange between the two trading entities. A laissez-faire policy would ensure the production of goods for which the country holds a comparative advantage. It is the differences in technology that dictate in which goods a country possesses a comparative advantage.

Heckscher-Ohlin (H-O) model: The presumption of uniform technologies across all nations forms the cornerstone of the Heckscher-Ohlin (H-O) model and serves as a fundamental premise of the Ricardian model. In both the theories of absolute and comparative advantage, one factor of production is implicitly assumed, leaving the question of the impact of trade on a country's factor income distribution unanswered (Jones, 1956). According to the Heckscher-Ohlin model, a country exports goods that heavily utilize its abundant factor and imports goods that predominantly rely on its scarce factor. This outcome is predicated on the notion that factor supply dictates factor prices. However, in the actual world, the relationship between factor supply and price may not be as simple and straightforward.

Traditional trade theories focus on the overall welfare of a country and leave politics out of the equation. A nation's government may seek to enhance national prosperity by implementing tariffs to enhance trading conditions. Similarly, a foreign government may impose tariffs to improve its terms of trade. Consequently, within traditional trade frameworks, a welfare-maximizing government might unilaterally pursue liberalisation to attain overall gains from trade. In a political economy model, policy decisions may lead to unilateral liberalisation. In the context of a small nation (i.e., beyond terms of trade considerations), where individuals have the ability to diversify their income sources to fully align with the shares of income sources in national income, there would be no vested interests advocating for protectionist policies. Consequently, governments would lack political incentives to adopt trade policies other than free trade (Feeney & Hillman, 2004).The terms of trade are determined by the ratio of an index of export prices to an index of import prices. An enhancement in the terms of trade is achieved through an increase in export prices or a decrease in import prices, both of which leads to an increase in a nation's overall welfare.

Income distribution in traditional trade models: Traditional trade models also delineate the manner in which trade and trade policy can impact income distribution. These impacts are depend on whether factors of production are mobile within domestic industries. In the long term, all factors within a country exhibit mobility. Consequently, coalitions seeking to influence trade policy are then categorised as factor-based. Jones & Marjit (1985) elucidated that the long-term perspective within the Heckscher-Ohlin model is encapsulated by the Stolper-Samuelson theorem, which delineates the beneficiaries and losers of trade policy contingent upon whether factors are abundant or scarce within the domestic economy relative to the global factor supply. Protectionist measures favour the relatively scarce factor within a country, whereas free trade policies favours the relatively abundant factor.

Protectionism in traditional trade models: In traditional trade models, protectionist measures can potentially enhance social welfare. The rationale behind protectionism is grounded in the presence of market failures, commonly referred to as "distortions." For instance, in the long-run Heckscher-Ohlin model, the imposition of a minimum wage (considered a distortion) may create the perception that a country is relatively deficient in labour, when in reality, labour is abundant. By restricting international trade, a country can increase its social welfare by avoiding trade arrangements that deviate from its comparative advantage. Moreover, according to traditional trade theories, trade policy may also serve as a response to the failure of foreign governments' policies (Hillman, 2005). For instance, in order to uphold stringent domestic environmental standards, the domestic government may opt to shield its producers from perceived "unfair" competition emanating from foreign sources (Ederington & Minier, 2003).

The terms of trade and tariff revenue in traditional trade models: In traditional trade models, large countries wield influence over their terms of trade. An enhancement in the terms of trade is intrinsically desirable at the national level (whereby imports become more affordable compared to exports). Within these models, a (small) tariff that deviates from free trade consistently proves advantageous for a large country in view of foreign trade policy: the national gain stemming from the enhanced terms of trade surpasses the adverse effects of reduced trade. The beneficiaries accrue more benefits than the losers incur losses. The national welfare gain stems from monopolistic power in global markets (Hillman, 2015).Consider a scenario where a large country imposes a tariff on coffee, resulting in an increase in the domestic price of coffee and a reduction in domestic demand, subsequently leading to diminished global demand and a consequent reduction in the world market price of coffee relative to other commodities. Consequently, coffee becomes more affordable for the country (resulting in improved terms of trade). Conversely, domestic consumers experience higher coffee prices. However, domestic coffee consumers can potentially offset the increased domestic price by receiving customs revenue from the government. In this model, customs revenue plays a pivotal role in the national benefit stemming from the improved terms of trade.

This section delves into the traditional theories of international trade. It is noteworthy that while traditional models elucidate comparative advantage and delineate a country's overall gains from trade and enhancements in terms of trade, they do not delve into the intricacies of the politics surrounding international trade policy. As a result, traditional trade theories have faced criticism. According to these theories, liberalisation (i.e., free trade) fosters an efficient allocation of resources. However, under conditions of imperfect competition, the benefits of liberalisation materialize only if such measures stimulate growth in industries characterized by economies of scale and reduce the profit margins of these industries. Conversely, if liberalisation results in the contraction of industries operating under economies of scale, the economic gains would be diminished. Even in scenarios where liberalisation exerts pressure on imperfect competitive forces within the economy, there exists no guarantee that the economy will experience an improvement. For instance, within the framework of monopolistic competition, the reduction in profit margins (due to liberalisation) could lead to the closure of firms whose production concepts are tailored to cater to a specific segment of the domestic market. The subsequent section delves into the new trade theories.

3.3.3. NEW TRADE THEORIES

The emergence of new theories of international trade during the 1980s marked a pivotal development in economic theory aimed at elucidating patterns of international trade. As elucidated by Krugman (2018), the new trade theory posits that the ability of firms to achieve economies of scale, thereby reducing unit costs associated with large-scale production, can exert significant influences on international trade dynamics. According to these theories, nations stand to reap benefits from trade even in the absence of disparities in resources or technology. A nation may assume dominance in the export of goods solely by virtue of being fortuitous enough to host one or more firms pioneering the production of said goods. In this context, governments are urged to deliberate strategic trade policies designed to foster and safeguard firms and industries wherein first-mover advantages and economies of scale hold substantial importance.

It is essential to acknowledge that the Ricardian theory and the Heckscher-Ohlin (H-O) theory offered good explanations for trade dynamics until the first half of the 20th century. However, numerous scholars have observed that comparative advantage appears to have diminished relevance in the contemporary global landscape. Present-day economists argue that traditional trade theories, namely the Ricardian theory and H-O theory, do not furnish a comprehensive elucidation for the structure of global trade. As highlighted by Engel et al. (2021), contemporary world trade data unveil various empirical regularities or stylized facts that diverge from the predictions of traditional theories. Consequently, the assumptions underpinning traditional theory, such as perfect competition, constant returns to scale, and uniform technology across nations, are no longer tenable in the current milieu of global trade. Consequently, economists have refined the traditional theory by relaxing many of its assumptions and formulating novel or supplementary trade theories. These emerging theories are rooted in considerations of economies of scale, imperfect competition, and disparities in technological capabilities among nations.

The rationales supporting comparative advantage in international trade suggest a significant propensity for trade to occur between nations characterised by substantial disparities in technology or factor endowments. However, empirical evidence indicates that this is not always the case, as trade flows often exhibit prominence between countries possessing similar technological capabilities or factor endowments (Findlay, 1995). The recent literature on international trade, encapsulating concepts commonly known as 'new trade theory,' has been advanced by seminal works including those by Dixit & Norman (1980), Lancaster (1980), Krugman (1980, 1981), Helpman (1981), and Ethier (1982). A primary area of contention between the new trade theories and traditional trade theory pertains to the policy recommendations essential for fostering industrial development. Contrary to the laissez-faire policies and neutral incentives advocated by traditional trade theory, new trade theory contends that such measures are not always conducive to industrial progress. The new trade theories have challenged three pivotal assumptions underpinning traditional trade models. These include: (1) the presumption of perfect competition, replaced by imperfect competition; (2) the notion of constant returns to scale, replaced by increasing returns to scale; and (3) the conceptualization of industries in terms of homogeneous goods, substituted with product differentiation.

Monopolistic competition represents a significant aspect of the New Trade Theory (NTT), highlighting that firms frequently compete based on brand reputation and product quality rather than solely on price. For instance, this explains the phenomenon of countries engaging in both exporting and importing designer clothing. It is also worth to note that, NTT underscores the concept of specialisation driven by increasing returns, situating it within models characterised by imperfect competition rather than the perfect competition framework of traditional trade theory (Harris, 1993). These new trade theories are based on models of monopolistic and oligopolistic competition rather than perfect competition, as seen in traditional trade theory (Peter Neary,2010).

Consequently, industries with the highest profitability are often dominated by capital-intensive nations that were pioneers in their development. Being the first company to reach industrial maturity therefore confers a formidable competitive, even if some scholars consider this an unfair advantage.

Lam (2015) has highlighted the New Trade Theory (NTT) as a pivotal factor explaining the trajectory of globalisation. This framework implies that less affluent, developing economies such as Zimbabwe may encounter challenges in establishing certain industries due to their substantial lag behind the economies of scale enjoyed by developed nations (Lam,2015). This disparity does not come from an inherent comparative advantage but rather from the economies of scale already entrenched within established firms. NTT therefore posits that governments could play a role in promoting new industries and supporting the growth of key industries. For instance, the Japanese automotive industry in the 1950s received significant governmental backing, while other Asian economies also benefited from governmental protection and support (Doner,1991). NTT also contends that developing nations might require tariff protection and domestic subsidies to incentivise the development of capital-intensive industries. With initial support, these industries could harness economies of scale over time and subsequently compete without any government assistance. Worth to note is that the NTT does not primarily advocate for government intervention in industries; rather, it acknowledges that economies of scale play a significant role in shaping trade development.. It also suggests that free trade and *laissez-faire* state intervention are far less desirable for developing countries that cannot compete with established multinationals. There is a tendency for powerful business interests to rely on state support. This state support can eventually promote inefficiency.

The NTT can be broadly classified into three categories: (1) Neo-technological trade theories, (2) Intra-industry trade models, and (3) Strategic trade policy models. Neo-technological trade theories emphasize the significance of technological innovation and the technological gap among firms and countries as major factors driving international trade. Intra-industry trade models, developed post-1970s, account for firm-level internal economies of scale and product differentiation in explaining trade between similar but differentiated products among identical economies. Strategic trade policy models provide theoretical justification for policy interventions such as home market protection and export subsidies aimed at increasing exports and enhancing national welfare.A summary of the NTT, as explained by Krugman & Obstfeld (2000) offers several features that explain the pattern of world trade today are summarised below:

(a) Liberation from perfect competition assumption: Unlike classical and neo-classical trade theories, the new theories operate within an imperfect competitive framework, which allows for a more realistic analysis of trade patterns.

(b) Incorporation of industrial organization theory: These new theories integrate concepts from industrial organization theory into the study of trade. This inclusion recognizes the influence of market structure and firm behaviour on international trade.

(c) Consideration of scale economies and product differentiation: The new theories incorporate the effects of economies of scale and product differentiation within the overarching framework of the Heckscher-Ohlin theory. This recognition acknowledges that factors such as economies of scale and product differentiation play crucial roles in shaping comparative advantage and trade patterns, enriching the traditional trade models with additional insights.

(d) Inclusion of important determinants: The new theories encompass a range of different crucial determinants influencing international trade patterns, encompassing factors such as increasing returns to scale, technological innovation, product differentiation, and the dynamics of international competition among oligopolies. These theories offer a theoretical framework supporting policy interventions, such as import protection or export subsidies, aimed at enhancing a nation's comparative advantage in export markets.

(e) Interaction between inter-industry and intra-industry trade: These theories demonstrate the potential interaction between inter-industry trade, which is based on relative factor endowments, and intra-industry trade, which arises from scale economies and product differentiation.

(f) Explanation of trade patterns in static terms: The new theories are powerful in explaining the patterns of trade between developed countries and between developed and developing countries at any given time. These analyses are underpinned by considerations of factors such as economies of scale, technological advancement, and market dynamics.

(g) Trade between developed and developing countries: According to the new theories, trade between developed and developing countries arises from differences in economies of scale and technological advancement. Developed countries typically have advantages in economies of scale and highly developed technology, while developing countries lag behind in these areas.

Overall, the new trade theories provide a comprehensive framework that incorporates imperfect competition, economies of scale, product differentiation and other determinants of trade patterns. They offer insights into trade relations between industrialised countries and between industrialised and developing countries, taking into account both static and dynamic factors. This section discussed the new trade theory. There are some important insights to note. The new trade theory does not primarily advocate for government intervention in industry but rather acknowledges the significant role of economies of scale in shaping trade dynamics and development. It suggests that for developing countries unable to compete with established multinationals, free trade and minimal government intervention may be less advantageous. However, some scholars critique the notion of government support for new industries as controversial. They argue that it may lead to additional challenges, including the government's lack of sufficient information regarding which industries to support and how to effectively do so. Moreover, such support may create a bias favouring powerful business interests reliant on government support, potentially fostering inefficiency in the long term. The subsequent section delves into the intricate relationship between politics and trade.

3.4. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW: NEXUS BETWEEN POLITICS AND TRADE

Economists wield significant influence over trade policy, advocating strongly for free trade and the elimination of trade barriers. While trade agreements aim to promote trade liberalisation, their specific provisions are heavily influenced by both national and international political contexts (Mattoo, Rocha, & Ruta, 2020). The world has undergone profound changes since David Ricardo introduced the law of comparative advantage. Velasco (2024) alludes that in recent decades, economists have adjusted their theories to accommodate factors such as capital and labour in trade, the rise of supply chains dominating global trade, and the success of countries employing neo-mercantilist strategies to achieve rapid economic growth. Presently, nearly all economists endorse the merits of free trade, a philosophy espoused by international institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). This was also the view after the Second World War, when Western heads of state and government launched the

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1947. Additionally, globalisation has political-economic consequences and the nature of international trade has changed, as Hillman (2008) suggests. Goods and services are now traded that were not previously traded (e.g. radiologists can send reports for patients in other countries). The internet has removed international borders for buying and selling. Globalisation has changed the ‘global' factor endowments relevant to international trade and thus changed the comparative advantages of countries. Trade theory predicts that the returns to factors of production will become more equal as a result of free trade (Ethier, 2005).

Although the desirability of free trade took the world by storm in the 1980s and 1990s. Trade among democratic countries is preferred. Mansfield, Milner & Rosendorff, 2002; Milner & Kubota, 2005; Chen, Pevehouse & Powers, 2023). However, it is complicated to determine which countries fit the democratic criteria since there is no consensus on democracy and trade (China) and the measuring of democracy. There is an ongoing debate on the subject. The fundamental features of democracy include but are not limited to a government based on majority rule, consent of the governed, the existence of free and fair elections, and respect for fundamental human rights and equality before the law (Bassiouni, 1998). Zimbabwe has been under authoritarian rule since its attainment of independence in 1980. This study has outlined in Chapter 2 how the political regime in Zimbabwe has evolved over time. The regime in Zimbabwe is characterised by brutal crackdowns, rigged/flawed elections, land confiscations and widespread human rights violations as you will see in the themes of chapters 5, 6 and 7 below. Based on the above facts, Zimbabwe is far from qualifying as a democratic country. The main research question for this thesis is how the political system has affected trade flows in the pre-GNU, during the GNU and post-GNU periods. Of interest in this study is how trade developed in these three periods, especially given the assumption that a GNU promotes democracy. Did the GNU period in Zimbabwe lead to more democracy and positive outcomes in trade compared to the pre- or post-GNU period. Or was it just a token process?

Makhlouf, Kellard, & Vinogradov (2015) reached the conclusion that in developing autocratic regimes, there exists a favourable impact of openness on specialization. This phenomenon can be elucidated by the ruling elites' pursuit of maximizing gains from international trade, focusing primarily on products yielding the highest returns. In contrast with autocracies, democracies prioritize sustainable growth. However, China's sustained growth over the last four decades, despite being classified as an autocracy with the Communist Party of China wielding authoritative control, challenges this notion. Makhlouf et al., (2015) argue that in developing democracies, openness correlates positively with export sophistication, as these developing democracies diversify their exports from low-productivity primary goods to high-productivity manufacturing and service-oriented goods. Conversely, autocratic regimes often exhibit resistance to modernisation policies like industrialisation. However, China has had excellent modernisation policies that have led to sustainable growth over four decades.

Empirical studies reveal the intricate political-economic dimensions of protectionist policies. Tavares (2006) demonstrates that industry interests, acting as lobbying groups, exerted a more pronounced influence with the establishment of the common European market and trade policy. Moreover, Tavares (2007) found that the size of a country played a significant role in shaping the common European trade policy, with individual countries' political sway approximated by their share of voters within the European Union. In a comprehensive analysis of European trade policy, Francois and Nelson (2014) concluded that political considerations favouring producer interests outweighed social welfare concerns by a factor of two to three. Additionally, they observed that industries deemed crucial to specific member states of the European Union received heightened protection, corroborating Tavares's (2007) earlier findings regarding the influence of individual countries on European trade policy.

One cannot talk about the political economy without specifying regime types. It is always a significant challenge to obtain reliable quantitative measures of regime types. One measure is the dichotomous classification of countries into democracies and autocracies constructed by the political scientist (Przeworski, 2000, 2004, 2007). In several studies that empirically studied the effects of political regimes on trade, it can be concluded to a greater extent that, in contrast to autocracy, democracy significantly increases trade flows (Barugahara,2015; Dai 2002; Mansfield, Milner, & Rosendorff, 2002). However, while these studies observed a positive impact of democracy on trade, other general studies have identified a negative impact. For example, in O'Rourke & Taylor (2006) found evidence for democracy harming trade in developed countries, whereas Duc, Lavallée, & Siroën (2008) observed that democratic countries do not necessarily trade more among themselves.

Gawarkiewicz & Tang (2017) carried out research on political trade, trade, and capital flows in Asia. They show that political unrest only appeared to have an influence on bilateral commerce between nations that are not WTO members (WTO) (Gawarkiewicz & Tang, 2017). In addition, they discovered that a 1% increase in the tension score causes a 0.05% decrease in trade (Gawarkiewicz & Tang, 2017). These research findings imply that political upheaval adversely affects trade flows. Meng (2018) shows the impact of political tensions on trade flows. According to the research, political unrest had a detrimental influence on China's purchases from its nearby trading partners but had no effect on exports (Meng, 2018). Furthermore, it was also discovered that political unrest could influence China's future imports (Meng, 2018). These research findings are at par with the views of (Gawarkiewicz & Tang, 2017). It can therefore be deduced that, if an economy does not solve the political issues it faces, the effects can affect its future trade flows. This implies that there is a strong link between political regimes and trade follows.

Singh (2018) adopted the Median Voter Theorem advances that democratisation affects trade liberalisation. Singh tested a dataset from the Varieties of Democracy project for the period 1974 to 2014 and used country-level panel data regression. The Median Voter Theorem is a model of voter behaviour and candidate choice. According to Jones, Sirianni, & Fu (2022), this theorem suggests that competing candidates in a democracy will move towards the centre of the ideological distribution to maximize vote share, regardless of the underlying distribution of voters' ideologies. This model assumes that voter preferences are "singled-peaked," meaning that they have a clear peak and decline on either side. Preliminary analysis from Singh’s work reveals that electoral democracy matters most for trade liberalisation. Singh went on to a Difference-in-Difference analysis. Difference-in-differences (DID) analysis is a method used to estimate the causal effect of a treatment by comparing outcomes before and after treatment administration (De Chaisemartin, & d'Haultfoeuille, 2024)). DID analysis relies on the assumption that confounding of the treatment effect in the pre-treatment period is equivalent to confounding in the post-treatment period. By comparing the changes in outcomes between the treatment group and a control group, DID analysis can identify the causal effect of the treatment. Singh found that the extension of suffrage lowers tariffs and results in a more open trade policy for developing countries. These findings provide fresh support for the application of the Median Voter Theorem to the link between democratisation and trade liberalisation.

Economists also believe that the relationship between democracy and trade liberalisation can be fully understood through the demand-side and supply-side theories of trade. Demand-side theories assume that trade policy is a function of preferences (through the Heckscher-Ohlin and Stolper-Samuelson models), while supply-side theories look at both the domestic and international institutions that aggregate these preferences (Martin, 2015). Given the relative importance of democracy in influencing national policy decisions, does a particular aspect of democracy play a crucial role in trade liberalisation? Boudreaux (2015) examines the impact of democracy on trade, both in the short and long run. The study found that democracy has a greater impact on trade performance over time, while democracy only affects trade policy in the short run. In another study, Giavazzi & Tabellini (2005) examine the sequence of economic and political reforms to test which countries perform better in terms of governance and the economy. Their results suggest that countries that liberalise their economy before democratisation perform better than countries that go the other way around. In other words, autocratic countries are more likely to be successful in liberalising trade.

Chen & Li (2018) argue that previous studies tend to look at trade policy as a whole and do not break it down further. They argue that democracy has different effects on different measures of trade policy – which they argue is composed of trade barriers, trade facilitation and trade dependence. Democracy lowers trade barriers and increases trade facilitation, but it does not increase trade dependence. Frye & Mansfield (2003) find an interaction between regime type and political fragmentation and conclude that the degree of fragmentation plays a role in trade liberalisation.

Drysadale & Armstrong (2011) also researched the influence of economics and politics on the structure of world trade and investment flows. The study focused on the Asia Pacific region and East Asia. From the research, it was realized that the importance of multilateral institutions is crucial in bridging the political and economic gaps between trading partners (Drysadale & Armstrong, 2011). In addition, the two discovered that political interactions have less of an impact on trading relations. Additionally, foreign investment rather than trade is how political ties have a significant impact on economic relations in the modern world (Drysadale & Armstrong, 2011). These research findings depict that economic factors can override political issues. However, for the Zimbabwean context, this thesis examines the relationship between politics and trade flows.

Another study by Makhlouf et al., (2015) on trade openness and political regime show that while its impact is negligible in developed nations, openness is crucial in shaping export patterns in emerging nations and the latter is a result of affluent countries' lack of medium- and long-term variability in openness and export diversification (Makhlouf et al., 2015). In addition, it was concluded from the study that the type of link between openness and diversification definitely depends on the political system in place (Makhlouf et al., 2015). These research findings depict that political regimes are closely connected to the trade flows and if one of the two is not well implemented, the results can adversely affect the proper functionality of a state. As such, politicians and economists should work collaboratively to ensure that economies do not fail.

Gupta et al., (2019) examined geopolitical risks and trade flows with a specific focus on developed and developing economies. Research findings proved that global trade flows are significantly impacted by geopolitical risks and tensions (Gupta et al., 2019). These findings show that economies globally have the mandate to ensure that there is a balance between the political side and the economic side. This implies that neglecting political tensions will ultimately result in adverse effects on the economic prospects of a nation. The research findings by Gupta and his colleagues (Gupta et al., 2019) are at par with the views of (Makhlouf et al., 2015) who posited that in developing economies the degree of openness to trade which ultimately affects trade flows depends on the political regime in place. This suggests a positive correlation between trade and political regimes.

Barugahara, (2015) researched the impact of political instability on trade agreements in Africa. From the research it was realised that trade flows especially in Nigeria were affected due to the political instability caused by the Boko Haram (Barugahara, 2015). The same also was noted for South Sudan and Burundi which have experienced rising political tension and dwindling trade flows (Barugahara, 2015). These results reveal that international trade and politics are key aspects that determine the growth prospects of an economy. Le Pere (2021) examined US-China geo-economic tensions. From the research, it was realised that a functioning and stable multilateral trading system is necessary for Africa's development and growth, but the liberal international order which is essential for free and fair trade - is being undermined by rising economic nationalism and protectionism (Le Pere, 2021).

A study by Mansfield et al., (2000) indicates that the structure of preferences in countries with similar political regimes is symmetric, meaning that a pair of democracies trades more than a pair of autocracies or that with democracy and autocracy. To distinguish democracies from autocracies, MMR argued that the chief executive in a democracy needs the approval of a legislative majority to enact a trade policy, while an autocrat does not. MMR analysed the TILI (take-it-or-leave-it) bargaining game, which compared the aggregate trade barriers between democratic pairs with those of autocratic pairs or mixed pairs. Under the TILI negotiation model, where there is no trade agreement, each country is free to set its own domestic trade barriers. In an autocracy, the executive sets the level of domestic trade barriers. In a democracy, it is assumed that the legislature has the final say on the level of domestic trade barriers.

Dai (2002) reviewed the MMR-TILI bargaining model, which states that pairs of democracies tend to agree on lower trade barriers than a democracy and an autocracy, regardless of the preferences of the decision-makers. Dai recalculated the aggregate trade barriers within democratic, autocratic and autocratic-democratic pairs and the results differ from what was proposed by MMR. Dai concluded that the trade arrangements between different nations also depend on the preferences of the political leaders of these institutions; thus, the preference of the decision-makers largely determines the trade flow in a particular country. According to Dai, the relationship between political regimes and trade flows can therefore be best predicted by first understanding the preferences of decision-makers.

Milner (1999) argues that some scholars have argued that democratic countries are less likely to adopt protectionist policies. She claims that autocratic countries are more likely to engage in rent-seeking and that protectionism is only one form of rent-seeking. Mansfield et al., (2000) also show that democratic country pairs are more likely to cooperate in reducing trade barriers and sign trade liberalising agreements than autocratic countries. On the other hand, Milner argues that democracies are less likely to engage in free trade due to the political conflict that trade entails and are more likely to take protective measures against each other unless trade within an industry dominates their trade flows.

The structure of government and the nature of the party system were also seen as important institutional factors influencing trade policy. Parties very often hold certain positions on trade policy, and their movement in and out of government can explain changes in trade policy. In countries with highly polarised party systems, where the main parties are separated by major ideological differences, there can be large swings in policy that generally lead to unsustainable trade reforms. On the other hand, countries with a large number of parties may often end up with coalition governments that may not be able to change the status quo. Haggard & Kaufman (2021) believe that countries with fragmented and/or polarised party systems will not be able to initiate, let alone sustain, economic policy reforms, including trade liberalisation. Many of the countries that have opted for trade liberalisation have also democratised. Mexico is a prime example of this. The rise of political competition and the decline of the ruling party's hegemonic position seem to have gone hand in hand with the liberalisation of trade policy since the 1980s. However, trade reforms in many of the least developed countries (LDCs) took place before the transition to democracy and were often more successful when implemented in this way. Chile, Turkey, Taiwan and South Korea began their trade liberalisation before their democratic transition (Rodrik, 2018). Any change of political regime is likely to lead to trade reforms. “Historically, major changes in trade policy have almost always been preceded (or accompanied) by changes in the political regime. Not all political changes lead to trade reforms, but strong changes in trade policy are typically the result of such changes.

Gassebner (2004) investigated whether political regimes influence trade flows and his findings were quite shocking and in contrast to his other studies on the same research question. In this study, he found that autocracies trade significantly less even after controlling for trade restrictions. Moreover, in this study, the researcher used data for individual importing and exporting countries instead of forming a dyad, which is contrary to the existing literature. Martin (2015), in his analysis of the influence of political regimes on trade patterns, has pointed out that ruling governments sometimes intervene and regulate trade networks and ultimately manipulate the terms of trade to empower themselves and their domestic supporters. This assertion is also in line with what Aidt & Gassebner (2008) mentioned. Some non-democratic regimes prefer to remain underdeveloped and trade less in order to gain more rental income for their personal benefit through trade restrictions.

Aidt & Gassebner (2007) analysed the influence of a country’s political regime on its participation in international trade. By estimating the well-known gravity model of trade for a panel of 130 countries over the period 1967-2000, the duo measured trade flows as a given country's real imports from each of its trading partners, rather than the usual average bilateral trade flows. They concluded that autocracies trade less. Suppose all autocracies in the world became democracies. By how much would the world's real imports increase each year since 1967 relative to their actual value? They found that the increase is significant, between 3 and 6%.

In another study, Aidt & Gassebner (2008) analysed whether the political regime has an impact on a country's participation in international trade. The two pointed out that ineffective political regime policies can affect a country's trade integration with the rest of the world. Moreover, the lack of political accountability makes it easy for autocratic leaders to make gains by imposing trade restrictions on international trade. Authoritarian governments are reluctant to dismantle trade-distorting bureaucracy and other related unofficial trade barriers. Meseguer & Escriba-Folch (2011) used data on developing countries from 1970–1999 and applied a rational approach to estimate learning from others and found that democracies are more likely to open up to trade because of learning. Their research also shows that dictatorships are more dogmatic, i.e. they are not receptive to the experience of trade liberalisation of other countries in the same region, even in times of economic hardship.

A study by Yu (2010), using panel data on 157 countries from 1962–1998, confirms that democracy increases trade by about 23%. According to the estimates of Aidt & Gassbner (2010), imports in autocracies are 5.5–22.9% lower and exports 5.5–22.4% lower compared to democracies. This is also consistent with Azu & Muhammed (2020), who also analysed the impact of political regimes on bilateral trade in West Africa using the Freedom House and Polity IV datasets and applied the pseudo-maximum method. The results are consistent with those of most other studies. Thus, the empirical results show that the political regime has a significant influence on trade. A democratic regime has a positive and significant influence on trade and is homogeneous in exports and imports.

Based on the panel data gravity model, Fankem (2018) analysed the impact of the level of democracy in Central African countries on trade. His study adopted democracy as a political regime variable, borrowing from the idea of Brunetti (1997) who distinguished five different political variables, namely democracy, government stability, political violence, political volatility and subjective perception of politics. The main results, obtained using the Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood estimator, show that bilateral trade between Central African countries is a decreasing function of their level of democracy; that is, trade decreases as democracy increases. Controlling the estimates for different democracy indices or institutional quality does not change this conclusion. Franken's study thus confirms that the democratisation process that has started in Central Africa has not been able to fully increase trade between Central African countries.

The literature and the results of the empirical analysis of the impact of political regimes and trade flows indicate that democracy can promote economic liberalisation and globalisation, but that globalisation itself does not promote democracy. Political scientists have demonstrated in extensive empirical tests that democratic transitions (in this case Zimbabwe 2009-2013) and higher levels of democracy positively influence trade openness. However, most scholars find that trade openness has no statistical impact on democracy or democratic transitions (Milner & Murkherjee, 2009). Aidt & Gassebner (2008) studied political regimes and international trade and argued that autocratic political regimes trade less with the rest of the world than democracies. They argued that this could be the reason why many autocracies do not develop economically, although there are exceptions such as China.

Kim, Londregan, & Ratkovic (2019) presents a model of political networks that integrates both the choice of trade partners (the extensive margin) and trade volumes (the intensive margin). This research analyses the impact of political institutions on trade flows. The model predicts that regimes secure in their survival, including democracies as well as some consolidated authoritarian regimes, will trade more on the extensive margin than vulnerable autocracies, which will block trade in products that would expand interpersonal contact among their citizens. The research applies a two-stage Bayesian LASSO estimator to detailed measures of institutional features and highly disaggregated product-level trade data encompassing 131 countries over a half century. This research shows that: **a)** Political institutions matter for the extensive margin of trade but not for the intensive margin. **b)** The effects of political institutions on the extensive margin of trade vary across products, falling most heavily on goods whose marketing involves extensive interpersonal contact. **c)** Regime security plays an important role on the extensive margin. **d)**

Autocracy has a trade-inhibiting effect on the extensive margin. This research made a significant contribution on the impact of political institutions on trade flows. However, it does not consider the impact of trade policies on the extensive and intensive margins of trade. Also, the paper does not analyse the impact of political institutions on the quality of trade and the impact of political institutions on the distributional effects of trade.

Although the primary purpose of any trade policy reform is supposed to result in the betterment of the country and its citizens, Davies (2004) argues that, overall, Zimbabwean's economic reforms since independence in 1980 have been shaped to benefit individual politicians within the ruling party and not necessarily to benefit the economy. It is apparent that opening a country to trade generates economic benefits. However, on the other hand, these pecuniary gains come at a political cost. For instance, trade entails increased cross-border interactions and communication among the citizenry (Chaney, 2014), potentially facilitating rebellion (Erickson,1981; Russett and Oneal, 2000). (Kim et al., 2019) is of the view that once the connections with other nations are made, the dictator seeks to extract the full economic benefit. It is true from the above to say that political economy integrates political and economic factors in the analysis of modern society. In as much as just about everyone would agree that politics and economics are intricately and irretrievably interwoven - politics affects the economy, and the economy affects politics - this approach seems natural. Political factors play a significant role in the process of economic development. The form of government, or regime type, operating in a country can have both positive and negative influences on economic growth and development. Political stability and the presence of effective governance structures are generally associated with positive economic outcomes. Countries with stable political environments and strong institutions tend to attract more investment, both domestic and foreign, which can contribute to economic growth.

Bringing it closer to home, the relationship between political elite influence and trade performance in Zimbabwe and other African countries is well-documented in various sources that explore how political interests can shape economic policies, regulatory frameworks, and trade performance. Sachikonye (1995) offers a foundational overview of how Zimbabwe's political elite influenced trade policies during the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). The work illustrates how the economic decisions of the elite were often aligned with their political interests, which adversely impacted Zimbabwe's trade performance. State capture often leads to a distortion of trade policies in favour of the elite's interests, undermining equitable economic growth. Zimbabwe's experience with structural adjustment shows how elite-driven policies can weaken trade competitiveness and increase dependence on imports. In a study by Raftopoulous and Mlambo (2009), the two conclude that Zimbabwe's political elites have maintained economic power through patronage networks, controlling key trade sectors like agriculture and mining. It also highlights how these networks have led to inefficiencies and contributed to economic stagnation. Also, Political patronage has led to monopolies in sectors critical for trade, creating inefficiencies that reduce international competitiveness. These networks typically exclude potential entrepreneurs and limit the broader economy's ability to engage in competitive trade.

Although not solely focused on Zimbabwe Mkandawire and Soludo (1999) examines the impact of elite-driven economic governance on trade across Sub-Saharan Africa. It suggests that trade policies are often directed by political elites to reinforce their economic power, often at the expense of broad-based economic development. Elite influence in policy decisions can skew trade policies toward short-term gains for the politically connected, leading to protectionist policies that reduce competitiveness. This work highlights that without broader institutional reform, trade policies will continue to serve the elite rather than support sustainable economic growth.Another study by Moyo and Yeros (2007) explored how Zimbabwe's political instability, often fueled by elite agendas, has affected trade. By examining trade disruptions and economic sanctions, their study provides insights and conclude that political corruption can destabilize trade relationships. Corruption among elites leads to the misallocation of resources and loss of investor confidence, both of which are crucial for a thriving trade sector. Zimbabwe's experience here serves as an example of how political instability, spurred by elite interests, can disrupt trade. Bayart (1999) offers a comparative analysis of how African political elites exert control over trade sectors to maintain power. Although it's a general text, it offers valuable insights applicable to Zimbabwe, focusing on how corruption, rent-seeking, and political favouritism shape trade policies across Africa. The political elite often turn the state apparatus into a means of economic control, monopolizing key trade sectors and reducing economic openness. This behaviour can lead to decreased trade performance, as trade policies favouring elite interests typically discourage foreign investment and innovation.

From the stated above, I conclude in this study that stable political systems often provide a favourable environment for the long-term planning and implementation of policies that are crucial for sustainable economic development. On the other hand, political factors can also have a negative impact on economic development. In countries with authoritarian regimes or weak governance, corruption, lack of transparency and political instability can hinder economic progress. These factors create uncertainty, discourage investment and hinder the efficient functioning of markets. The relationship between political and economic affairs is indeed closely intertwined. Political decisions, such as trade agreements, have a direct impact on economic outcomes. Voters and interest groups play an important role in shaping economic policy through their influence on the political process. Political economists analyse how these groups and institutions interact and how their interests affect policy outcomes. Understanding political economy is crucial for policy makers and economists as it helps to recognise the incentives and constraints that influence economic policy decisions. By examining the relationship between political forces and the economy, policymakers can gain insight into the factors that drive or hinder economic development and formulate better policies to promote sustainable growth. This study assesses the state of trade flows in Zimbabwe before the formation of the GNU (pre-GNU), during the GNU and after the GNU (post-GNU).

3.5. The Political Economy of Trade Policy

The critical issue that political scientists raise in relation to political economy and trade is how the political characteristics of democracy affect the choice of trade policy in today's world. Why do countries so often choose protection over liberalisation, even though economists emphasise the benefits of free trade? If free trade is as good as economists say it is, it is puzzling to political scientists why governments/nations want to protect it. According to Martin (2015), the government chooses to provide protection to some sectors of the economy until a point is reached where further protection would reduce overall welfare so much that the government is worse off. Traditional models of international trade do not address the actual implementation of trade policy, which requires a "political economy" perspective. "How do the government's trade policy determinations compare to the outcomes it would experience under conditions of unrestricted trade?"It is true to say that the waves of democratization in literature have gone hand in hand with the liberalisation of trade, even if it is difficult to determine the causal mechanisms of this process. In a more systematic study, Milner & Kubota (2005) concluded that developing countries that are more democratic are also more likely to liberalise trade, which supports the general finding that democratic regimes trade more. Milner and Kubota also concluded that trade flows are a major component of globalisation. Thus, one can conclude with no doubt that the transition to free trade goes hand in hand with a move towards democracy. The democratisation of the political system therefore reduces the ability of governments to use trade barriers as a strategy to gain political support. Also, autocratic governments are reluctant to reduce trade distorting red tapes, since they enjoy extracting rent by imposing trade restrictions (Mansfield et al., 2000). In essence, trade barriers may be lowered as political leaders become more democratic.

There is still debate and complexity surrounding the relationship between free trade, democratisation, and government use of trade barriers, especially for a country like Zimbabwe. While there is some evidence that the move towards free trade may be linked to a move towards democracy as explained in the paragraph above, it is important to note that this relationship is not necessarily causal. Moreover, political leaders' preferences regarding trade barriers may depend on various factors. The promotion of free trade has frequently been cited as a strategy for fostering prosperity and economic growth, which can indirectly contribute to the establishment and consolidation of democratic systems (World Bank, 2022). Free trade and democracy do not necessarily go hand in hand as the relationship between the two is not clear-cut. There are cases where autocratic regimes have used free trade to strengthen their economic power without necessarily promoting democratic reform as noted by (Burnell & Schlumberger,2014). Li (2006) posits that autocracies use economic incentives and rewards as a means to maintain their political power and control. By participating in preferential trade agreements (PTAs), autocratic regimes can benefit from greater economic integration and access to international markets, which can boost their economic growth and strengthen their position on the global stage (Gerschewski et al., 2020). This strategy allows autocratic regimes to maintain their power while reaping the economic benefits of free trade. In addition, autocracies can use trade policy as a tool to manage conflicts between elites and maintain political stability. By redistributing political power within the elite and changing trade policy in response to popular demands, autocratic regimes can appease dissent and maintain control without necessarily transitioning to democracy (Fossatti, 2022).

There are examples of autocratic regimes that are committed to free trade without necessarily promoting democratic reforms.One such example is Myanmar, where the European Union (EU) reinstated the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) following the installation of a "democratic" government in 2011. The reintroduction of the GSP had a significant positive impact on Myanmar's exports, especially in the garment industry (Tuğal, 2023). Another example is China, which has experienced unprecedented globalisation and economic reform since the late 1970s. China, for example, has experienced significant economic growth through its engagement in global trade while maintaining an authoritarian political system. It has successfully reformed its economy through the path of co-optation, but political power remains concentrated with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Neoliberalism, including free trade policies, has had a significant impact on China's political, economic and social landscape. However, China's affirmation of free trade has not led to democratic reforms (Pronin, 2020).

Bringing the above home, Zimbabwe’s political system has been dominated by the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). The party-state system has led to a centralization of power within the executive branch, underpinned by a strong presidency. The political economy of Zimbabwe's trade policy is deeply intertwined with its political structures and historical context. The political landscape significantly influences trade policy formulation and execution. The dominance of the ruling party, ZANU-PF, and its control over state institutions have led to policies that often prioritize political stability over economic efficiency. This centralization of power has resulted in policies that are reactive rather than strategic, affecting investor confidence and economic performance. Bratton and Masunungure (2008) argue that Zimbabwe’s governance is marked by authoritarianism, with limited political pluralism and a shrinking civic space. Although the characterisations vary, there is a fair amount of consensus that Zimbabwe is an authoritarian state, which is a prominent regime type, and is often contrasted in the scholarship to totalitarianism and democracy (Lewanikwa,2019). Schedler (1998) defines authoritarianism as a system of rule in which a leader or a small group of leaders control the state and affords very limited political pluralism. Schedler (1998) places authoritarianism at one end of a continuum with democratic sub-types (electoral,liberal and advanced democracy) anchoring the other end. Three categories of authoritarian regime (or authoritarian variants) that have been used to describe the Zimbabwe government under ZANU-PF(Lewannikwa,2019) are summarized below as follows:

1. Entrenched socio-economic authoritarianism, characterised by extractive,predatory accumulation as part of the power politics of the state.
2. Militarised electoral authoritarianism, informed by legacies of the colonial past, guerrilla struggle for liberation and an easy resort to violence.
3. Authoritarian nationalism, undergirded by anti-imperialism, manipulation of history and binaries between contesting nationalisms along liberal and nationalist lines.

Patron-client relationships are central to the Zimbabwe political system, with trade policies often reflecting the interests of powerful elites rather than national developmental goals (Scoones et al., 2019). Additionally, Zimbabwe’s judiciary, parliament, and other institutions have struggled to maintain independence and effectiveness, often serving as extensions of executive power (Sachikonye, 2011).As already highlighted ,the structure of government and the nature of the party system are also important institutional factors influencing trade policy. Zimbabwe with a polarised party systems, where the main parties are separated by major ideological differences, experienced large swings in policy that generally lead to unsustainable trade reforms over the years under study. Although the primary purpose of any trade policy reform is supposed to result in the betterment of the country and its citizens, Davies (2004) argues that, overall, Zimbabwean’s economic reforms since independence in 1980 have been shaped to benefit individual politicians within the ruling party and not necessarily to benefit the economy. In essence, political stability and the presence of effective governance structures are generally associated with positive economic outcomes. Countries with stable political environments and strong institutions tend to attract more investment, both domestic and foreign, which can contribute to economic growth(Mukoka,2023).

Trade policies in Zimbabwe are often shaped by elite interests, with tariff regimes and export incentives frequently designed to benefit politically connected businesses. This phenomenon is rooted in the country's governance and political dynamics, where policies are crafted by a centralized authority with minimal input from broader stakeholders, leading to a system that favors the elite. Zimbabwe's governance is marked by a top-down approach where policies are crafted unilaterally by the ruling party (ZANU-PF), often excluding ordinary citizens and other stakeholders from the decision-making process (Howes,2023).The political landscape in Zimbabwe is characterized by political entrepreneurship, where political leaders leverage their positions to control economic resources, thereby influencing trade policies to serve their interests.

This has resulted in a trade environment that is not only exclusionary but also regressive. Mukoka (2023) posits that political leaders in Zimbabwe, particularly from the ruling ZANU-PF party, have been known to exploit their positions to gain economic advantages, influencing trade policies to benefit themselves and their allies. Sachikonye (1995) illustrates how the economic decisions of the elite were often aligned with their political interests, which adversely impacted Zimbabwe's trade performance over the years.The political elite often turn the state apparatus into a means of economic control through state capture, monopolizing key trade sectors, distorting policies and reducing economic openness. This behaviour can lead to decreased trade performance or stagnant progress, as trade policies favouring elite interests typically discourage foreign investment and innovation.

I conclude this section by highlighting that stable political systems often provide a favourable environment for the long-term planning and implementation of policies that are crucial for sustainable economic development. Authoritarian regimes or weak governance, corruption, lack of transparency and political instability as is the case of Zimbabwe hinders economic progress. These factors create uncertainty, discourage investment and hinder the efficient functioning of markets. In Zimbabwe,trade policies are frequently influenced by elite interests, with tariff regimes and export incentives often designed to benefit politically connected businesses. This undermines equitable economic growth and stifles competition as noted by (Raftopoulos, 2013). Zimbabwe's trade policy highlights a recurring theme in the literature, the prioritization of political survival over economic rationality. The government's focus on short-term political gains, such as maintaining patronage networks and appeasing influential constituencies, often results in suboptimal trade policy decisions. For instance, the excessive reliance on protectionist measures has limited the competitiveness of local industries in regional and global markets.Moreover, while the "Look East" policy has diversified Zimbabwe's trade relations, it has failed to address structural economic challenges such as low productivity and a lack of industrial diversification. In conclusion, Zimbabwe's political landscape continues to exhibit consistency, with ZANU-PF employing varied strategies to maintain political dominance. This has resulted in weak governance, corruption, a lack of transparency, and political instability. Consequently, I anticipate stagnant trends in trade flows in empirical chapters 5, 6, and 7, as the policies enacted by the regime primarily serve to consolidate its power rather than promote comprehensive economic development.

3.6. LITERATURE GAP

There exists a dearth of studies that simultaneously consider both the extensive margin (the selection of trading partners) and the intensive margin (the volume of trade) when evaluating the influence of political institutions on international trade. The widely used "gravity" model of international trade primarily focuses on bilateral trade volume, i.e., the intensive margin between two nations. Too little and insufficient attention is devoted to exploring the political determinants of international trade across both margins, spanning from traditional to contemporary trade theories. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of empirical analyses within international political economy concerning bilateral trade predominantly examine the institutional effects on trade (e.g., Mansfield et al., 2000).

Wruuck & Wruuck (2015) identify two criticisms directed at studies focusing on democracy as a regime type. Firstly, studies on democracy and trade liberalisation frequently rely on the Polity Index, which dichotomizes countries into autocracies and democracies. A parallel critique can be applied to the utilisation of the Freedom House Index for measuring democracy, which categorises countries as free, partly free, or unfree (Boogards, 2012). This approach fails to furnish a direct measure of democracy but rather assesses the degree of democratic governance within a country. Secondly, despite these indices comprising sub-components, evaluating them in their composite form poses challenges as it remains unclear which specific factors drive trade outcomes. The variations in results discussed in section 3.4 may simply stem from the disparate variables employed to measure democracy or trade.

To depict democracy as a variable in trade analysis, it is imperative to employ more nuanced measures that transcend the conventional variables used so far. Berden, Bergstrand, & van Etten (2014) scrutinize the influence of various governance components, as measured by the World Bank's World Governance Indicators (WGI), on trade levels through the examination of disaggregated measures of democracy. The authors assess the six WGI indicators vis-à-vis bilateral trade. They find that one specific indicator, voice and accountability, is negatively associated with trade volume, likely due to trade losers being more vocal. In another study, Dean (2022) observes that the impact of democratisation on trade liberalisation in developing nations depends on the level of labour rights within a country. Labour rights allow workers to organise collectively to influence the government on trade policy matters. The authors identify a positive interaction between the Polity Index and the level of labour rights, signifying a reinforcing relationship. However, it is crucial to recognise that governance differs from democracy.

Additionally, most studies apply quantitative methods when analysing the relationship between trade and political regimes, as shown in the empirical literature in section 3.4. They do not consider historical analyses, in-depth analyses or analytical narratives. That is, they focus on quantitative methods when exploring the relationship between political regimes and trade and neglect historical analyses and qualitative methods such as analytical narratives. The reliance on quantitative methods in this area of research has its advantages, such as the possibility of extensive data analysis and statistical testing, but it can also lead to oversimplification and the omission of important contextual factors. Analytical narratives offer a valuable approach to understanding complex social phenomena such as the links between political regimes and trade. By combining theoretical predictions with detailed historical descriptions, researchers are able to comprehend more deeply about the underlying mechanisms and causal pathways at play. This method helps to contextualise the relationships and provides a more nuanced perspective on the interaction between political institutions and economic performance. Qualitative methods can provide valuable insights into the historical, cultural and institutional context that influences trade outcomes. In particular, analytical narratives can help researchers construct coherent narratives that provide a compelling explanation of how particular policy regimes influence trade patterns. These narratives can include detailed accounts of historical events, policy choices, and political dynamics that offer a deeper comprehension of the linkages between different levels of institutions and trade outcomes.

In comparison, quantitative methods are essential for statistical evidence and hypothesis testing, but they are not always sufficient to capture the complexity of real-world situations. By incorporating qualitative methods such as analytical narratives, researchers can complement quantitative findings and offer a deeper comprehension of the dynamics between political regimes and trade. To summarise, a mix of qualitative methods and quantitative methods in studying the relationship between political regimes and trade flows can enhance the depth and accuracy of the analysis. Each method brings its own strengths, and together they contribute to a more comprehensive and better understanding of the topic.

3.7. Chapter Summary

The political equalisation approach, as discussed by Behuria et al., (2017), offers a different perspective on clientelism than neopatrimonialism.Let me focus on the specific features of the political settlement approach and how it challenges certain notions of clientelism in the African political economy context.

Causes of clientelism: The neopatrimonial literature often portrays clientelism as a product of cultural or historical factors, such as long-standing traditions of patronage and personalistic rule. In contrast, the political settlement approach seeks to understand clientelism as a result of specific social and political dynamics. It emphasises the distribution of power and resources among different actors and how this shapes the incentives for clientelist practices.

Effects of clientelism: Neopatrimonialism tends to view clientelism as inherently harmful to economic development and to portray it as an obstacle to rational decision-making and efficient resource allocation. While recognising some negative consequences, NIE approaches often focus on how clientelism can serve as a mechanism to overcome transaction costs and coordinate economic activities. However, the political equilibrium approach recognises that the effects of clientelism may vary depending on the specific context. It emphasises the need to analyse the distributional consequences and the ways in which clientelism can either stabilise or disrupt political orders.

The exceptionality of clientelism: Neopatrimonial literature often treats clientelism as an exceptional or deviant phenomenon in African political economy. It tends to view it as a deviation from modern or rational forms of governance. In contrast, the political settlement approach challenges this exceptional view and argues that clientelism is an integral part of many political settlements. It recognises that clientelism can be deeply embedded in social and political structures and therefore cannot be dismissed as an anomaly.

Acemoglu & Robinson (2006) attempted to correct this by focussing on groups with political power and their role in the creation of economic institutions. They conceptualise political power as (a) de facto power, i.e. the ability to engage in strikes, demonstrations and violent conflict, and (b) political institutions, i.e. formal rules of the game. Powerful groups often try to maintain their dominance by preventing the emergence of economic institutions that could potentially strengthen rival groups. The reason for this is that the growth of such institutions could lead to a redistribution of political and economic power, which could undermine the privileges of the dominant group. On the other hand, technological advances or other economic changes can disrupt the existing balance of power and give new economic groups the opportunity to establish themselves. In such situations, there is usually a struggle to create new political and economic institutions that reflect the changing power dynamics. When new economic institutions are created, they can further strengthen the power of the emerging economic groups. These institutions can be designed to benefit these groups and allow them to consolidate and expand their economic power. At the same time, political institutions often play a role in maintaining the existing power structure, ensuring that the dominant groups retain their influence and privileges to a certain extent.

In general, there is an intricate and entwined relationship between political and economic institutions. Changes in one area can significantly impact the other in some way, and the struggle to shape these institutions reflects the ongoing power dynamics within a society. To summarise, the political equilibrium approach offers a unique perspective on clientelism in the African political economy. It emphasises the causes and effects of clientelism, taking into account power dynamics and contextual factors. Furthermore, it questions clientelism as an exceptional phenomenon and recognises its embeddedness in political systems. By understanding these differences, scholars and policy makers can develop a more nuanced understanding of clientelism and its impact on economic change.

With all the research on the subject mentioned in the literature review and the results obtained, Zimbabwe has become an interesting case study as trade patterns have not been consistent over the years. The country has been experiencing BOT deficits for a long time. Meseguer & Esriba-Folch (2010) are of the opinion that dictatorships are more dogmatic - they are impervious to the experiences of trade liberalisation of other countries in the same region even in times of economic difficulties. Zimbabwe has been experiencing political and economic hardships since the late 1990s. The researcher assumes that Zimbabwe as an authoritarian regime did not trade more before the GNU. However, during the GNU period, one would have expected more trade flows as it was a transition period to democracy. The theoretical discussion on globalisation revealed that there are links between democracy and trade, even if the direction of influence is less certain. Formal empirical studies remain scarce and have often focussed on the question of whether democratic regimes influence trade policy, as opposed to the actual relationship between political regimes and trade.

This chapter presented the empirical literature and theoretical literature on political economy and trade in general. The first section focussed on the theoretical review of political economy. In it, we discussed political economy in general in detail by reviewing Political Settlement Theory and Neopatrimonialism. The second section of this chapter provided a theoretical overview of the main trade theories. This was achieved through an exhaustive overview of mercantilism, conventional / traditional trade theories, and subsequently, the emerging new trade theories. Subsequently, the chapter delves into the empirical literature on the nexus between politics and trade, followed by a brief discussion of the political economy of trade policy. The next chapter discusses the methods used to answer the three research questions.

4. CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The study's methodology is presented in this chapter, considering the outlined research objectives. According to Wohlfeld & Runeson (2021) the research methodology refers to the procedures used by researchers to carry out their studies. According to Lee (2022), it demonstrates how researchers formulate their research questions, define their goals, and present the data they have gathered. Research can be conducted using qualitative, quantitative or mixed techniques House (Gueguen et al., 2021). This research is based on mixed research techniques. It deployed both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions. It regards this technique useful for the study because quantitative data allows to present the trade flows more clearly, and qualitatively, the focus on the political economy literature allows one to find answers to the identified research gap (Dupin & Borglin, 2020).

4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the framework or sequence of activities that researchers follow to gather information and answer research questions. This includes decisions about the sources of data, the timing and methods of data collection, and the analysis of the data. Nichols & Edlund (2023) point out that the choice of research design is influenced by factors such as the novelty of the research question, the level of analysis and explanation, the epistemological and ontological assumptions, the characteristics of the data sources, the analysability of the data, the pilot results and practical considerations. In simpler terms, it is a plan for the research that guides the researcher on how to answer the identified research questions in order to achieve the research objectives. It is important to note that a good research design should be able to provide accurate and unbiased findings. It should have characteristics such as neutrality, reliability, validity and generalisability (Miksza et al., 2023). According to Gupta (2023), there are several research designs, such as quasi-experimental, true experimental, and pre-experimental designs. They can also distinguish between explanatory, exploratory and descriptive research. Explanatory research is undertaken with the primary objective of gaining a thorough comprehension of a subject of interest, and it may be conducted using either secondary or primary data sources (Benitez et al., 2020).It is worth noting that research designs can be categorised into quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Each has its own strengths and applications.

This research was conducted using a descriptive research design. This design was chosen because it is more comprehensive than other quantitative methods and gives a broader picture of an event or phenomenon such as political regimes and trade in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, descriptive analysis is a better method of gathering information that describes relationships as natural and shows the world as it exists. For this reason, this analysis is very real as all trends are identified after research on the real behaviour of the data. Due to the availability and nature of the information required for this study, the researcher did not place much importance and attention on data analysis. Rather, the researcher chose to depend to a greater extent on qualitative method which involved collecting and analysing qualitative data. The aim was to gain deeper insights into the political regime and trade in Zimbabwe and to develop new ideas. This method was used to achieve all three objectives.

In addition to the aforementioned methods, the research methodology employed in this study entailed an exhaustive review and analysis of pertinent theoretical and empirical literature concerning various facets related to political regimes and trade. The researcher scrutinized the economic policies implemented by the Zimbabwean government. The policies examined included the Indigenisation and Empowerment Act (2008), the Short Term Economic Recovery Programme (STERP 1&2) (2009-2012), the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) (2013), the "Zimbabwe is open for business" initiative (2017), and the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (2018). The researcher further conducted a comprehensive literature review on the political economy theories underpinning the study. This included a review of political settlement theory and neopatrimonialism. The theoretical literature on trade by Adam Smith, David Ricardo and Heckscher Ohlin was also reviewed.

4.3. RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is a trend or a particular approach or point of view in research (Isidori et al., 2015). It is a framework or blueprint that guides the development of knowledge within a particular discipline. It encompasses the researcher's views on the nature of reality and influences their approach to research. It thus encompasses the choice of ontology, epistemology and methodology, as illustrated in Figure 3 below. Different paradigms may be chosen based on the researcher's understanding of power dynamics, the need for interdisciplinary approaches, or the specific area of study (Jayarusiya, 2023). A research paradigm represents a researcher's perception of the nature of reality and directs their approach to conducting research aimed at extracting knowledge from this reality. It is important to note that in research, paradigms, research design and methodology should be considered together.

Figure 3

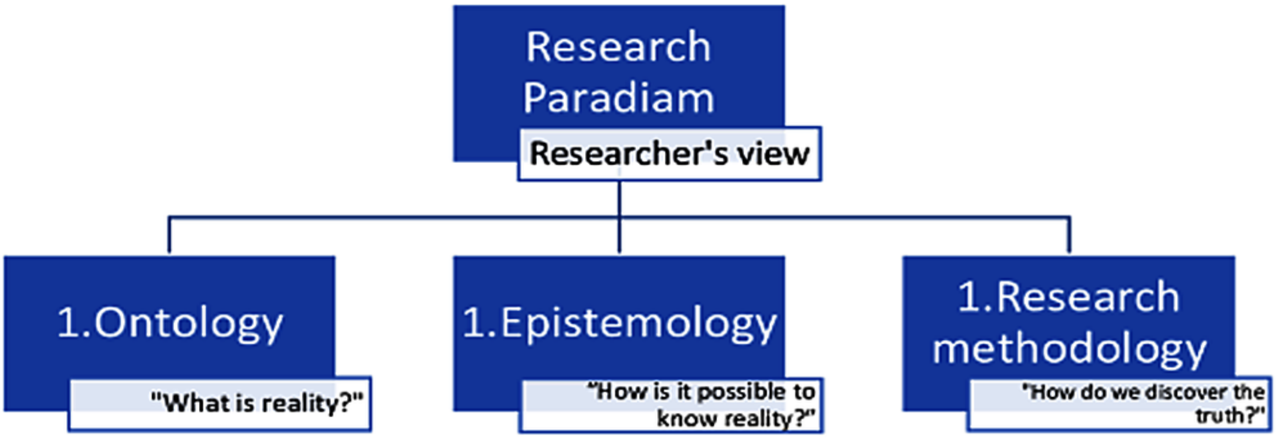


FIGURE 3: RESEARCH PARADIGM
Source: Jayasuriya 2023

There are different types of research paradigms. These include the positivist paradigm, the interpretive paradigm, and the critical paradigm (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Positivist researchers adhere to the notion that there is a single measurable reality that can be comprehended or understood. Consequently, they predominantly employ quantitative methodologies in their research. Positivists typically formulate hypotheses that can be verified or unverified through employing statistical data analysis. This paradigm emphasizes the exploration of relationships between variables rather than delving into the underlying causality.The positivist approach to research is based on the idea that social phenomena should only be studied using scientific methods and analytical formulae. The idea of a positivist research paradigm is to establish a cause-and-effect relationship in a study (Ataro, 2020). However, according to Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004), positivism is a bad option for categorising quantitative researchers because it has long been supplanted by more recent scientific ideologies. A term that better represents the quantitative researchers today is post-positivism (Phillips & Burbules, 2000).

Systematic, inductive and scientific methods of analysis are a form of the constructivist paradigm (Kovacs et al., 2019). On the other hand, constructivists claim that there are various realities rather than a single reality or truth. They assume that people are imaginative and perceive their social environment (Gichuru, 2017). Constructivists are dedicated to comprehending and interpreting the significance attributed to actions. Consequently, they often opt for qualitative research methodologies, such as interviews or case studies, which focus towards conveying diverse perspectives. Constructivism aims to answer the underlying rationale or "why" behind phenomena. Pragmatism, on the other hand, represents a third research paradigm. Pragmatists posit that reality is continually interpreted and renegotiated in response to new and unpredictable circumstances. The pragmatist research paradigm is used for this study because it enables my research by combining positivist and constructivist principles, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the political economy of trade regimes in Zimbabwe. This research is grounded in a qualitative paradigm. It was instigated by the desire to examine the political regime and its impact on trade, particularly during a period when Zimbabweans expressed a strong desire for a resurgence of good governance and democratic principles following years of de facto one-party rule.

4.4. RESEARCH METHODS

Research can be conducted through qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approaches. In quantitative research, phenomena are delineated by gathering numerical data, which are subsequently analysed using mathematical methods, particularly statistics (Muijs, 2011). Thus, quantitative research primarily focuses on gathering and quantifying data to facilitate numerical measurements and draw conclusions (Smith & Hasan, 2020). On the other hand, a qualitative approach focuses on efforts to understand and interpret. This approach is about knowledge in the form of qualitative feedback (Alase, 2017), such as explanations, descriptions and narratives. In essence, qualitative research methodology aim towards observing, evaluating, and seeking to comprehend the underlying significance and motivations behind human behaviour and experiences, encompassing diverse perspectives, attitudes, and emotions. Conversely, mixed methods research employs both numerical and non-numerical data to address specific research questions and attain the objectives of a study (Doyle, Brady & Byrne, 2009).

As evidenced from the literature review in Chapter Three, various methodologies have been employed to analyse the distinct study objectives, all of which ultimately sought to examine the correlation between political regimes and trade patterns. While the majority of these studies predominantly utilised panel data regression techniques, some studies resorted to the Freedom House and Polity IV indices employing the Poisson Pseudo Maximum Likelihood estimator. Other studies used difference-in-differences analysis and the gravity model for panel data. In an effort to be innovative and bring a different perspective to light, the researcher used a mixed research method with a stronger focus on analytical narratives and grounded analyses. This allowed basing the research on literature reviews, analyses of existing studies and academic work on political economy and trade. The researcher further drew on historical and political analyses, document retrieval and content analysis to understand the origins and characteristics of political regimes and trade in the context of Zimbabwe. It also helped to arrive at specific conclusions that helped to illustrate certain arguments. Thus, the data in this study was analysed using thematic analysis and qualitative descriptive and temporal trend analysis. In the next sections, the researcher will discuss the individual objectives and explain the steps taken to achieve each research objective.

4.4.1. OBJECTIVE ONE: TO REVIEW AND DESCRIBE THE STATUS OF POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS IN ZIMBABWE BETWEEN 2005 AND 2020.

To achieve this goal, the study applied thematic analysis (TA). First, a case presentation and a description of the political situation were created, which were used for further analysis. By reading the collected data, mainly from media, newspaper articles and documentaries, different themes were identified. Relevant literature from various journal articles is brought together in the analysis. To achieve this goal, the data was then grouped and presented under each relevant identified theme. Identifying main themes and grouping the data according to these themes facilitated the thematic analysis of the data. The thematic data analysis involved the following steps. Firstly, the search for themes in the literature. Second, a presentation of the identified themes. Thirdly, and this was the final step, an analysis of the information was conducted based on the identified themes. At the time of conducting this research, the political climate in Zimbabwe was not conducive to conducting interviews with ZANU-PF politicians. The researcher therefore opted for secondary data. The study deployed secondary data including newspaper articles, blogs, social media platforms, archives, reports and journal articles to generate the analyses in this research. The grouping/coding of the collected data was solely based on secondary data. The democracy debate in the country is a highly contentious area as the outcome of the 2018 and 2023 presidential elections is endlessly disputed, making any research on the topic of political regime dangerous. However, despite the shortcomings mentioned above, the findings of this study are useful in making an informed assessment of the political regime in Zimbabwe over the years.

Xu & Zammit (2020) define thematic analysis as a qualitative technique that is useful for understanding the data as it allows patterns of meaning (themes) to be identified and analysed. It is a broadly applicable, affordable, and adaptable instrument for exploratory research (Herzog, Handke, & Hitters, 2019).To answer the first research question, the study employed thematic analysis because it organises and categorises data and makes it easier to interpret and draw conclusions about political relations in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2020. Themes were identified and assigned to the data, which was subsequently transcribed to discern key patterns, themes, and meanings. Consequently, recurring themes emerged, which served as the focal points of the research. The researcher then organized the transcribed data under these developed themes to elucidate the status of political relations in Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2020 and address the research questions.In analysing qualitative data, thematic analysis requires a logical organisation of the data, followed by categorisation into meaningful groups, then interpretive enquiry to identify the major themes, patterns and meanings, and finally generalisation. Therefore, the researchers' three-step approach was applied in this study, where the collected data was organised in a meaningful way and then categorised and interpreted so that the results could be easily understood.

TA is one of the most common forms of analysis within qualitative research as it highlights, identifies, analyses and interprets patterns. There are different versions of thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2018). For this aim, the researcher considered reflective thematic analysis to be the most appropriate as it utilises an approach associated with a fully qualitative paradigm. The researcher utilised TA as it involves examining and recording patterns of emergent themes from the data collected, with themes forming categories of analysis. Themes were identified through careful reading and re-reading, grouping data with similar characteristics. The data were then analysed on a case-by-case basis. The main theoretical frameworks and literature related to policy regime change between 2005 and 2020 were analysed. The identified themes were used to analyse how these regimes have led to some changes in Zimbabwe's trade flows. The analysis was linked to the main theories of political economy that underpin the study. The data was presented through analytical summaries that were thematically organised.

4.4.2. OBJECTIVE TWO: TO INVESTIGATE THE STATE OF TRADE FLOW IN ZIMBABWE BETWEEN 2005-2020.

To achieve this goal, the study presents the main values of trade flows for the period in question and analyses how trade flows behaved due to changes in the political regime. To achieve this objective, the researcher analyses the overall trade balance by examining the changes in export and import patterns. The researcher complemented the quantitative analysis with qualitative findings. In my analysis of the state of trade flows, the researcher considered changes in government policies, geopolitical events, and economic conditions that may have affected trade. The themes identified under the first objective are also used to explain and justify the state of trade in Zimbabwe during the study period. Descriptive analysis is a statistical technique used to summarise and examine data. It involves examining the values in a data set, visualising the data through graphs and summarising the data using various statistical measures (Varsha & Karan, 2023). Descriptive statistics are important in research as they provide a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the retail dataset and help in interpreting the results.

It is worth noting that for this objective, the application of descriptive analysis is key to describe the trend of trade flows and provide the possibility of trends considering the underlying theoretical framework of political economy. Descriptive analysis is a phenomenon that identifies patterns in the data and thus simplifies the descriptive analysis of the data. The choice of this method is also due to the fact that descriptive analysis can stand on its own as a research product, such as when it identifies patterns in data that were not previously recognised and explains the conditions and circumstances of causes that point to a casual understanding and the mechanisms behind casual relationships. Although descriptive analysis does not make predictions about the future, it has the power to filter out less meaningful data and focus on the patterns in the data rather than the outliers. For this objective, the focus is on the pattern of trade flows. The trade figures are presented using data visualisations such as graphs, charts and scatter plots.

4.4.3. OBJECTIVE THREE: TO ANALYSE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPORT AND EXPORT CONCENTRATION IN ZIMBABWE BETWEEN 2005-2020.

To analyse the characteristics of import and export concentration in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2020, a comprehensive and systematic research approach is required. A combination of methods were deployed to analyse the characteristics of import and export concentration in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2020. The focus of this objective was to analyse Zimbabwe's export and import market concentration, product concentration and industry concentration. This was an extension of objective two, which only focused on the trend of trade flows. One approach was to use trend analysis and statistical analysis to examine the balance of trade and the relationship between imports and exports over the specified period (Bonga, 2018). In this objective, the researcher focussed on the overall trade patents rather than specific products or industries. Using the trade dataset, the researcher deployed trend analysis to determine the sectors or industries which contribute the most to import and export concentration. To do this, the data was divided into categories such as agricultural products, minerals, industrial products and so on. The researcher also analysed the geographical distribution of trade concentration by identifying Zimbabwe's major trading partners and assessing how concentrated trade is with specific countries or regions. Using time trend analysis, the researcher examined how import and export concentration patterns have changed from 2005 to 2020. This research also identified significant shifts or trends and assessed the reasons behind them. The research examined the impact of government policies, trade agreements and economic factors on import and export concentration. It also assessed how changes in regulations or economic conditions have affected trade patterns. The research findings were presented using diagrams and charts.

4.5. DATA SOURCES

The methodical process of obtaining and evaluating data from many sources in order to generate a comprehensive and precise picture of a subject of interest is known as data collection (Weller & Romney, 1988). The study is based on a qualitative research design and uses secondary data collected for the period 2005-2020. Secondary data is information collected by someone other than the current user. Although secondary data is easier to collect than primary data, its main weakness is that it may not be as reliable. The sources encompass a range of readily available repositories, including compendia, statistical datasets, scholarly journals, newspapers, documentaries, and reports, all of which were crucial sources of data for this study. The secondary data utilised in this research encompass both published and unpublished records. Quantitative data on trade was sourced from the ZimStats website, the World Development Indicators website and the World Integrated Trade Solutions website.

4.6. DATA ANALYSIS

The process of analysing raw data to gain insights and draw conclusions from the information available is called data analysis. It involves steps, patterns, relationships and trends in the data (Yandell, 2017). It is worth noting that the process of analysing data goes through four stages, namely: describing the data, its variance and covariance, interpreting effects and drawing conclusions about the population (Watt & Collins, 2023). Thematic data analysis was deployed for the first objective of this research. Quantitative data was used to answer research objectives two and three above, utilising descriptive analysis and time trend analysis respectively. The results were presented in diagrams, tables and scatter plots.

4.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations in research include questions of morality, the principles of right and wrong behaviour and the protection of people (Ketefian, 2015). These comprise a range of expected norms that need to be followed while engaging with institutions and participants in a study (Glenna et al., 2019).According to Cooper & Schindler (2006), research ethics is the norms and standards of behaviour that guide moral decisions about research conduct. According to Connelly (2014), readers of research reports want to find out if an institutional review board has approved the study or if informed consent has been obtained from participants. This research study went through the University of the Witwatersrand ethics committee at application level. Ethical clearance was granted by the Faculty Ethics Committee. Enfield & Truwit (2008) explain that institutional review boards play a role in protecting human subjects, but are also used by various research organisations to take a second look at proposed research methods to ensure that the researcher is taking a high quality approach. The study was conducted with secondary data in the form of monthly and annual reports using statistical data to test the selected variable and therefore the information used is both legal and factual publicly available documents. My research does not include human or animal participants. The results of this study will be made public.

4.8. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design underlying the study was discussed. This chapter also described the research paradigm and the methods used to conduct the study in order to achieve the research objectives. In order to achieve the research objectives, the study presented the main values of trade flows for the period in question and analysed how trade flows have responded to changes in the policy regime. Both quantitative figures and qualitative information on the political regimes were deployed. The period analysed was divided into three periods. The period 2005-2008 (pre-GNU), 2009-2013 (GNU) and 2014-2020 (post-GNU). A descriptive analysis technique and a time trend analysis were applied to describe the development of trade flows and to identify the possibility of trends, taking into account the underlying theoretical framework of political economy.

5. CHAPTER FIVE: THE PRE-GNU PERIOD: INCREASING POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND CONTRASTING TRADE PATTERNS [2005-2008]

5.1. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

In 1980, Zimbabwe attained independence from British colonial rule, marking the emergence of four prominent political parties in the country: the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) led by Robert Gabriel Mugabe, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) led by Joshua Nyongolo Nkomo, the Rhodesian Front (RF) led by Ian Douglas Smith, and the United African National Council (UANC) led by Abel Muzorewa. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003), a key distinction between the two major parties (ZANU and ZAPU) was their respective support bases, with ZANU primarily backed by the Shona ethnic group and ZAPU by the Ndebele. Following its victory in the 1980 elections, ZANU governed the nation in a dictatorial manner, as asserted by Olaleye (2004). Nonetheless, the newly formed government under Mugabe's leadership in 1980 initiated significant political and economic reforms throughout the 1980s and 1990s to revitalize the economy. These reforms encompassed monetary and fiscal policy measures, alongside trade policies that triggered substantial shifts in trade patterns. In 1987, the two major political parties entered into a unity agreement, leading to the formation of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Fund (ZANU-PF). The 1987 unity agreement has been interpreted by many political scholars as a strategy employed by President Mugabe to consolidate power and establish a one-party state (Olaleye, 2004).Some argue that since gaining independence, Zimbabwe has been under a totalitarian regime in which the government controls all aspects of citizens' lives through political repression, media control and election rigging (Olaleye, 2004). An undemocratic approach. Others believe that although Zimbabwe is not a classic totalitarian state, it has some elements that could be found in such a state. The increasing brutality of political repression and voter suppression has brought the Zimbabwean government into high disrepute domestically, regionally and internationally (Groves, 2009).

On 21 December 1979, an important and historically significant agreement was signed in Lancaster House, the so-called Lancaster House Agreement. This agreement, with its far-reaching implications, can be seen as a decisive political agreement that effectively ended the armed conflict in Zimbabwe. Moreover, it symbolised the end of the unjust and illegal white-dominated regime that had unjustly ruled Rhodesia, which we now know as Zimbabwe, since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965. Before I delve deeper into this topic, I would like to give an overview of the name change from Rhodesia to what we know today as Zimbabwe. It is important to understand how colonialism, independence movements and political machinations played a role in the name change from Southern Rhodesia to Zimbabwe (Chireshe & Dzimbanhete, 2023). Chireshe and Dzimbanhete argue that the name changes had great political and historical significance in addition to geographical identification. Zimbabwe represented historical claims and a future free from colonial influence, while Rhodesia remained a contested name associated with white minority rule.

Southern Rhodesia (1898-1964): First given the name "Zambesia" by the British South Africa Company, it was renamed Southern Rhodesia in 1898 in honour of financier and imperialist Cecil Rhodes, who was instrumental in the Colonisation effort (Houser,1997). Until achieving self-government in 1923, it remained a British colony, although it was still subject to British authority in terms of defense and foreign policy.

Rhodesia (1964-1979): The Southern Rhodesia was reunited with Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) in 1964 when the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was dissolved (Matthews, 1990). By eliminating all mention of the other territories, Southern Rhodesia became just "Rhodesia," causing controversy (Mlambo, 2005). Due to its discriminatory policies and white minority rule, Rhodesia was unable to gain international recognition after declaring its Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, marking its break from Britain (Chireshe & Dzimbanhete, 2023).

Zimbabwe Rhodesia (1979): The Rhodesian government moved to a power-sharing arrangement with moderate Black leaders in an effort to be recognised internationally and placate the Black majority. In 1979, the nation renamed itself "Zimbabwe Rhodesia," although Waddy (2014) claims that this name was still not recognised internationally.

Zimbabwe (1980): Following protracted discussions and warfare, the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 established the path for globally acknowledged independence (Mlambo, 2005). The nation formally adopted the name Republic of Zimbabwe on April 18, 1980, a designation chosen by the populace to honour pre-colonial heritage and usher in a new era.

It was the UDI Agreement that served as the catalyst for the birth of the newly independent and sovereign state of Zimbabwe and marked an extraordinary chapter in the country's history. The Lancaster House Agreement, with its comprehensive provisions and forward-looking approach, not only paved the way for Zimbabwe's independence, but also laid the foundation for the establishment of a multi-party democracy that ensured the protection of the rights of the white minority and addressed the crucial issue of land reform. In other words, Scholars such as Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni argue in his book Do Zimbabweans Exist that the Lancaster House Agreement protected the rights of white minorities and not those of black minorities such as the Ndebeles. Yet despite these noble intentions and aspirations, Zimbabwe's political landscape since its inception as an independent state has been characterised by a complex mix of authoritarian rule, the remaining vestiges of liberation politics, persistent economic hardship and sporadic attempts at political reform. In the 1980s, Zimbabwe began to introduce import substitution industrialisation (ISI), reinforcing the earlier protectionist policies of 1965 that were introduced with the unilateral declaration of independence. According to Masaka (2013), at independence Zimbabwe retained the state interventionist controls inherited from the colonial era. The period from 1980 to 2004 was characterised by various government reform programmes aimed at reviving the economy. Some of the objectives the government sought to achieve were to satisfy the aspirations of the previously marginalised black majority and to democratise the colonial states and their institutions (Masaka, 2013).

This chapter focuses only on the period from 2005 to 2008. It is important to look at the political economy of trade in Zimbabwe as Makochekanwa et al., (2012) argue that the regulation of foreign trade has been a defining feature of the Zimbabwean economy. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Zimbabwean government controlled imports through licences, quotas, extensive bans, high tariffs and various non-tariff barriers. The manufacturing sector was one of the most protected sectors in order to protect the domestic industry and save foreign exchange. The Zimbabwean government endeavoured to promote domestic production and reduce dependence on imports, especially for goods that were considered non-essential or that could be produced domestically. The various government policies introduced in the 1990s are described in chapter two of this study. However, the policies proved not to be worthwhile in the early 1990s when the country began to experience economic difficulties (Makochekanwa et al., 2012). For example, imports totalled US$2.35 billion in 1991, rose to US$2.5 billion in 1994 and stood at US$3.81 billion in 1997. Imports were on the rise and there was an urgent need to move from protectionist policies to liberalisation. As shown in Table 1, the period 1985-1990 was characterised by positive trade balances, although the government pursued policies that did not favour trade liberalisation.

TABLE 1: ZIMBABWE TRADE BALANCE - HISTORICAL DATA

Date	Balance- Billions of US $	% of GDP
1980/12/31	-0.21	-3.16
1981/12/31	-0.52	-6.48
1982/12/31	-0.45	-5.29
1983/12/31	-0.24	-3.03
1984/12/31	-0.02	-0.24
1985/12/31	0.01	0.20
1986/12/31	0.16	2.53
1987/12/31	0.18	2.74
1988/12/31	0.26	3.38
1989/12/31	0.13	1.62
1990/12/31	0.01	0.07

Source: World Bank (2022)

Madimu (2020) posits that during the period from 2000 to 2008, the governing regime, ZANU-PF prioritised the accumulation and retention of power over addressing the severe economic and political crises confronting the nation. The policies enacted during this timeframe severely undermined the country's capacity to produce and manufacture food, consequently compelling citizens to heavily rely on food imports, mainly sourced from South Africa. Prior to land reform in 2000, Zimbabwe's economy was largely characterised by export-oriented large-scale tobacco and maize from white-owned farms. ZANU-PF hastily orchestrated a land reform programme and worsened Zimbabwe's economy in the pre-GNU era. The effects of the rushed land reform programme of 2000 were already evident in 2000 in the form of production declines and food shortages that continued throughout the decade.

Raftouplos & Phimister (2004) argue that '[t]his elite(ZANU PF) has expanded on the back of the current state offensive, not only through the restructuring of ownership on the land but on assault on ownership structures throughout the economy'.A good example of the accumulation tendencies within the ZANU-PF regime, particularly escalating in the post-2000 Zimbabwean context, is evident in the acquisition of Foyle Farm in Mazoe by the president's wife, Grace Mugabe, from its white owners during the zenith of the 2000 land reform (Madimu, 2020). Subsequently, this acquisition led to her establishment as arguably the largest dairy farmer in the country (Hove, 2015). Such actions contributed to portraying Zimbabwe as an unfavourable investment destination to the international community and underscored the relentless desire for accumulation by President Mugabe , his family , and many ZANU-PF elites and their business partners to acquire wealth for personal gain(accumulation tendencies) (Madimu, 2020). It became so apparent that those who had very strong connections to the ruling regime would gain.

According to Masaka (2013), Zimbabwe experienced its first hyperinflation between 2005 and 2008, in parallel with the "politics of violence" pursued by ZANU-PF. In an economic climate characterised by significant depreciation of the official currency, the Zimbabwe dollar, coupled with hyperinflation, businesses encountered formidable challenges in maintaining viability, while ordinary citizens faced considerable difficulties in meeting basic needs (Masaka,2013).One of the main causes of hyperinflation during this period was the Zimbabwean government's practise of printing excessive amounts of money to finance its budget deficits (fiscal mismanagement) (Makombe, Kufakurinani, & Chimhete, 2023). This expansion of the money supply without a corresponding increase in goods and services has fueled hyperinflation. Another factor worth mentioning is land reform and the decline of agriculture. The confiscation of commercial farms from white farmers and their redistribution to black Zimbabweans led to a disruption in agricultural production as many of the new landowners lacked the skills and resources to engage in productive farming. Due to the country's economic difficulties, it was unable to fully repay its foreign debts and generate enough for domestic and export needs. Corruption, profiteering, black market trade and constant price increases for essential goods increased. During the period spanning from 2005 to 2008, Zimbabweans witnessed a significant upheaval characterized by escalating commodity prices and a precipitous decline in the value of the national currency as mentioned above. This period was marked by a profound transformation in the socio-economic landscape, as the populace grappled with the ramifications of economic collapse and political unrest within the framework of market reforms (Gono, 2008).

It is noteworthy that the onset of the crisis in Zimbabwe can be traced back to 1997. During this period, the government abandoned the medium-term planning and implemented reactive measures characterized by price controls, policy inconsistencies, reversals, and even contradictions (Kanyenze & Tyson, 2017). The crisis period (1997-2008) is a typical example of the above-mentioned reactive measures that characterise ZANU-PF's actions to this day. Between 2005 and 2008, the Zimbabwean government implemented economic plans. Worth mentioning are the Macroeconomic Policy Framework (2005-2006), the National Economic Development Priority Programme NEDPP (2006-2008) and the Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy (ZEDS) (2007-2011), although the ZEDS was abandoned at its conception. The Zimbabwean government planned for a long time and implemented little. The programmes were changed regularly, the policies were incoherent and contradictory and were even reversed, so that little progress was made in these areas.

The Ministry of Trade in Zimbabwe is responsible for overseeing the nation's trade policy. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Zimbabwe, commonly referred to as the Ministry of Trade, is tasked with the promotion of trade, industry, and economic growth. The primary roles encompass the development of policies to enhance trade, regulation of industrial standards, and negotiation of trade agreements (Newfarmer & Pierola, 2015). The ministry is integral to Zimbabwe's economic strategy, emphasizing export growth, local industry support, and the balancing of trade relations with both regional and international partners. Between 2005 and 2020, multiple ministers were responsible for overseeing trade and commerce in Zimbabwe, although the title and organizational structure of the ministry evolved during this period.Obert Mpofu held the position of Minister of Industry and International Trade from 2004 to 2009.Welshman Ncube served as Minister of Industry and Commerce from 2009 to 2013 within the Government of National Unity.Mike Bimha served as the Minister of Industry and Commerce from 2013 to 2018.Mangaliso Ndlovu served as the Minister of Industry and Commerce from 2018 to 2020. These ministers were responsible for various aspects of trade, industry, and commerce, though the focus and specific roles evolved during this period.

The Ministry formulates trade policies designed to foster a conducive environment for private investment and trade, focusing on aspects such as macroeconomic predictability and tariff structures that influence export profitability (Newfarmer & Pierola, 2015).The implementation of industrial policies, such as the indigenization policy, aims to empower local businesses while maintaining a balance with foreign investment interests (Newfarmer & Castro, 2015).The Ministry enhances trade by upgrading infrastructure and services, especially in rural regions, to improve market access for local producers (Pedersen, 2019).It endorses initiatives that facilitate the distribution of essential goods, including fertilizers and agricultural products, which are crucial for rural development (Pedersen, 2019).The Ministry also aims to diversify Zimbabwe's export basket by promoting the development of various sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing (Newfarmer & Castro, 2015).

From 2005 to 2020, the Ministry implemented multiple policies designed to revitalize the economy and enhance local production.The Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Policy (2007-2018) significantly influenced trade dynamics. The Indigenisation and Empowerment Act of 2008 mandated that foreign-owned enterprises must allocate 51% of their shares to indigenous Zimbabweans. This policy sought to empower local citizens and improve their engagement in the economy, especially via SMEs (Maunganidze, 2013).The indigenization policy, although aimed at empowerment, has been criticized for diminishing investor confidence and restricting private investment (Newfarmer & Pierola, 2015).The other policy is the National Trade Policy (2012-2016).Trade liberalization policies were enacted to eliminate import and foreign exchange controls, with the objective of enhancing household income and promoting economic growth. These policies exhibited varied equity impacts, favoring certain sectors over others (Makamache and Chikwature, 2020). The policy sought to enhance exports, with a specific focus on non-traditional sectors such as services and processed goods. The initiative aimed to enhance Zimbabwe's trade balance through regional integration, decreased reliance on imports, and increased industrial productivity.

The Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET, 2013-2018) was a policy aimed at promoting economic growth through the utilization of local resources. ZIMASSET specifically targeted food security, social services, infrastructure development, and value addition in the mining and agriculture sectors. Challenges, including inadequate policy communication and implementation, constrained the effectiveness of these initiatives

(Musabayana, Mutambara, & Ngwenya, 2022).Statutory Instrument 64 of 2016 was implemented to safeguard local industries through import restrictions; however, it elicited varied responses, with certain SMEs perceiving it as an obstacle to their operations (Musabayana, Mutambara, & Ngwenya, 2022).Despite these efforts, the Ministry of Trade encountered substantial challenges, such as policy predictability and governance issues, which resulted in an unfavorable environment for investment and trade (Newfarmer & Pierola, 2015).The Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP, 2018-2020) was an economic reform initiative designed to stabilize the economy via fiscal consolidation and to mitigate inflation. The measures encompassed support for industrial growth, management of the trade deficit, and attraction of foreign investment.The policies were components of the government's comprehensive strategy to tackle economic challenges, yielding mixed results; while some stimulated local industry, they also contributed to inflation and trade deficits.

As Sachikonye (2002) observed, the trajectory of the Zimbabwean economy has oscillated over time between state-dominated and market-oriented development strategies. However, both approaches have encountered difficulties in rejuvenating the economy from its near-dead state of stagnation. The Zimbabwean government has overlooked the interconnectedness of policies with regional and global dynamics. The government has failed to recognise that policies are influenced by regional and global factors and cannot be implemented in isolation (Masaka, 2013). External factors have significantly influenced the economic situation in Zimbabwe. However, unwise domestic policy decisions by the ZANU-PF regime have also played their part in worsening the situation. The counterproductive political and economic decisions of the ruling regime have led to serious economic problems. In looking at the political economy of trade, this study is more interested in the interaction between political and economic factors that have shaped international trade policy and practise in Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2020. The political economy in a particular historical period and a particular country (in this case Zimbabwe) determines the benefits of a particular development strategy. This study is about how the policy decisions of ZANU -PF or political institutions have influenced trade flows in Zimbabwe. Some of the key aspects analysed in this study in the context of the political economy of trade in Zimbabwe are trade policy and trade agreements.

Trade Policies: On this aspect, this study analyses how governments formulate and implement trade policies. Considering domestic political pressures, interest groups, and public opinion and this can have an effect on decisions on tariffs, quotas, subsidies, and other trade barriers. The balance of power within a country's political system and the interplay between different stakeholders can also shape trade policy outcomes (Milson,2021).

Trade Agreements: The process of negotiating and creating trade agreements is a multifaceted one that involves intricate interactions amongst a variety of different nations (Sandrey,2013). Scholars often explore the field of political economy analysis to gain an understanding of how governments pursue their objectives and navigate their respective domestic political arenas while engaging in international trade negotiations. This area of study enables us to investigate how trade agreements impact different sectors, industries, and societal groups by changing the way trade is conducted. Understanding political economy analysis is essential for comprehending the complex dynamics involved in international trade. Moreover, this research allows us to acquire an understanding of how power structures and interests influence the bargaining process and ultimately the outcome of trade.

Furthermore, political economy analysis can help to understand the complex dynamics of international trade. The political economy of trade offers valuable perspectives on the intricate interplay of politics and economics in shaping trade policies, agreements and outcomes. Hoekman & Kostecki (2009) recognise that trade decisions are not only motivated by economic factors, but are also influenced by political processes, interests and power dynamics at different levels, ranging from the national to the global level. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the political economy of trade is crucial to understand trade-related outcomes and to develop effective trade policies that cater to the diverse and changing interests of different actors. While the primary objective of trade policy reform is outwardly the enhancement of the nation and its populace, Davies (2004) contends that, in general, economic reforms in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980 have been crafted to favour individual politicians within the ruling party rather than serving the broader economic interests of the country.

The farm invasions in 2000 was yet another blunder by the ZANU-PF which exacerbated diplomatic tensions between the Zimbabwean government, the United States, and the European

Union, culminating in the imposition of a sequence of targeted sanctions against numerous regime members and affiliated entities.These sanctions restricted trade and financial interactions and further isolated the Zimbabwean economy. This was compounded by escalating violence, intimidation of political opponents and harassment of the independent press. As a result, Zimbabwe's economy continued to deteriorate, with severe foreign currency shortages, a wave of deindustrialisation, hyperinflation and severe shortages of food and other essentials (Madimu, 2020). The ruling regime (ZANU-PF) placed more emphasis on maintaining power and using the state as a tool to accumulate wealth than on developing long-term responses to the challenges of the economy and importing sufficient food resources. As Serrat (2017) proposes, political economy integrates political and economic factors to analyse modern society. It is true to then say that that the success or failure of an economic system is not solely attributable to its inherent qualities, but is instead influenced by different multitude of variables (Faundez, 2016). Specifically, the political economy of a country at a given time significantly influences the formulation of trade policy (Hoekman & Kostecki, 2009). While it is widely acknowledged that politics and economics are intricately interconnected — with politics shaping economics and vice versa — this approach is considered inherent, logical, and natural.

The economic decline of 2000-2008 described above, which includes a combination of land confiscations, hyperinflation, displacement of people and international sanctions, contributed to a severe economic decline in Zimbabwe during the period under review. Trade was a driver of economic growth in many countries. In Zimbabwe, however, there have been several political problems that have hampered trade flows over the last two decades. Some of the notable problems are the poor predictability of macroeconomic policies and economic management as well as industrial policies that undermine investor confidence. The lack of foreign investment, reduced export capacity and increasing trade barriers have affected the country's ability to participate in international trade (World Bank, 2015). The 2008 global financial crisis also further exacerbated Zimbabwe's economic challenges by reducing demand for its exports and exacerbating the existing economic crisis in the country. These political events had a significant negative impact on Zimbabwe's trade and economy as a whole between 2005 and 2008.

5.2. *Results, Interpretations, and Analysis*

All three research questions are answered in this section. The focus is on the period from 2005 to 2008, i.e. the time before the GNU was founded. The first part provides an overview and description of the state of the political landscape in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2008. The second part analyses the state of trade flows in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2008. The third part analyses the characteristics of import and export concentrations in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2008.

5.2.1. *Objective 1: To review and describe the status of political relationships in Zimbabwe between 2005-2008*

The four years from 2005 to 2008 were characterised by considerable political tensions, economic challenges and power struggles. During these four years, Zimbabwe faced significant challenges and the political landscape remained volatile and characterised by tensions. These political tensions intensified in 2000 shortly after the formation of the main opposition party, the MDC. Political tensions also intensified in the wake of land reform and parliamentary elections. This led to a deterioration in relations between the various political actors in Zimbabwe. Especially between the two main political parties at the time, the ZANU-PF under the leadership of Mugabe and the MDC under the leadership of Tsvangirai. Using a thematic analysis, this study has identified some of the key issues that emerged between 2005 and 2008 (see below).

Theme 1: International Isolation and Sanctions

The country's isolation from the international community went hand in hand with the sanctions imposed by Western countries. Zimbabwe's international isolation began in the early 2000s after the country embarked on its controversial land reform programme in 2000. Land was taken away from white farmers without compensation. This was condemned internationally, especially by Western countries. The land reform programme in Zimbabwe led to restrictions on donations and foreign aid from the World Bank and IMF (Mkodzongi, 2022). As Rusenga & Ncube (2021) noted, white farmers were portrayed as victims in international media coverage of the land reforms, which led to reprisals from the international community and reinterpreted the debate as a human rights issue. These human rights narratives shaped the land discourse and led to sanctions that further exacerbated the socio-economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe (Chipenda, 2021). In 2001, the then Finance Minister Simba Makoni acknowledged an economic crisis. He also pointed out that the World Bank and IMF had begun to restrict donations and foreign aid to Zimbabwe due to the land reform programme. This led to a shortage of the country's foreign currency reserves (BBC News, 2022). These sanctions and international isolation continued to affect the country between 2005 and 2008. This contributed to the country's political and economic crisis.

The United States of America (USA) Congress imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe in 2001 under the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) because the USA government believed that the country was being mismanaged by the Zimbabwean government (Majome, 2021). The European Union (EU) imposed its first sanctions on Zimbabwe the following year, 2002, under which the EU imposed arms embargoes, asset freezes and travel bans on organisations and individuals believed to be contributing to the deterioration of the democratic space in the country. In addition, the Commonwealth suspended Zimbabwe's membership in 2002 due to the disputed presidential elections that left former President Robert Mugabe in power (The Guardian, 2002). It was ZANU PF's actions to suppress the opposition MDC and the resulting human rights abuses that drew international criticism and sanctions against Zimbabwe. The then Australian Prime Minister John Howard issued a press statement in the UK in 2002 in which he pointed out that the suspension would only apply for one year and would then be reviewed

> Speaking in London, Mr Howard announced: "The committee has decided to suspend Zimbabwe from the councils of the Commonwealth for a period of one year with immediate effect. This issue will be revisited in 12 months' time, having regard to progress in Zimbabwe based on the Commonwealth Harare principles and reports from the Commonwealth secretary general. (The Guardian, 2002).

The sanctions that were in place from 2005 to 2008 came into force in the early 2000s. In addition, between 2005 and 2008, the EU mostly made amendments to these laws and introduced additional provisions as it saw fit. ZIDERA was extended by the United States to include the freezing and blocking of the property of additional individuals believed to be contributing to the undermining of democratic space and practises in Zimbabwe. In addition, the ZIDERA amendments were amended in 2008 to ban the sale of arms and military equipment to the country.

The ruling ZANU-PF party continued to condemn the sanctions, emphasising that they were illegally imposed on the country and had a negative impact on the country's economy (Kanyongo, 2016). The argument for lifting the sanctions was supported by some countries such as South Africa, China and Russia, which legitimised ZANU-PF’s argument that the sanctions were illegal. The support against the sanctions in the period 2005 to 2008 was demonstrated at a UN Security Council meeting in July 2008 when South Africa, China and Russia refused to vote with other countries in favour of imposing additional sanctions on Zimbabwe (United Nations, 2008).

Zimbabwe's ruling party ZANU-PF war veterans march past the US Embassy holding placards condemning sanctions against their government in Harare, Zimbabwe, Apr 23, 2010 (file photo) by Peta Thornycroft, Voice of America, February 15, 2011.

Theme 2: Human Rights Abuse

The Zimbabwean government was responsible for human rights violations against women, civil society groups and opposition party members and leaders between 2005 and 2008. ZANU PF’s actions were seen as attempts to fight any opposition and maintain its power. Most of the human rights violations that took place were in the political arena. Attacks and violence were mainly perpetrated against individuals and civil society groups who held different views from the ruling party, or against those who participated in demonstrations that did not take place (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2005).

The Zimbabwean government launched Operation Restore Order (Operation Murambatsvina) in 2005 to remove illegal settlements in urban areas. This operation was condemned by the international community as a violation of human rights, as many people were displaced and left homeless (Dzimiri & Runhare, 2012). Approximately 570,000 people were displaced by the operation and over 700,000 people were directly affected by its impact. (The report of the UN Human Rights Council, 2005). In addition, the human rights report emphasised the following:

> The United Nations Special Envoy, Anna Tibaijuka, deployed to Zimbabwe by the U.N. Secretary-General in June 2005, to access the scope and impact of Operation Murambatsvina, reported that the operation was carried out in "an indiscriminate and unjustified manner, with indifference to human suffering and, in repeated cases, with disregard to several provisions of national and international legal frameworks.

Satellite imagines of 2002 and 2006 of Porta farm before and after Operation Murambatsvina: Photo taken from Smith (2006): The Guardian, May 31, 2006.

Zimbabweans also experienced violence after the elections of 29 March 2008, especially in rural areas. The main opposition party, the MDC, had won the majority of seats in parliament at the time, including seats in rural areas where ZANU-PF was traditionally a stronghold. This exposed some rural areas to ZANU-PF violence and denied people access to medical care in the event of injury (Human Rights Watch, 2008). The 2008 Human Rights Watch report emphasises the following:

> ZANU-PF officials and "war veterans" are beating, torturing and mutilating suspected MDC activists and supporters in hundreds of base camps, many of them army bases, established across the provinces as local operations centers. Abusive "re-education" meetings are being held to compel MDC supporters into voting for Mugabe. In one of these meetings, on May 5 in Chiweshe, ZANU-PF officials and "war veterans" beat six men to death and tortured another 70 men and women, including a 76-year-old woman publicly thrashed in front of assembled villagers.

In addition, a run-off election was held in June 2008 after the presidential elections in March 2008 failed to produce a majority between former MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai and former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. In the run-up to the run-off elections, there were a number of political attacks and human rights violations, particularly against members and supporters of the opposition, human rights activists and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (Human Rights Watch report, 2011). The following excerpt shows some of the activities of law enforcement agencies such as the police even after the June 2008 elections:

> The police have also routinely arrested human rights activists and journalists and subjected them to torture, cruel, degrading and inhumane treatment. The torture and ill-treatment inflicted has included severe beatings on the back, buttocks and soles of the feet with blunt objects, forcing victims to seat or stand in uncomfortable positions for hours on end, as well as false executions and threats of death. The government has repeatedly refused to investigate allegations of torture by police and other state agents, despite court orders.

Theme 3: Political Contestation between Zanu-PF and MDC

Between 2005 and 2008, there was a series of political disputes between the ruling Zanu-PF party and the main opposition MDC party. The ZANU-PF government committed a number of acts of political violence against opposition supporters. With the country facing a humanitarian and economic crisis at the time, the MDC staged several demonstrations against the government, popularly known as “stay-aways”, to try and address poverty and other economic problems in the country. The then president of the MDC, Morgan Tsvangirai, was once injured by the police and some of his opposition activists were killed during a “Save Zimbabwe" prayer meeting held in the Highfields community in Harare in 2007 (Phimister & Raftopoulos, 2007). Around the same time, Aljazeera, the only international media agency in the country, reported that the MDC and other rights groups were detained and tortured for three days in prison after attempting to attend a banned rally.

One more thing: In 2005, the MDC split into two parties, the MDC-T, which was now led by Morgan Tsvangirai, and the MDC-A, which was not led by Professor Arthur Mutambara. The split was due to disagreements over the party's strategy and leadership. The MDC split due to disagreements between the party leadership over participation in the 2005 general elections (yes, actually it was senatorial elections) amidst the violence that prevailed in the country (Ploch, 2011). The split weakened the MDC and made it difficult to challenge ZANU-PF in elections and to organise more effective demonstrations and protests.

The situation in Zimbabwe changed when a political and economic crisis erupted in 2008 as a result of the violence instigated against the opposition. This occurred against the backdrop of ZANU-PF losing its majority in parliament to the opposition MDC. In the first round of the presidential elections in March, Robert Mugabe received 43.2 percent of the vote, while Morgan Tsvangirai received 47.9 per cent. This made Mugabe the winner, but not to the extent that a run-off election could be avoided – this took place on 27 June 2008 (Smith-Hoehn 2009). What followed was a staged operation to hold on to power. Intimidation and violence were used against the opposition, and it is alleged that the violence was carried out by soldiers, police and intelligence agents.

Theme 4: Crisis of legitimacy

Between 2005 and 2008, the country experienced electoral irregularities and controversial elections that called the country's legitimacy into question in the eyes of the international community. The former director of the National Democratic Institute for South and East Africa, Shari K Bryan, said the following on 21 April 2005 before the House International Relations Committee Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations:

> The March 2005 elections were yet another in a series of fatally flawed elections in Zimbabwe, and must be viewed in the context of three important issues: 1) the illegitimate parliamentary elections in 2000 and presidential election in 2002 – both of which were fraught with violence and intimidation; 2) an economic and social crisis

> that is raging throughout the country; and 3) the weak regional response to the crisis and the impact it is having on democratic leaders and activists throughout southern Africa.
>
> For the past five years, Zimbabwe has held three consecutive elections that have shared common themes: state-sponsored violence and intimidation directed toward opposition leaders and their followers; an unfair electoral framework and corrupt election administration; a biased judiciary that has failed to adhere to the rule of law; limitations on freedom of speech, assembly and the independent press; and severe restrictions on civic groups engaged in voter and civic education.

All elections between 2005 and 2008, i.e. the parliamentary elections in 2005, the parliamentary elections in March 2008 and the run-off elections in June 2008, were characterised by violence, a politically polarised environment and restricted freedom of expression, so that the elections were considered illegitimate. Mugabe's re-election as president in the June run-off was considered illegitimate by the United States and the United Nations Secretary-General, among others (Ploch, 2011). This did not help the country as it was in an economic crisis and relied on aid from the international community to recover. In February 2009, the United States Department of State issued a statement saying:

> Zimbabwe, with a population of approximately nine million, is constitutionally a republic, but the government, dominated by President Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) since independence, was not freely elected and was authoritarian. The last four national elections--the presidential election in 2002, the parliamentary elections in March 2005, the harmonized presidential and parliamentary elections in March 2008, and the presidential run-off in June--were not free and fair.

To summarise, the political situation in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2008 was characterised by political repression, disputed elections, economic hardship and attempts at power-sharing. The measures taken by the ZANU-PF government to suppress the opposition and the resulting human rights violations led to international criticism and sanctions. The sanctions isolated Zimbabwe and strained the country's relations with other nations.

5.2.2. Objective 2: To investigate the state of trade flow in Zimbabwe between 2005-2008.

This section investigates the state of trade flow in Zimbabwe from the period 2005 to 2008. The section displays the trends of trade and discusses the possible political developments that lead to such trends.

Figure 4

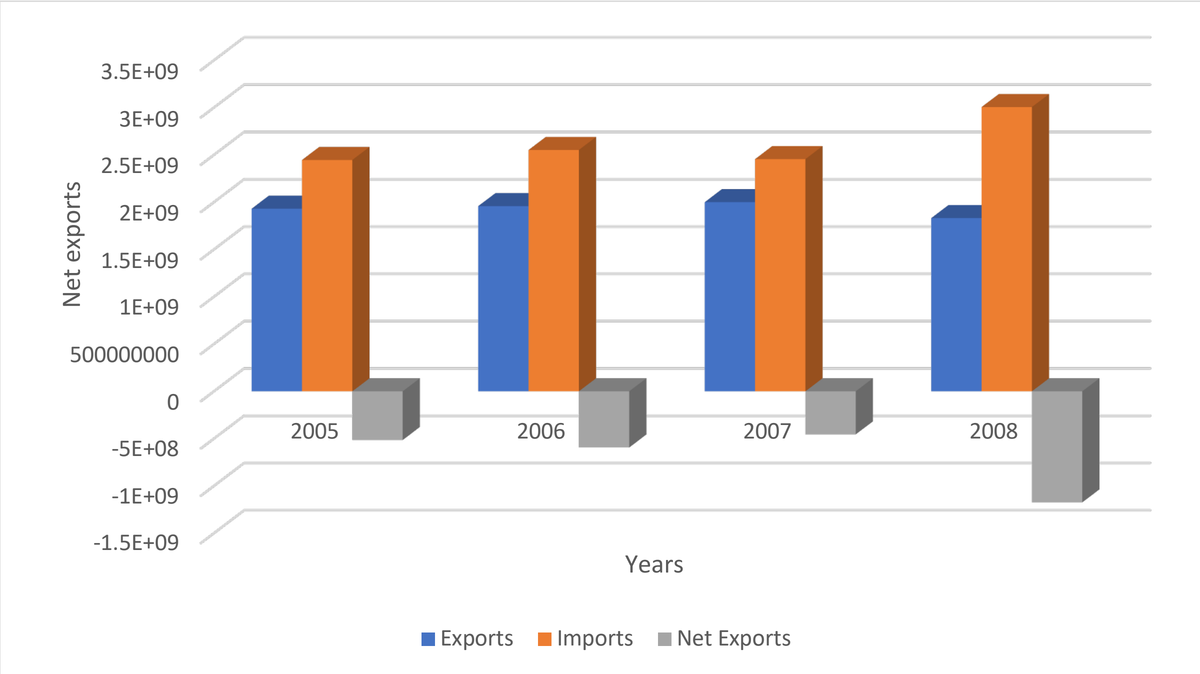


FIGURE 4: ZIMBABWE'S IMPORT AND EXPORT VALUES 2005 TO 2008
Source: Author's Computation

Figure 4 above displays Zimbabwe's import and export values in the period 2005 to 2008. The figure shows negative net export values, which means that the country imported more products than it exported in the period 2005 to 2008. During this period, the Zimbabwean economy was in decline, with production falling as a result of the land reform implemented by ZANU-PF in 2000. The hyperinflation that prevailed during this period made the few products that were produced in Zimbabwe extremely expensive. This prompted people to buy basic goods from other countries, especially South Africa, which led to an influx of imports into the country. Net exports fell from -US$514 885 200 in 2005 to -US$593 837 200 in 2006, representing a 15% decline in net exports. However, the decline in net exports decreased by 23% in 2007, reaching a net export value of -US$455 221 900. However, at the height of hyperinflation in Zimbabwe, when inflation reached

231 billion per cent, net exports fell to -US$1 174 044 400 in 2008, representing a 158% decline in net exports.

Figure 5

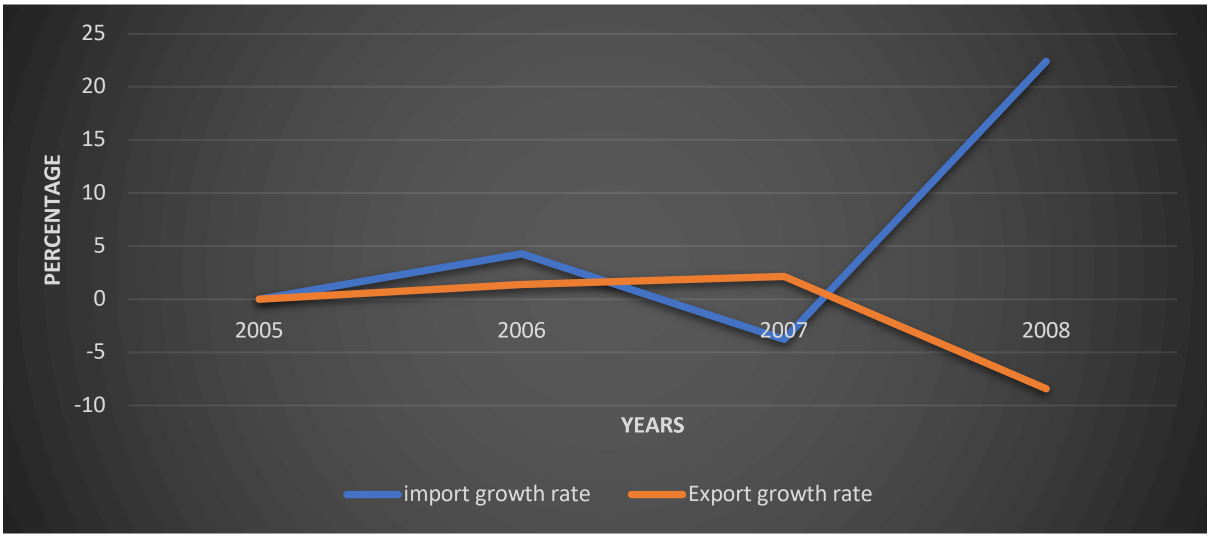


FIGURE 5: ZIMBABWE'S IMPORT AND EXPORT GROWTH RATES 2005 TO 2008
Source: Author's Computation

Figure 5 above shows Zimbabwe's import and export growth rates during the periods 2005 to 2008. The import and export growth rates can be used to track changes in the level of imports and exports respectively in a country overtime. Since this section is starting its analysis from 2005, the growth rates of both imports and exports are starting at zero. The import growth rate for the country stood at 4% in 2006 and export growth rate at 1% during the same period. This shows that the country was a net importer of goods and services.

The growth rate of imports fell dramatically in 2007, reaching -4%, while the growth rate of exports was 2% in the same period. As the economy was in a hyperinflationary environment, consumers lost their purchasing power and this led to a decline in goods and services imported by consumers. Due to the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by Western countries, the decline in agricultural production which led to a decline in foreign exchange earnings and the hyperinflationary environment, the government was limited in its ability to import the goods and services needed in the economy. However, the growth rate of the country's imports surged in 2008, reaching around 22% compared to the growth rate of exports, which reached around -8% in the same period. The jump in the import growth rate meant an 18% increase in the country's import growth rate. In the period 2007 to 2008, inflation rose from 66212.30% in 2007 to 231,150,888.87% in 2008. The hyperinflation in 2008 was so strong that it led to a sharp decline in the national currency. As a result, imported goods became more affordable compared to domestically produced goods, leading to increased demand for imports.

Figure 6

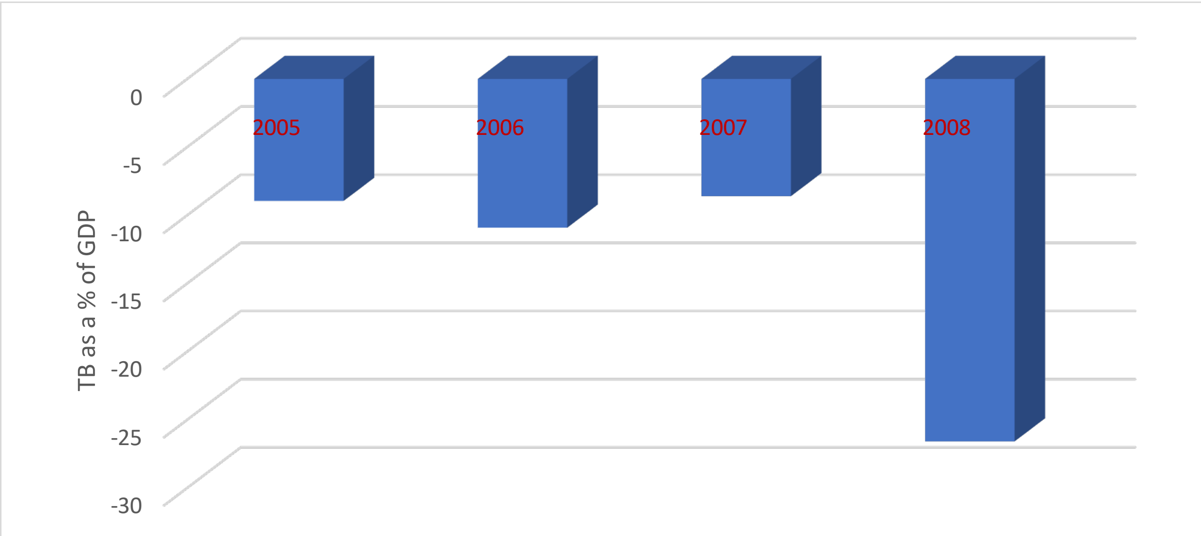


FIGURE 6: ZIMBABWE'S TRADE BALANCE AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP 2005-2008
Source: Author's Computation

Figure 6 above shows the country's trade balance as a percentage of gross domestic product in the period from 2005 to 2008. This indicator shows how important trade is for a country. As can be seen from the figure, Zimbabwe had a negative trade balance as a percentage of GDP from 2005 to 2008. This means that the country was a net importer of goods and services. In 2005, the country's trade balance as a percentage of GDP was -9%. The percentage fell to -11% in 2006. Although the percentage rose again to -9% in 2007, it further declined to -26% in 2008, confirming the negative impact of the hyperinflation the country was facing, as shown in Figure 6 above. The impact of the land reform programme, sanctions, corruption and fiscal indiscipline are some of the political and economic factors that led to the country being in an economic crisis between 2005 and 2008.

Figure 7

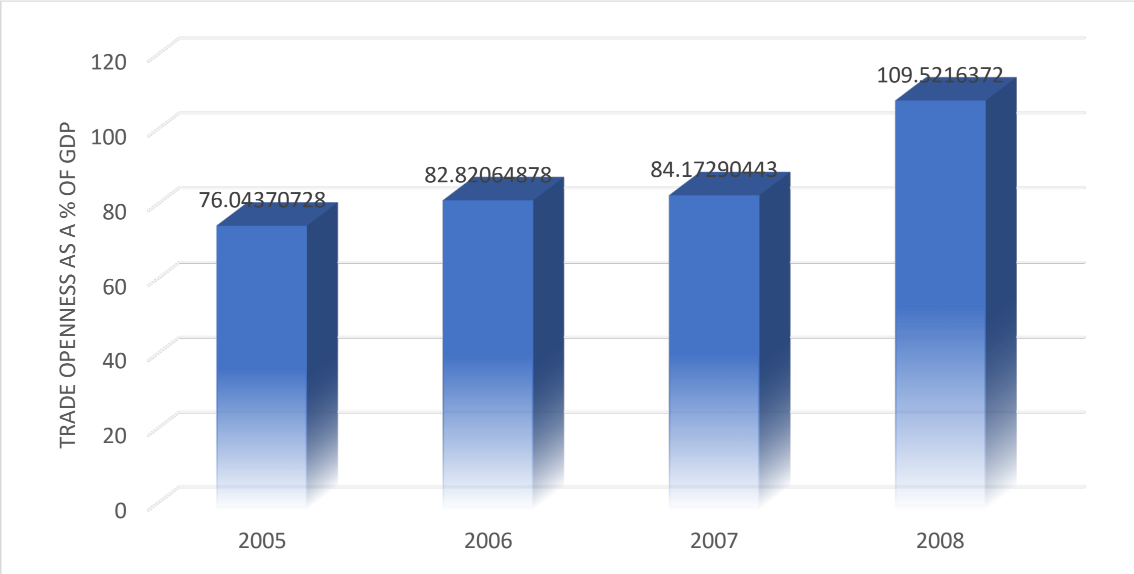


FIGURE 7: ZIMBABWE'S TRADE OPENNESS 2005 TO 2008
Source: Author's Computation

Figure 7 above shows Zimbabwe's trade openness from 2005 to 2008. According to Eleje, Eze & Agabi (2020), trade openness refers to the degree to which a country participates in international trade and allows the flow of goods and services across its borders. It is often measured as the ratio of total trade (exports plus imports) to gross domestic product (GDP). One should also bear in mind that the impact of trade openness on economic growth can vary from country to country, with some regions having greater advantages than others, as noted by (Abd Karim, 2005). However, it cannot be denied that trade openness is an important factor in a country's economic performance and environmental sustainability. As can be seen in the figure above, the country's trade openness has increased over the years from 2005 to 2008. In 2005, trade openness as a percentage of GDP was around 76%. In 2006, the percentage reached about 83%, an increase in trade openness of 7 percentage points. In 2007, the percentage increased and reached around 84%. In 2008, trade openness reached around 110%. This represents a 26 percentage points increase in the country's trade openness compared to 2007.

Trade openness in Zimbabwe increased between 2005 and 2008 as imports of goods and services increased. The country had a weak currency compared to other countries, which made imports much cheaper than using local products. At the same time, there was immense deindustrialisation of the country during this period as local industries could not operate in a hyperinflationary environment. This left consumers with no choice but to import goods and services from other countries as local industries collapsed.

5.2.3. *Objective 3: To analyse the characteristics of import and export concentration in Zimbabwe between 2005 to 2008*

This section analyses the characteristics of import and export concentration in Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2008. This objective focuses on identifying product, industry and market concentration. The focus of this objective is to analyse export and import market concentration, product concentration and industry concentration in Zimbabwe. The first part of the study deals with import and export market concentration, while the second part of the study focuses on the development of trade flows. The second part focuses on product concentration. The third part deals with industry concentration.

Market Concentration: Exports

Figure 8

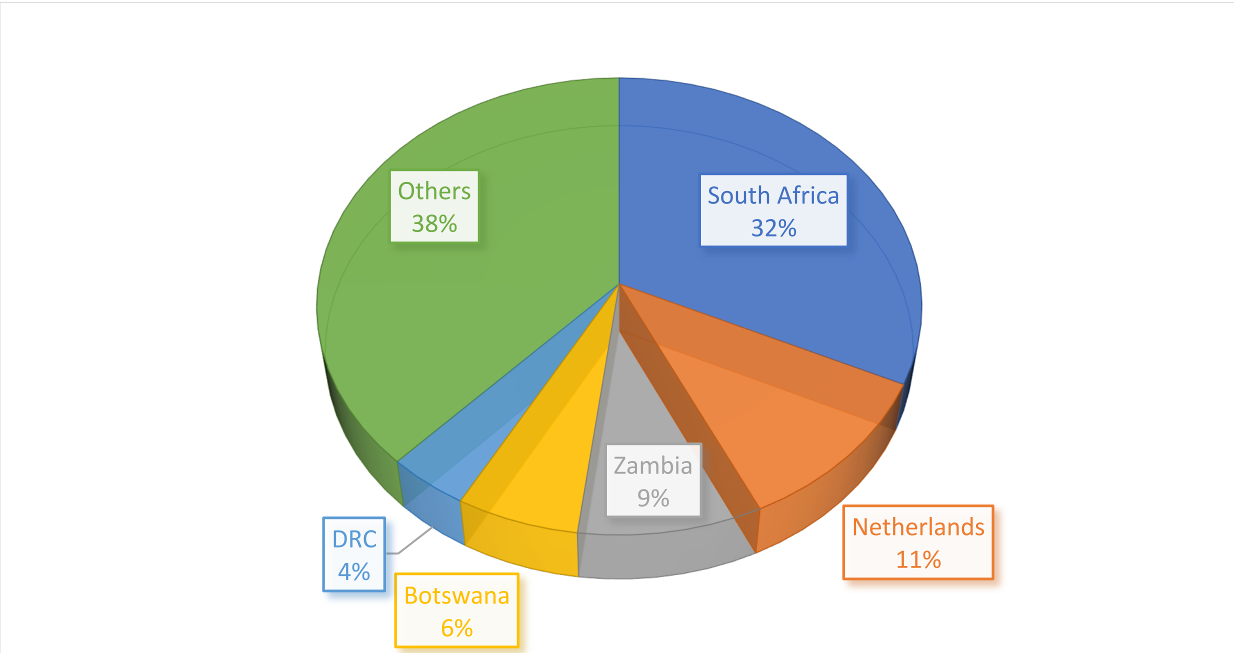


FIGURE 8: ZIMBABWE'S MAJOR 5 EXPORT DESTINATIONS 2005 TO 2008
Source: Author's Computation

Figure 8 above shows the market concentration of Zimbabwe's exports to other countries between 2005 and 2008. The figure shows that Zimbabwe exported most of its products to South Africa

(32%), followed by the Netherlands (11%), Zambia (9%), Botswana (6%) and the DRC (4%). The share of others (38%) represents other countries that received exports from Zimbabwe in the period 2005 to 2008. The bilateral trade agreement between Zimbabwe and South Africa in 1964 gave the two countries preferential access to various products such as agricultural produce, manufactured goods, textiles and clothing. As a result, Zimbabwe was able to export more products to South Africa than other countries during this period.

Market Concentration : Imports

Figure 9

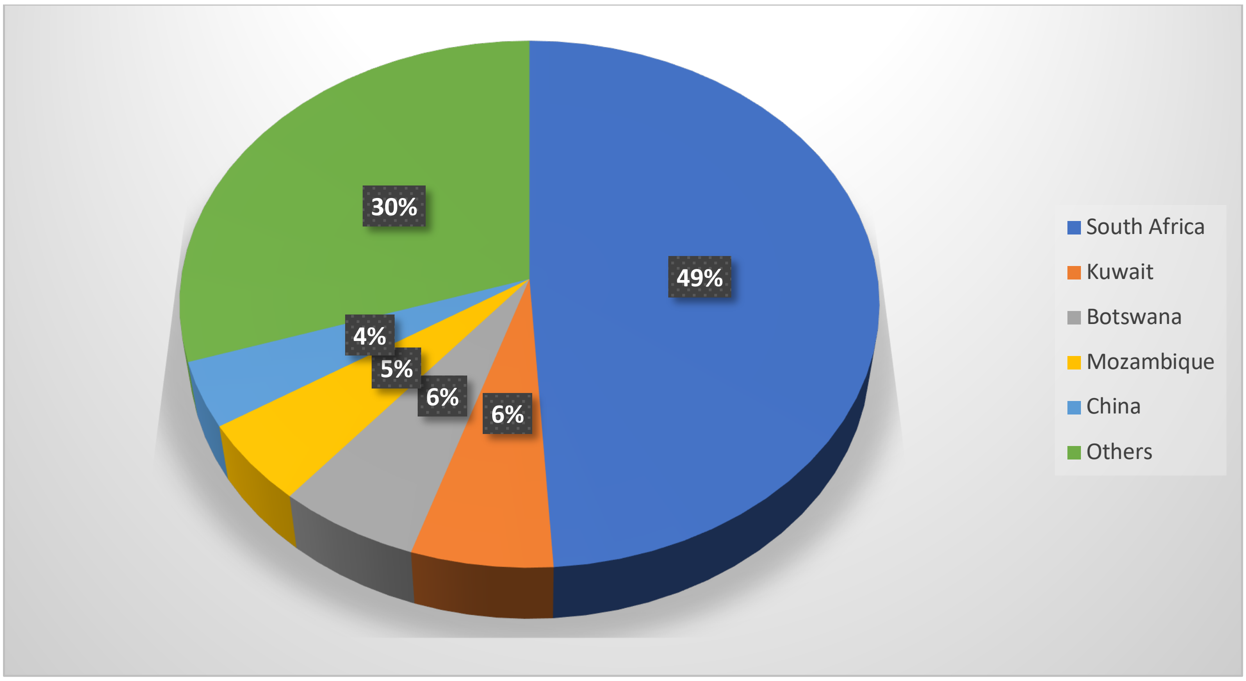


FIGURE 9: ZIMBABWE'S 5 MAJOR IMPORT DESTINATIONS 2005 TO 2008
Source: Author's Computation

Figure 9 above shows Zimbabwe's top five import destinations from 2005 to 2008. According to Tandra and Suroso (2023), market import destination refers to the specific countries or regions to which goods are imported. The two further asserts that this concept is crucial in international trade as it influences various aspects of economic performance, trade strategies, and market dynamics. The figure shows that the country imported most of its products from South Africa (49%), followed by Kuwait (6%), Botswana (6%), Mozambique (5%) and China (4%). Others (30%) represent other importing countries, but their share was very small. Due to the bilateral trade agreement between Zimbabwe and South Africa in 1964, which gave both countries preferential access to products, South Africa was the main importing country for products to Zimbabwe. During this period, the Look East policy introduced by the ZANU-PF government began to gain momentum and China (4% of imports) became involved in trade and other relations with the country.

Product Concentration: Exports

Figure 10

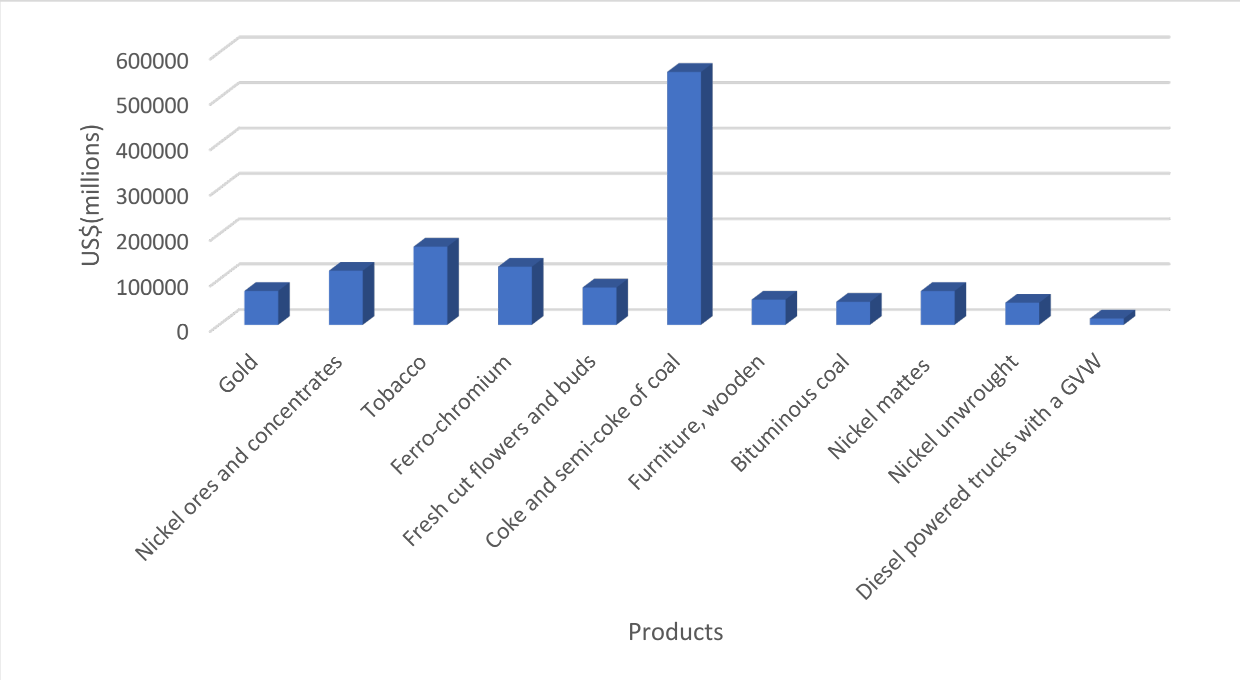


FIGURE 10: ZIMBABWE'S EXPORT PRODUCT CONCENTRATION 2005 TO 2008
Source: World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS)

According to Gnangnon (2023), export product concentration refers to the extent to which a country's exports are concentrated in a limited number of products or industries. It is a measure of the extent to which a country relies on a narrow range of export products in its international trade. The concept of export product concentration has been studied in the context of various aspects of economic development and performance. A study by Breitenbach, Chisadza & Clance (2021) has shown that export product concentration can have both positive and negative effects on poverty volatility, social protection spending and economic growth. In the case of low-income countries, for example, export product concentration tends to increase poverty volatility. In relatively advanced developing countries, on the other hand, it reduces poverty volatility.

Figure 10 above displays the country's export product concentration for the period 2005 to 2008. The figure shows that Zimbabwe exported US$557,110 million worth of coke and semi-coke between 2005 and 2008. Coke and semi-coke from coal was Zimbabwe's most exported product to other countries in the period 2005 to 2008. In addition, Zimbabwe exported tobacco worth US$172110 million during this period, making it the country's second highest export. Ferrochrome exports to other countries were worth US$127,905 million, while nickel ores and concentrates were worth US$119,203 million, fresh cut flowers and buds were worth US$82,172 million and gold was worth US$74,659 million. Most of the country's exports were commodity-based products in the form of coke and even tobacco as opposed to high value-added products that could earn the country more foreign exchange. During this period, the manufacturing sector was in a parlous state and production was low, limiting the value addition of the products..

Product Concentration: Imports

Figure 11

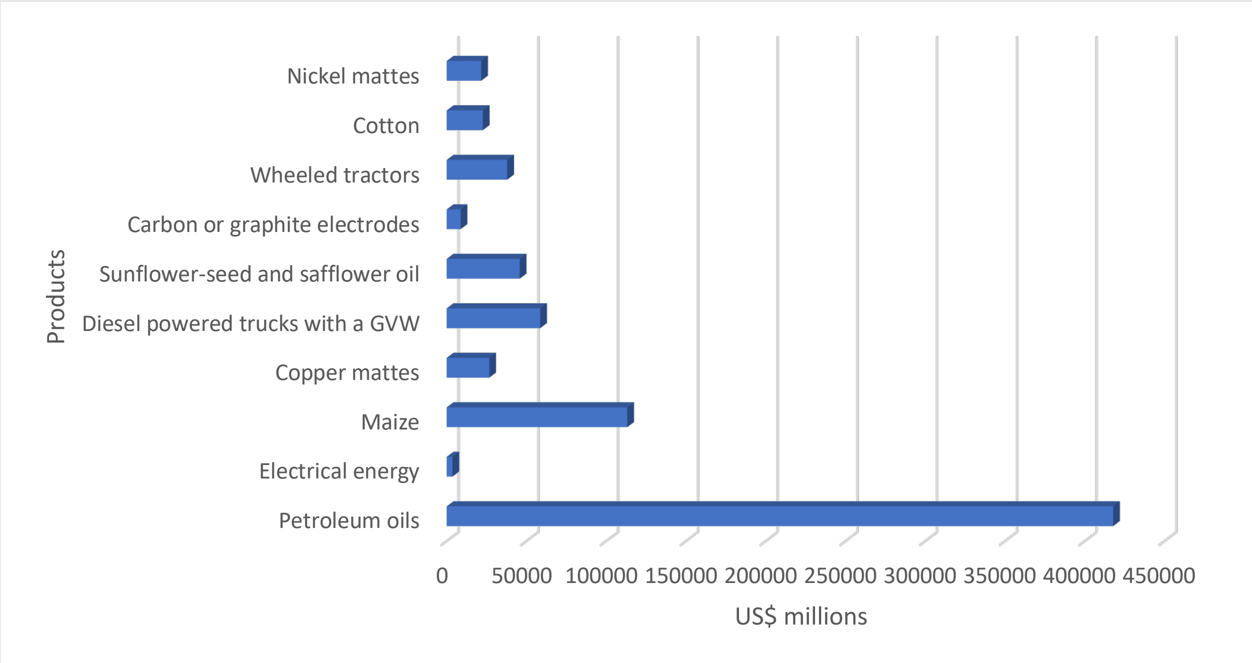


FIGURE 11: ZIMBABWE'S IMPORT PRODUCT CONCENTRATION 2005 TO 2008
Source: World Integrated Trade Solution

Import product concentration refers to the degree to which a small number of firms dominate the import market for a specific product. Figure 11 above shows Zimbabwe's import product concentration for the period 2005 to 2008. The figure shows that Petroleum oils was the most imported product valued at US$ 417 728 million. The second most imported product was maize during the period which was valued at US$ 113173 million. The importation of maize during a period where the land reform programme was still in progress (which began in 2000) may be an indication that the programme was not going well, and the population had severe food shortages.

In the period from 2005 to 2008, diesel- powered lorries worth US$ 58 611 million were also imported. During this period, the Zimbabwean government also implemented an agricultural mechanisation programme to support farmers who had received land as part of the land reform. Trucks and other agricultural machinery were therefore important to improve agricultural productivity. Electrical energy worth US$ 3588 million was the least imported product in the period 2005 to 2008.

Industry Concentration: Exports

Figure 11

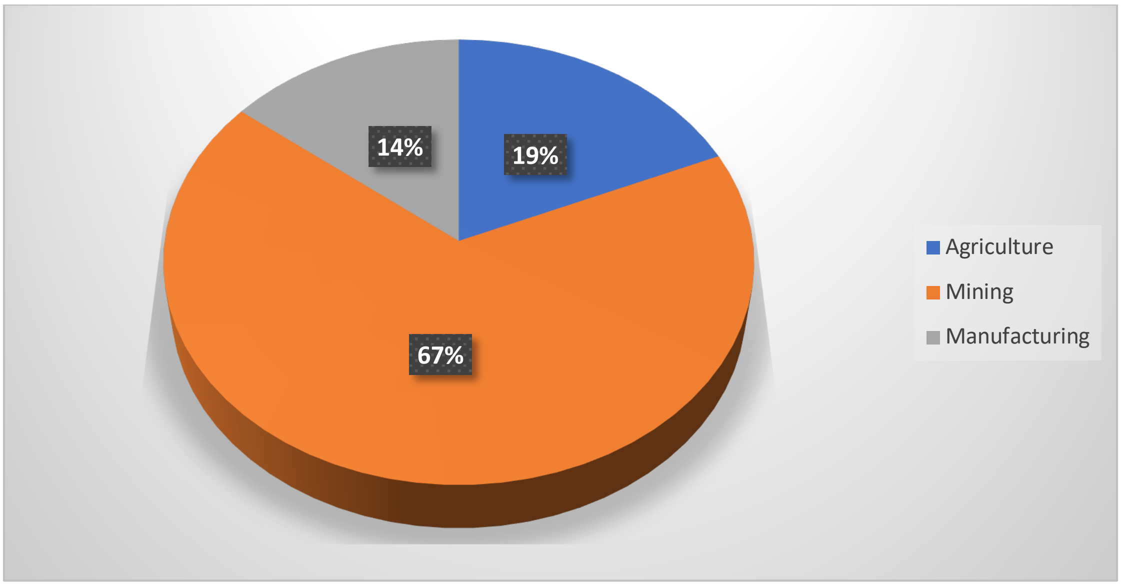


FIGURE 12: ZIMBABWE'S EXPORTS BY INDUSTRY 2005 TO 2008
Source: World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS)

Figure 12 above shows the country's exports by sector from 2005 to 2008. The figure shows that most exports come from the mining industry (67%). This shows that the country has mainly exported raw materials to other countries. However, raw materials generate less foreign exchange earnings than value-added products. The country's agricultural exports accounted for 19% of total exports, while manufacturing exports accounted for 14% of total exports in the period 2005 to 2008. The above figure also shows that the country's industrial export portfolio was not diverse as it was concentrated in only three sectors, namely mining, agriculture and manufacturing.

Industry Concentration: Imports

Figure 13

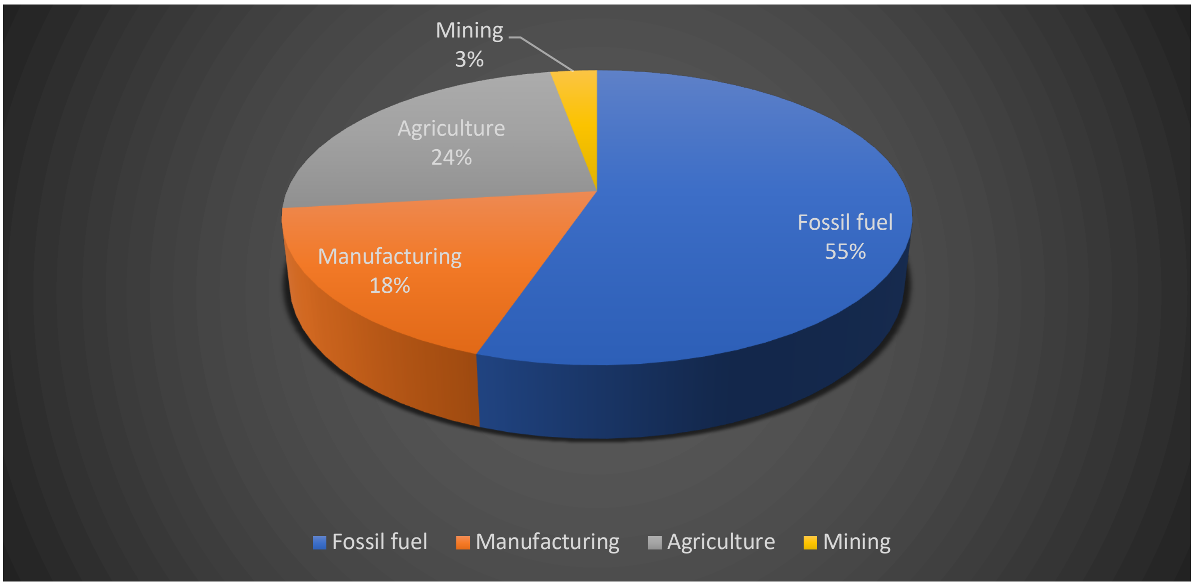


FIGURE 13: ZIMBABWE'S IMPORTS BY INDUSTRY 2005 TO 2008
Source: World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS)

Figure 13 above reveals the country's imports by industry in the period 2005 to 2008. The figure shows that a large proportion of imports into the country come from the fossil fuel industry, namely 55%. This underpins the results in Figure 13, which show that most of the country's imports in the period 2005 to 2008 came from the oil industry. Imports from the agricultural sector accounted for 24% of total imports, while imports from the manufacturing sector accounted for 18% of total imports. Imports from the mining sector were the lowest, accounting for only 3% of total imports.

5.3. Discussion of Results

From 2005 to 2008, Zimbabwe's precarious trade relations and economic decline can be critically understood through the lens of neopatrimonialism, a framework that highlights the role of patron-client networks, corruption, and the fusion of public and private interests in governance. De Sousa and Cuadrado (2023) indicate that neopatrimonialism has been associated with both beneficial and detrimental effects on development and democracy. The two further argue that regulated neopatrimonialism can promote development, while predatory neopatrimonialism hinders it. In this case, I argue that from 2005 to 2008 Zimbabwe was under a predatory neopatrimonialism, entailing a hierarchical distribution of resources, giving rise to patron-client networks revolving around a dominant individual or party, as outlined by Francisco (2010). These regimes have superseded colonial institutions, serving the interests of a select few individuals in the ZANU-PF party. This period also characterized by international isolation and economic sanctions imposed by the USA and EU, illustrates how neopatrimonial governance exacerbated Zimbabwe's economic vulnerabilities. The sanctions disrupted access to international markets and financial capital, but the deeper cause of economic dysfunction lay in the neopatrimonial structures of the ZANU-PF regime. The regime's prioritization of political survival over coherent trade and economic strategies resulted in the erosion of productive capacities and international competitiveness.

The land reform program epitomizes the impact of neopatrimonial practices. While framed as a redress of historical injustices, its implementation was marked by arbitrary allocations favoring political elites and their clients. This approach undermined agricultural productivity, a key driver of exports, leaving the sector incapacitated due to a lack of capital, equipment, and expertise among the new farm owners. The resultant decline in food production forced the country into a dependency on imports, especially from South Africa, destabilizing trade balances and deepening economic precarity. In this way, the regime's neopatrimonial tendencies,favoring loyalty over competence—directly harmed the nation's economic foundations. As mentioned in section 5.2.2, Zimbabwe had to import more than it exported. The country became a net importer of goods and services between 2005 and 2008. In this thesis, I also argue that the ZANU-PF land reform disrupted agricultural production and led to unstable trade balances, mainly because it was implemented arbitrarily and because the new farm owners were not fully equipped for production as they lacked capital, basic equipment and other inputs. As a result, the country was unable to produce enough food to feed the entire population, so more food had to be imported, especially from South Africa (see section 5.2.2). Zimbabwe became increasingly dependent on imports.

Zimbabwe during this period demonstrates how neopatrimonialism distorts policy formulation and implementation. Of worth is to note that neopatrimonialism significantly influences policy formulation, particularly in development projects, and is associated with the misallocation of aid and state resources, as noted by Harnois & Gagnon (2023). Their findings suggest that neopatrimonialism frequently intertwines with corruption and state capture, especially in nations heavily reliant on international development aid.Trade policies, such as the Look East Policy, were politically motivated rather than economically strategic. While ostensibly designed to counter Western sanctions by fostering relations with China, this policy led to an influx of cheap Chinese goods, effectively crippling local industries unable to compete. Instead of promoting industrial growth, the policy reinforced the regime's clientelist networks, as economic decisions prioritized the regime's immediate survival over long-term economic health.

The quasi-fiscal policy introduced in 2003 by former Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) Governor Gideon Gono was seen as politically motivated as it funded ZANU-PF-driven activities. The quasi-fiscal activities were estimated at USD 0.8 billion in 2007 and USD 1.1 billion in 2008 (IMF, 2009). The quasi-fiscal activities of the RBZ were one of the main causes of hyperinflation in Zimbabwe during this period. In turn, the Zimbabwean government attempted to introduce price control measures to control hyperinflation. This further illustrate how neopatrimonialism entrenched economic instability. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's funding of ZANU-PF-driven initiatives through quasi-fiscal operations was a hallmark of clientelist economics, diverting resources from productive investment to patronage networks. These activities fueled hyperinflation, disrupted price structures, and reduced the competitiveness of Zimbabwe's exports. Price control measures introduced by the regime to mitigate the impact of hyperinflation further undermined the manufacturing sector, as businesses faced shrinking profit margins and were forced to scale down operations or close entirely. These policy distortions are emblematic of neopatrimonial governance, where economic policies serve political ends at the expense of national development. This is in line with what Davis, Fuchs, and Johnson (2019) concluded that governments can use trade as a tool by linking political objectives to economic outcomes. The broader socio-economic instability also reflects the pervasive effects of neopatrimonialism. High unemployment, lack of social safety nets, and the rise of informal cross-border trade highlight a state where governance structures fail to deliver public goods and services. Instead, the regime leveraged these conditions to reinforce its patronage networks, maintaining control over key resources and institutions, such as the Joint Operations Command (JOC). The JOC's role in ordering price cuts in 2007 underlines how the regime's security apparatus extended its influence into economic governance, exacerbating economic decline.

Neopatrimonialism inherently weakens state institutions, undermining their capacity to implement coherent trade and economic policies. Bratton & Van de Walle (1997) argue that neopatrimonialism combines clientelism, strong presidential power, and the utilization of state resources for political legitimization, thus further reinforcing its adverse impact on democratic governance. Zimbabwe's failure to leverage regional trade agreements, such as the SADC Trade Protocol, further underscores the inefficacy of its governance structures. While regional integration offered an opportunity to stabilize trade, the regime's preoccupation with consolidating power rendered such opportunities secondary. Import restrictions and exchange controls, introduced to combat foreign currency shortages, were similarly politicized, prioritizing regime stability over economic rationality.Ultimately, the poor performance of Zimbabwe's trade sector during this period as shown above is a direct consequence of the neopatrimonial governance model. As Erdmann and Engel (2006) argue, neopatrimonial regimes, by their very nature, hinder meaningful development. Zimbabwe's experience aligns with this, showing how corruption, weak institutions, and the centralization of power within clientelist networks stifle economic growth.

5.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The period from 2005 to 2008 was characterised by a political regime characterised by authoritarian rule and political unrest, which in turn had a significant impact on the country's trade flows. The country was in an acute economic crisis during these years, characterised by foreign exchange controls and trade restrictions, hyperinflation and widespread poverty. Mismanagement of the economy, land reform policies and international sanctions contributed to the collapse of the Zimbabwean dollar and severe shortages of essential goods. Economic hardship has further exacerbated political discontent and instability in the country. The political economy has a significant impact on trade flows as the above trade flows show. Over the years, Zimbabwe has faced economic and political challenges that could have led to its downfall. Sanctions from the West also prevented Zimbabwe from integrating with other countries, confirming the inextricable link between economic policies and political regimes. Due to political instability and grievances, Zimbabwe has not pursued sound trade policies over the years Makochekanwa et al., (2012). In this chapter, the researcher adopted a critical perspective to analyse the phenomenon of political economy on trade in Zimbabwe during this period of increasing political instability and conflicting trade patterns. The researcher also developed a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the historical, political and economic context. In the next chapter, the study explores the three objectives during the GNU period (2009-2013).

6. CHAPTER SIX: THE GNU PERIOD: TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY OR JUST A TOKEN? [2009-2013]

6.1. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

The year 2008 brought many changes to Zimbabwe. The country experienced an economic and political crisis. The crisis was a result of the violence used by the ruling regime, ZANU-PF, against the main opposition party (Makhowa, 2013). The political crisis had its origins in the fact that ZANU-PF had lost the majority in parliament to the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), in the 2008 elections. In the first round of the presidential elections in March, President Robert Mugabe received 43.2 per cent of the vote, while Morgan Tsvangirai received 47.9 per cent. This made the latter the winner, but not to the extent that a run-off election could be avoided – this was held on 27 June 2008 (Smith-Höhn 2009). The run-off was boycotted by Tsvangirai, Mugabe 'won' and the region forced the MDC into a unity government with Zanu-PF, which used the ensuing stability to re-establish control of the country and neuter the opposition. What transpired thereafter was an orchestrated operation by the ruling ZANU-PF to hold on to power. Rwodzi (2018) claims that intimidation and violence was used against the opposition and it is alleged that the violence was perpetrated by soldiers, the police and intelligence agents. The ZANU-PF regime's kleptocratic style of governance was built on ethnic politics and military dominance and led to a culture of violence in Zimbabwe (Rwodzi, 2018).

The political crisis in Zimbabwe led to the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) by all political parties on 15 September 2008 to find solutions to the political and economic crisis in the country (Sikwila, 2013). Prior to the GPA agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 21 July 2008 between ZANU-PF and the two MDC factions, the Tsvangirai-led Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) and the Mutambara-led Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-M) (Smith-Höhn 2009). The GPA agreement was signed under the mediation and facilitation of former South African President Thabo Mbeki (Dodo et al., 2012). in 2009, the following year, Mbeki's mediation of the GPA led to the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). The GPA was intended to pave the way for the formation of a Government of National Unity and the reconstruction of society in general (Mashmbye, 2022). In fact, the signatories of the GPA pledged to solve all economic and political problems and give the country a new direction.

The formation of the new inclusive government was expected to provide an opportunity to consider fundamental reforms in the provision of security and justice services to the people of Zimbabwe. According to Makhowa (2013), the problem areas for ZANU-PF were sanctions, the land issue and external interference. The MDC was concerned about the security of its members, the prevention of violence, the demand for an end to hate speech, and the role of SADC and the African Union as “insurers and guarantors” of the global political agreement. It should be noted, however, that the politics of development change is not so much about agreements between states and societies, but rather about the relationships and interactions between key elites and between these elites and their respective groups of followers - and it is this combination of horizontal and vertical relationships that should be at the centre of the political settlement (Laws, 2012).

The political landscape and economic conditions in Zimbabwe changed drastically as the country transitioned from the period of hyperinflation to the period of the Government of National Unity from 2009 to 2013. In April 2009, the Government of National Unity suspended the Zimbabwe dollar, bringing some stability to the economy. There was a change in monetary policy when the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) introduced the multi-currency system (Sikwila, 2013). The GNU government gave hope to the citizens of Zimbabwe who had endured a long period of challenges (Nhede, 2012). Prior to 2009, several Zimbabweans migrated to South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, the United Kingdom, etc. as economic migrants due to the economic crisis that prevailed in the country (Ploch, 2011). However, thanks to the inclusive government, some diasporans returned. The international community, especially Western countries, started to take measures to support the country again and bring it out of international isolation. It is also worth noting that the GNU was established at a time when the country was facing hyperinflation, a sustained period of negative gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates and massive currency devaluation (Dodo et al., 2012). During the GNU period, the country's economic performance and the standard of living of its citizens improved.

In 2009, the GNU government, through the Ministry of Finance, put forward an economic blueprint known as the Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP1) to stabilise the economy and develop economic programmes that would stimulate growth in the economy (Biti, 2015). The STERP 1 programme also aimed to create investment and savings in the country (Ministry of Finance, 2009). The first STERP ran from March 2009 to January 2010, and STERP 2, which ran from February 2010 to 2011, aimed to continue the macroeconomic stabilisation initiatives started with STERP 1. Although STERP 1 and 2 brought some economic stability to the economy and reduced inflation compared to the hyperinflationary period from 2005 to 2008, the measures focussed only on short-term goals such as political stability, good governance and sound macroeconomic management, which made it difficult for the country to pursue long-term growth strategies

Mutenga (2021) pointed out that the GNU government introduced the four-year Medium Term Plan (MTP), from 2011 to 2015, to address the problem of long-term growth strategies. The MTP had broader objectives than STERP 1 and STERP 2 and aimed to reduce poverty in the country, reduce unemployment, maintain macroeconomic stability and increase economic growth in the country. The MTP aimed to achieve economic growth of 7.1% per year for the country (AfDB, 2012). However, the economic plan was hampered by the lack of implementation as political parties in the GNU focussed on political tensions and preparations for the next elections, which were due the following year (AfDB, 2012).

It is also worth noting that this study emphasises that the country’s economic growth improved significantly during the GNU period. The country had an average GDP growth of about 5% per annum between 2009 and 2013 (Biti, 2015). However, there were still other challenges in the economy, such as a high unemployment rate and high levels of poverty. Although some basic services were restored during the GNU period (BTI, 2018), a significant percentage of people in the country still experienced water shortages and lacked clean water and sanitation facilities. Matenga (2021) notes that although the economic plans were to increase investment in the country, the savings rate to GDP ratio remained very low at about -5% and yet the savings rate was an important component of investment in the country.

Mlambo (2017) points out that the 2014 CZI report concludes that although the economy stabilised when the multi-currency system was introduced in 2009, the manufacturing industry did not benefit much from the system as it faced challenges such as increased competition from imports due to the strength of the US dollar. According to Mlambo (2017), the report also showed that capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector declined from over 50% in 2012 to 39.6% in 2013. The decline in capacity utilisation also meant an increase in unemployment as several companies had to shut down their operations as they could not keep up with foreign competition. Importantly, the rise in unemployment was actually a fall in formal employment

Picture showing some of the currencies which were used by the country during the period 2009 to 2013.

Sabao (2016) pointed out that the economic reforms implemented during this period led to greater urbanisation, higher consumption and reduced poverty in the larger cities. Article 31(a) of the GPA prioritises the restoration of economic stability and growth in Zimbabwe. However, it is important to note that power-sharing agreements require the commitment and innovation of both heads of state , as well as monitoring and adherence to democratic principles and guidelines. According to Izquierdo-Brichs (2021), the transition to democratic systems requires popular pressure, as elites are unlikely to willingly give up their power or privileges in favour of democracy. For example, a study in Central Asia found that mobilisation for democratic transitions was weak, leading to an accumulation of power among a few elites and the establishment of neopatrimonial authoritarian regimes (Izquierdo-Brichs, 2021). These types of regimes are characterised by a high concentration of power and a lack of accountability to the population. It is also worth noting that power-sharing arrangements have been extensively discussed in the literature. Proponents consider them a panacea for divided societies, while critics argue that they can perpetuate divisions and conflicts within societies (Sriram, Lekha &, Zahar, 2009; Sambanis, 2020).

Ugur-Cinar (2017) believes that in an ideal democracy, dissenting opinions can be expressed without being punished and that public services are provided according to institutionalised rules. However, there are heads of state who would prefer that things are run according to their worldview and that they allocate state resources as they see fit. The ruling ZANU-PF regime can justify such actions with patriarchal discourses. Over the years, research has shown that GNU is seen as a way of achieving political stability through good governance and power sharing (Chigora & Guzura, 2011; Mukuhlani, 2014). It is argued that, *ceteris paribus*, political stability should have a positive impact on trade flows (Vila & Villanueva, 2022). Zimbabwe has been in a fragile recovery since 2009. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the impact of political regimes on trade flows in Zimbabwe. This chapter aims to analyse whether the political regime as a transition to democracy had a positive impact on Zimbabwe's trade in the period 2009-2013.

This section outlined the various circumstances that led to the founding of the GNU in Zimbabwe. The next section analyses how the political settlement, which manifested itself in the form of power sharing through the GNU, affected the trade dynamics within the country between 2009 and 2013. The researcher questions whether power sharing was the right prescription for Zimbabwe and whether inclusive governance enabled democratic governance to flourish. It is worth noting that existing literature shows that power sharing arrangements are not free from encountering challenges. Their implementation may prove to be a challenging task, and may lead to outcomes that are not considered optimal.

6.2. Results, Interpretations, and Analysis

In order to provide a comprehensive and thorough assessment, this section begins with a detailed description and comprehensive overview of the political landscape and contexts that prevailed in Zimbabwe during the period of the unity government. In addition, this section analyses the patterns and trends observed in the country's trade flows, focusing on the years 2009 to 2013. Finally, an in-depth analysis is conducted to determine the extent of import and export concentration that emerged in Zimbabwe during the GNU period.

6.2.1. *Objective 1: Review and describe the status of political relationships in Zimbabwe between 2009-2013*

Between 2009 and 2013, Zimbabwe experienced several significant political developments and shifts in its political fortunes. The country also experienced a period of political transition with the formation of a government of national unity, contested elections and international mediation efforts in the political crisis. Sanctions and tense international relations were an important issue during this time. The period was characterised by efforts to stabilise the country's political situation and its tense international relations. With the help of a thematic analysis, some of the most important issues that emerged between 2009 and 2013 were identified as follows.

Theme 1: Political Transition and Power Sharing

The Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed in February 2009 after the devastating hyperinflation of 2005 to 2008, which left many Zimbabweans living in extreme poverty. In the presidential and parliamentary elections in March 2008, the ruling party ZANU-PF lost the elections to the main opposition party at the time, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). ZANU-PF lost the parliamentary elections and the then President Robert Mugabe had fewer presidential votes than the then opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai (Chinyoka & Seekings, 2016). The March 2008 elections did not produce a clear winner for the presidential elections (Chigora & Guzura, 2011).

A run-off election was held in June 2008, but Robert Mugabe won after Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew from the elections due to political violence against opposition supporters. Although ZANU-PF claimed victory in the June 2008 run-off elections, the lack of legitimacy of the elections and the government made it difficult to govern the country (Chigora & Guzura, 2011). Thanks to the intervention of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) through former South African President Thabo Mbeki, the three main political actors in Zimbabwean politics at the time, Robert Mugabe of ZANU-PF, Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and Authur Mutambara of the MDC-M, signed the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which formed an inclusive government in Zimbabwe in September 2008 (Nhede, 2012). The formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in

Zimbabwe in February 2009 was seen by the international community as a first step towards the economic reconstruction of the country and the creation of democratic political conditions.

In a United Nations press statement released on 11 September 2009, the former UN Secretary General Ban-ki-Moon highlighted that:

> He congratulated the agreement of national unity reached by the Government and the Opposition Parties , MDC-T and MDC-M. He hoped that the GNU would work towards creating peace ,the improvement of welfare as well as improvement in addressing human rights issues in Zimbabwe.

Picture of the three political principals of the Government of National Unity (GNU) (left to right) Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T), Robert Mugabe of ZANU-PF and Arthur Mutambara of MDC. Voice of America, February 13 ,2009.

In the GNU government that began in February 2009, Robert Mugabe retained the office of President of the country, while Morgan Tsvangirai became Prime Minister of Zimbabwe and Thokozani Khupe (of the MDC-T) and Authur Mutambara (of the MDC-M) became the country's Deputy Prime Ministers. Parliament was able to amend the constitution on 5 February 2009 to give room for the formation of the GNU on 13 February 2009 (Ploch, 2009). The coalition government had the major task of working together to improve economic conditions in the country and improve the lives of Zimbabweans who were living in extreme poverty. The country was experiencing widespread poverty as unemployment reached over 80 per cent during 2008 (Stoeffler et al., 2016). Added to this was the task of restoring the country's image in the international community.

The structure of the GNU government was expectedly acrimonious at the beginning, as all parties wanted to take control of influential ministries in order to control the workings of the government (Nhede, 2012). However, after a series of negotiations, a cabinet consisting of the three major parties was formed. Ministries such as Defence, Justice and Legal Affairs and Foreign Affairs went to ZANU-PF, while ministries such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and the Ministry of Health were given to the MDC-T (Ploch, 2010). The Ministry of Home Affairs, which was controversial during the negotiations, was split between ZANU-PF and MDC-T. This meant that the ministry had two ministers.

The GNU's first term ended in February 2011 after two years (Dodo et al., 2012). However, all parties involved felt that they had not yet achieved their objectives, so the GNU was extended for another two years until 2013. The then Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai had set himself the goal of leading the country in the drafting and adoption of a new constitution that would be more democratic and people-centred (Dodo et al., 2012). In February 2011, the constitutional process had not yet been finalised. The then President Robert Mugabe was still concerned about foreign interference and therefore wanted the government under the GNU to implement some reforms that would minimise foreign interference in Zimbabwe's day-to-day politics.

Theme 2: Electoral Reforms and Political Tensions

One of the mandates of the GNU government in Zimbabwe was to initiate electoral reforms in time for the 2013 elections. Members of the opposition MDC-T in particular feared that there would be widespread political violence and abuse of their supporters if the country went to the polls before the electoral reforms, as was the case in 2002 and 2008. The GNU introduced some electoral and legal reforms, but not much was done to enforce these reforms to enable free and fair elections in the future (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

The GNU government promulgated the Electoral Amendment Act in 2012 to reform the work of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (Human Rights Watch, 2013). The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), which was mandated to establish and oversee all electoral matters in the country, was now headed by a team of commissioners led by Justice Simpson Mutambanengwe. However, many political analysts were of the opinion that the ZEC was still controlled by ZANU-PF as several staff members were believed to be close to ZANU-PF in the background (Kibble, 2013). Furthermore, the Electoral Amendment Act still had flaws, such as not allowing Zimbabweans living outside the country to vote (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

The process of drafting the new constitution took almost 4 years, from 2009 to 2013, but according to the original Global Political Agreement (GPA), the process of the new constitution was supposed to take 18 months (Sachikonye, 2013). The drafting of a new constitution was an important process to achieve electoral reforms that would guarantee free and fair elections in the future. The coordinating institution that ensured that the issues raised by the citizens and the members of the three parties that formed the GNU were considered was called the Parliamentary Committee on the New Constitution (COPAC). COPAC was chaired by Zanu-PF member Paul Mangwana, MDC-T member Douglas Mwonzora and MDC-M member Edward Mkhosi.

Zimbabwe draft constitution is taken to parliament. In this picture is Douglas Mwonzora (MDC-T co-chair of COPAC), Edna Madzongwe (Senate President from Zanu-PF), Lovemore Moyo (Speaker of Parliament from MDC-T) and Paul Mangwana (ZANU-PF co-chair of COPAC). Nehanda Radio, August 1,2012.

COPAC played an important role in drafting the 2013 Constitution under difficult circumstances. The drafting of the constitution took some time as there were disputes between the parties (ZANU-PF, MDC-T and MDC-M) over some of the contents of the new constitution. The drafting of the new constitution was a long time coming and some interest groups such as war veterans allied to ZANU-PF and senior members of the military called for elections even though the constitution was not yet finalised (Sachikonye, 2013). The MDC-T members wanted the constitution-making process to take place before the next elections. This was an indication of the political tensions that existed and were building up between ZANU-PF and the MDC-T. However, the SADC Parliamentary Forum Election Observation Mission played an important role in assisting COPAC to expedite the drafting of the constitution, which was a prerequisite for the holding of the 2013 elections (Sachikonye, 2013). The drafting and distribution of the constitution itself also posed challenges. The SADC Parliamentary Forum Election Observation Mission noted the following in 2013 after the constitution was drafted:

> The draft constitution was in limited quantity and not everyone was able to receive a copy of it. Furthermore, some members of the public complained that the constitution was not provided in different vernacular languages (SADC, 2013).

The new 2013 constitution was seen as an important step for the country towards a democratic environment where free and fair elections would be conducted in a peaceful environment with less violence and political tension. However, many civil rights groups pointed out that the constitution was not sufficient to address the electoral reforms needed in the country. The new constitution continued to give President Mugabe a lot of power, which was a cause for great concern (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

Theme 3: Human Rights and Rule of Law

The GNU government established the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) during its tenure. The ZHRC was established in 2010 but only became operational in 2012 when former Zimbabwean President Mugabe signed the ZHRC Act into law (Mhiripiri, 2015). The Commission was established to promote human rights and freedom of speech in the country. The commission was also established to monitor whether human rights are being respected in all provinces in the country. However, some political analysts pointed out that the ZHRC had limited impact on the human rights situation as it could only investigate issues from the GNU government period (Human Rights Watch, 2013). This means that other problems and violations that have occurred in the country, particularly the violence in the 2008 run-off election, could not be investigated.

Furthermore, in 2012, the then Chair of the ZHRC, Professor Reginald Austin, resigned from his position, citing, among other reasons, the lack of flexible laws to address human rights issues. Some of Professor Austin's quotes in the Mail and Guardian newspaper (December 2012) were as follows:

> The critical reason for my resignation is the legal framework within which the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission is expected now and, in the future, to carry out its mandate. As a national human rights institution, the commission must be independent and properly capacitated. This resignation is an unequivocal statement of the condemnation of the current operating framework particularly the excessive powers of the executive.

Significantly, it was during the GNU government that the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe was established. The court was established under section 166 of the 2013 Constitution (Mhiripiri, 2015). The Constitutional Court, which is made up of the Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice and other judges, plays an important role in ensuring that the rules and laws are in line with the requirements of the country's constitution. It is also an institution that ensures that the President and Parliament act within the framework of the Constitution. However, the credibility of the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe has been questioned since its inception in 2013 as it has been unable to deal with governance challenges emanating from the executive (Hofisi, 2019). The political situation in Zimbabwe makes it difficult for the country's Constitutional Court to scrutinise members of parliament and the executive (BTI, 2018).

Although it was less widespread compared to the period of political violence in 2007-2008. Human rights violations continued during the time of the GNU government (Dziva, Dube & Manatsa, 2013). The security forces, consisting of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF), the police and the intelligence organisation known as the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), were also continuously under ZANU-PF during the GNU period and were a source of intimidation and human rights violations against opposition members (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Islam (2021) reports that attacks on human rights defenders continued even after the founding of the GNU. The Director of Amnesty International's Africa Programme in 2010, Erwin van der Borght, highlighted the following

> The Attorney General's office, police and army have been left to freely violate human rights in pursuit of a political agenda. By delaying reform, the situation in Zimbabwe remains fragile as perpetrators continue to escape justice and are instead effectively given the all clear to continue violating human rights.

Theme 4: International Relations and Diplomacy

The formation of the inclusive government in 2009 gave the country hope of improving relations with the international community. Due to human rights violations and political violence that took place during the hyperinflation from 2005 to 2008, the country was internationally isolated. However, during the GNU period, international relations did not fully improve, although they did get better. The European Union (EU) sent a high-level delegation to Zimbabwe in September 2009 after 7 years as this was seen as a new chapter for the resumption of diplomatic relations with Zimbabwe following the formation of the GNU (Ploch, 2011). A few sanctions were lifted during the period of the unity government. In August 2012, the EU lifted measures under the Cotonou Agreement that restricted the Zimbabwean government's access to direct aid (Matyszak, 2019). The US, through the Obama administration, also emphasised the need for renewed engagement with the country in 2009 and had an initial meeting with Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai when he visited Washington to seek aid and international support. (Ploch, 2011). However, the ZIDERA sanctions, first imposed by the United States of America in 2001, remained in place, as did the European Union (EU) sanctions imposed since 2002 (Katsinde, 2022). Grebe (2010) pointed out that travel bans and financial restrictions that accompanied the targeted US and EU sanctions undermined the international relations of Western countries with the GNU government.

During the period of inclusive government, tensions between the two major parties, ZANU-PF and MDC-T, grew as ZANU-PF began to call on Prime Minister Tsvangirai and Western countries to lift sanctions (Ploch, 2011). However, most Western countries were reluctant to lift these sanctions given the intensity of the political violence and human rights violations that took place in 2008 (Ploch, 2011). ZANU-PF continued to maintain good relations with Eastern countries such as China and Russia, while Western countries were keen to open up to a resumption of relations with Zimbabwe (Chitiyo & Kibble, 2014).

In summary, the period between 2009 and 2013 in Zimbabwe was characterised by a delicate balance of power between the ZANU-PF and MDC factions in a coalition government. While attempts were made to address the political, economic and human rights challenges, progress was hampered by tensions, power struggles and disagreements over reforms. The engagement of the international community played a role in shaping the political landscape, but the internal dynamics remained complex and difficult to navigate. Most African heads of state and government expressed their support for the inclusive government to improve the lives of Zimbabweans. Various African heads of state paid state visits to the country during the period of the unity government. During his visit to Zimbabwe in 2010, former South African President Jacob Zuma had to mediate some political tensions within the unity government (VOA, 2010). One of the issues was that Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai accused President Mugabe of not adhering to the GPA agreement and appointing important people in the government, such as ambassadors, without his consent (VOA, 2010).

6.2.2. Objective 2: To investigate the state of trade flow in Zimbabwe between 2009-2013.

This section investigates the state of trade flow in Zimbabwe from the period 2009 to 2013. The section exhibits the trends of trade and discusses the possible political developments that lead to such trends.

Figure 14

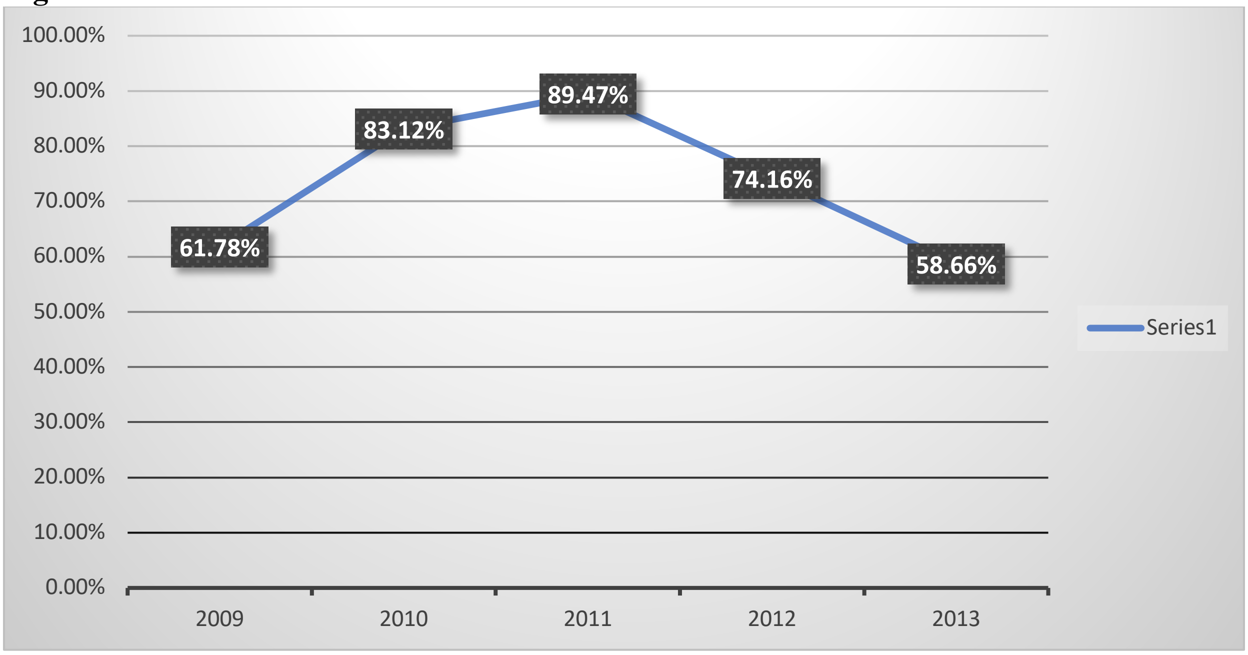
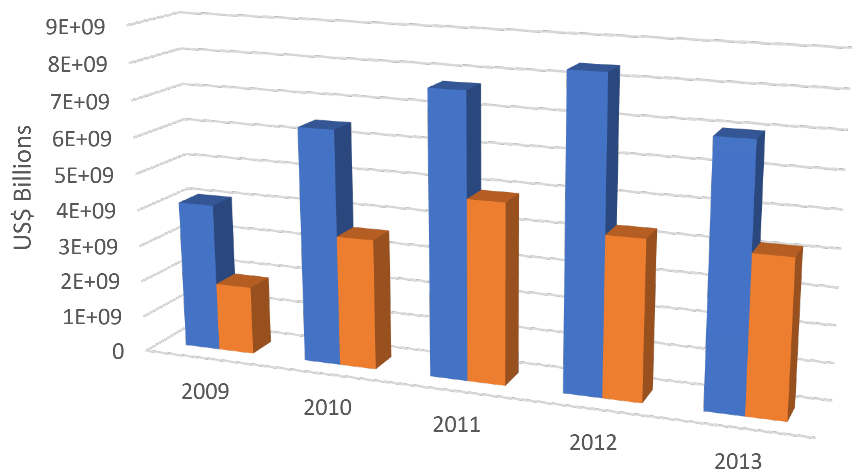


FIGURE 14: ZIMBABWE'S TRADE AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP 2009-2013
Source: Author's Computation

Figure 14 shows the country's trade as a percentage of GDP in the period 2009 to 2013. The indicator of trade as a percentage of GDP shows the degree of openness and the extent to which a country is integrated with other trading partners or countries. The figure shows that trade as a percentage of GDP in Zimbabwe was 61.78% in 2009. This shows that the country was very open to the exchange of goods and services with other countries. This percentage increased from 61.78% in 2009 to 83.12% in 2010 and Zimbabwe's trade to GDP ratio peaked at 89.47% in 2011. Since the country adopted the multi-currency system in 2009, the exchange of goods and services using the US dollar and the South African rand has allowed the country to trade openly. During the GNU period, the country moved from a less integrated position, which it had occupied in the period from

2005 to 2008 (due to sanctions), to a position of engagement with the rest of the world. During this time, some international sanctions were lifted by the US and the EU. However, the complete lifting of sanctions remained dependent on further progress in democratic reforms and improvements in the human rights situation. Despite some initial steps, progress on reforms was slow and concerns about continued human rights violations and restrictions on political freedoms persisted (Giumelli & Krulis, 2012). As a result, the US and EU maintained targeted sanctions against individuals and entities associated with the Mugabe regime. The full normalisation of relations and the complete lifting of sanctions remain dependent on sustained progress in democratic reforms, respect for human rights and credible elections (Van Wyk, 2020). The US and the EU continued to monitor the situation in Zimbabwe and adjusted their sanctions policy accordingly. However, the chart above shows that the share of trade in GDP fell to 74.165% in 2012 and further to 58.66% in 2013. However, the percentage remained above 50%, indicating that the country remains open to international trade.

Figure 15



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Imports	4088721400	6440274000	7708917000	8386153400	7000435600
Exports	1882654700	3569254400	4907581300	4306653100	4197687400

years

FIGURE 15: ZIMBABWE'S EXPORT AND IMPORTS VALUES (USD) 2009-2013
Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 15 above shows the country's export and import values in the period from 2009 to 2013. The figure shows that the country received more imports than it exported during this period. The use of the US dollar during this period meant that the country was using a strong currency compared to other currencies in the region. This is one of the factors that facilitated more imports as exporters from other countries traded with Zimbabwe to acquire the dollar. In addition, the country's manufacturing industry was still recovering from the hyperinflation of 2005 to 2008, which led to the closure of most of these industries. From 2009 to 2013, the country was therefore more dependent on imports, although some manufacturing industries began to recover during this period.

Also, during this period several new industries emerged or gained prominence. These industries contributed to the country's economic recovery and diversification. Here are some notable new industries that formed during the GNU era according to (Mwonzora,2017).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): The ICT sector experienced significant growth during the GNU period. The government implemented measures to promote ICT adoption and investment, which led to the establishment of new technology companies and the expansion of existing ones. This industry contributed to job creation, improved communication infrastructure and improved access to information and services.

Mining and Minerals: The mining industry experienced a boom during the GNU era. Several new mining companies were established, particularly in the gold, platinum and diamond sectors. These investments brought foreign capital into the country and increased export earnings. The mining industry contributed to economic growth and job creation in the local communities.

Tourism: The tourism industry also experienced growth during the GNU period. The government took measures to improve the tourism infrastructure, promote Zimbabwe as a tourist destination and attract international visitors. This led to the development of new tourism facilities such as lodges, hotels and tour operators. The tourism industry contributed to job creation and foreign exchange earnings.

Agriculture and Agro-Processing: The GNU era saw a renewed focus on agriculture and agro-processing industries. The government supported farmers by providing them with access to inputs and finance, which led to an increase in agricultural production. New agro-processing industries were established to valorise agricultural products, reduce post-harvest losses and create employment opportunities.

Renewable Energy: The development of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind energy gained momentum during the GNU period. The government introduced policies to encourage investment in renewable energy projects. This led to the establishment of new companies focussing on the development and installation of renewable energy.

These new industries contributed to economic growth, job creation and diversification in Zimbabwe during the GNU era. They played an important role in the country's recovery and helped lay the foundation for future economic development. This can be seen in Figure 15 above as exports increased during this period.

Figure 15 above shows that the value of imports rose from US$ 4.08 billion in 2009 to US$ 8.3 billion in 2011. This was a 105 per cent increase in the value of the country's imports. In contrast, exports rose from US$ 1.8 billion in 2009 to US$ 4.3 billion in the same period. This represents a 129 percent increase in the value of exports. Although the percentage increase in the value of exports (129%) was higher than the percentage increase in the value of imports (105%), imports remained higher in volume compared to exports. However, imports fell to US$ 7 billion in 2013, while exports fell to US$ 4.1 billion in 2013.

Figure 16

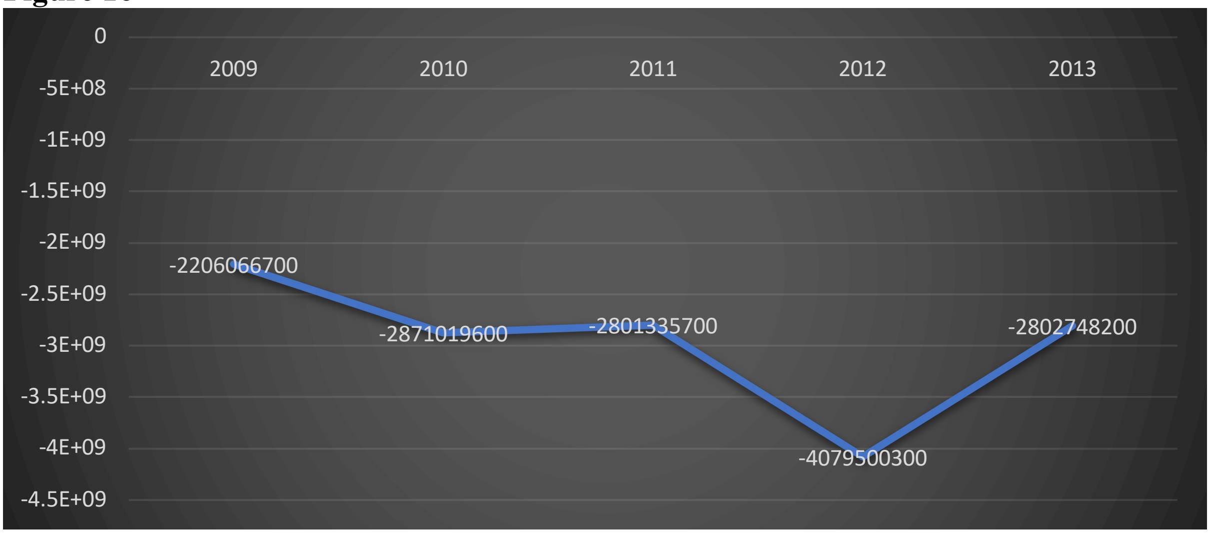


FIGURE 16: TRADE DEFICIT VALUES FOR ZIMBABWE 2009 TO 2013

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 16 shows the trade deficit values of Zimbabwe from 2009 to 2013. The trade deficit values are important to show the country's performance in the area of trade. As can be seen from the graph above, more money was spent on imports than was earned through exports over the entire period. Trade deficits have several disadvantages for an economy. These include workers employed in the manufacturing industry losing their jobs in the future as they cannot withstand foreign competition and the economy being more vulnerable to external shocks due to its openness. Although Zimbabwe has a trade deficit, most exports are unrecorded due to the high level of informal trade, especially at border posts such as Beitbridge, as many products are smuggled into Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe's trade deficit was estimated at -US$ 2 206 066 700 in 2009 and further increased to -US$ 2 871 019 600 in 2010. Zimbabwe's trade deficit reached -US$ 4 079 500 300 in 2012, the highest value in the period from 2009 to 2013.

Figure 17

FIGURE 17: ZIMBABWE'S IMPORT AND EXPORT GROWTH RATES 2009-2013

Source: Author's Computation

Figure 17 shows the growth rates of the country's imports and exports in the period from 2009 to 2013. The growth rates of imports and exports are important as they show the country's trade trends. In addition, the growth rates of imports and exports show the impact of the country's trade policy during the period under review. In the period from 2009 to 2013, Zimbabwe had opened its borders to international trade due to the easing of sanctions by the US and the EU. Since we are looking at the period from 2009 to 2013, the growth rates of Zimbabwe's imports and exports are set at 0 per cent for the year 2009. In 2010, the country's import growth rate reached about 58 per cent, while the export growth rate reached about 90 per cent. It can be seen that at the beginning of the GNU period there was a lot of confidence in the future of the economy and the manufacturing industry started to perform better than in the previous period which was characterised by hyperinflation. In addition, both import and export growth rates declined in 2011, reaching a growth rate of around 20% for imports and around 37% for exports. In 2012, however, the country's export growth rate fell drastically and recorded a drop of around 12%, while imports only grew by 9%. In 2013, the import growth rate recorded growth of around minus 17%, while the export growth rate for the country recorded around minus 3%. Kaminski (2013) points out that the decline in Zimbabwe's export growth rate during this period was primarily due to the global economic slowdown, political instability and drought-related challenges facing Zimbabwe. On the other hand, the increase in the import growth rate was influenced by the depreciation of the local currency and sustained domestic demand.

Figure 18

FIGURE 18: ZIMBABWE'S TRADE IN SERVICES AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP 2009-2013

Source: World Development Indicators, 2023

Figure 18 shows trade in services as a percentage of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). In international trade, services are seen as a pillar for growth and job creation. International trade today is diversified and includes trade in both goods and services. Trade in services in Zimbabwe came into the limelight especially after 2009 when the country introduced the multi-currency regime. During this period of GNU, businesses were allowed to grow and use stable currencies to import and export services. Although trade in services accounted for only a small share relative to trade in goods, it played a crucial role in the development of trade in the country during this period. The figure above shows that trade in services increased from 12.19% in 2009 to 15.33% in 2011. However, in 2012, trade in services declined and reached a percentage of 12.37% and in 2013 a percentage of 11.78%. According to Eaton & Kortum (2018), trade in services refers to the international exchange of services between countries. It includes a wide range of activities such as transport, tourism, financial services and telecommunications. Trade in services has become increasingly important in the global economy and now accounts for a significant share of total world trade.

In Zimbabwe, trade in services has declined and this decline is due to a number of factors, including the country's economic crisis and political instability. The decline in trade in services has had a negative impact on the Zimbabwean economy as it has eroded the country's foreign exchange earnings and made it difficult for businesses to operate.

6.2.3. OBJECTIVE 3: TO ANALYSE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPORT AND EXPORT CONCENTRATION IN ZIMBABWE BETWEEN 2009 TO 2013

This section analyses the characteristics of import and export concentration in Zimbabwe from 2009 to 2013. This objective focuses on identifying product, industry and market concentration. The focus of this objective is to examine export and import market concentration, product concentration and industry concentration in Zimbabwe. The first part of the study focuses on import and export market concentration. The second part focuses on product concentration. The third part deals with industry concentration.

Market Concentration: Exports

Figure 19

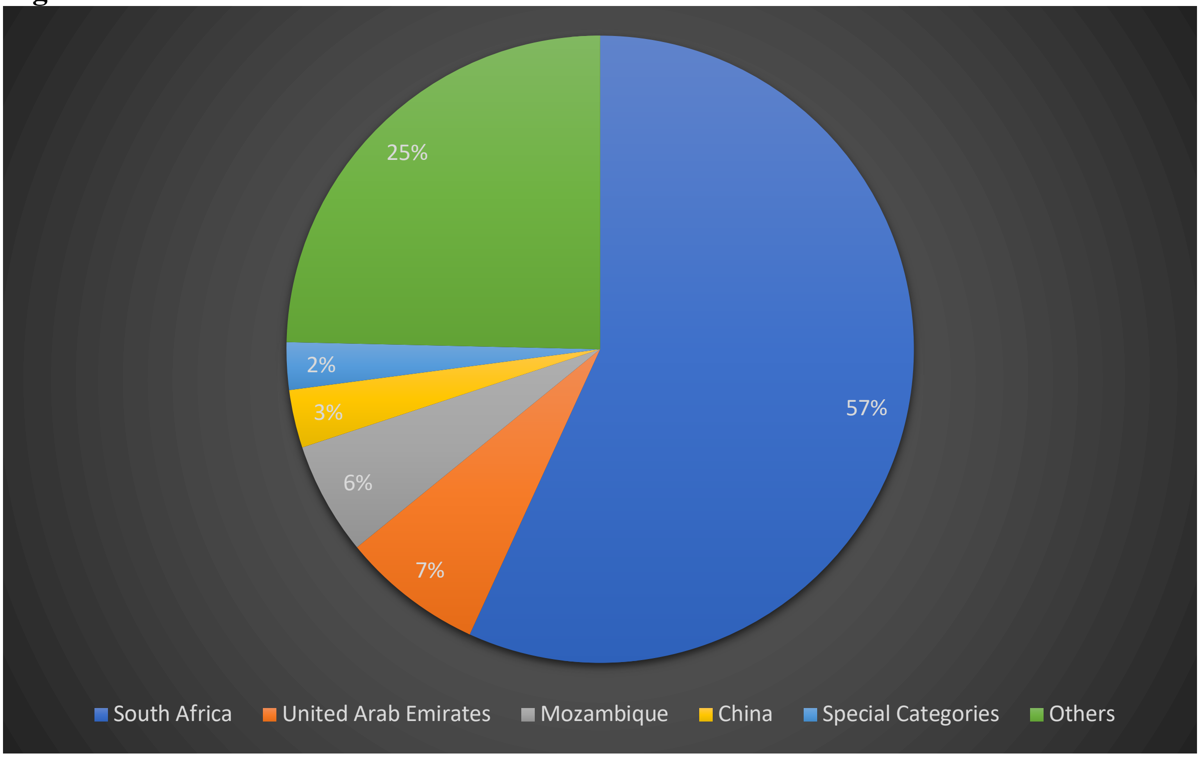


FIGURE 19: ZIMBABWE'S MAJOR 5 EXPORT DESTINATIONS 2009-2013
Source: Author's Computation

Figure 19 above shows the country's top five export destinations in the period 2009 to 2013. Zimbabwe exported most of its products to South Africa (57%). This is followed by exports to the United Arab Emirates (7%), Mozambique (6%), China (3%) and special categories (2%). Countries in the special category include those that are subject to additional controls and regulations by other countries and companies. Other countries are small countries that have imported products from Zimbabwe, but whose export volume is very low. Due to the multi-currency system, it has been easier for Zimbabwe to export its products to South Africa due to the proximity of the country and the ease of exchanging and trading currencies. The Rand was one of the currencies that the country used as a medium of exchange alongside other currencies such as the US Dollar, Botswana Pula etc.

Market Concentration : Imports

Figure 20

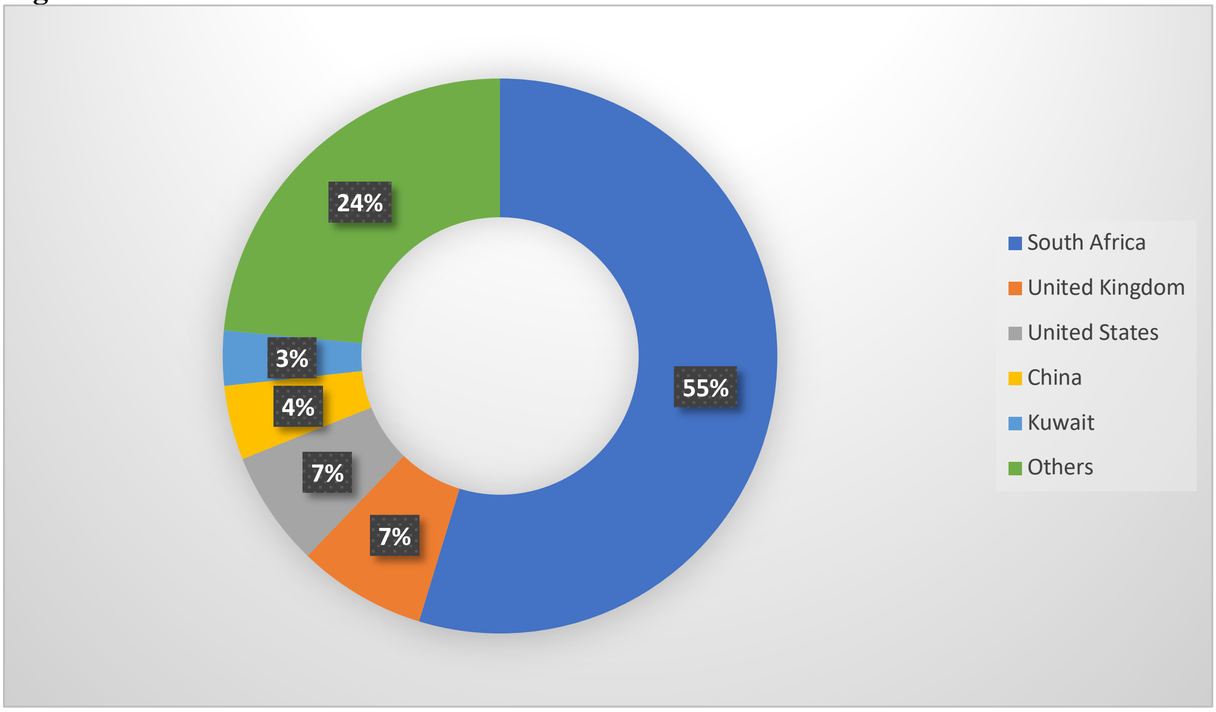


FIGURE 20: ZIMBABWE'S MAJOR 5 IMPORT DESTINATIONS 2009-2013

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

The figure above shows the country's top 5 import destinations from 2009 to 2013. The figure shows that 55% of the country's imports came from South Africa. South Africa had the highest percentage of imports coming into Zimbabwe. This is followed by 7% of imports from the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In addition, 4% of the country's imports in the period 2009 to 2013 came from China, while 24% of imports came from other countries in the world. In the period 2009 to 2013, the use of the strong US dollar compared to other countries' currencies facilitated the inflow of imports into the country. Most individuals and companies imported most of their raw materials and products from South Africa because of its easy accessibility, proximity and the strength of the dollar against the rand. In addition, South Africa and Zimbabwe had signed trade agreements that facilitated trade between the two countries. For example, the 1964 bilateral trade agreement between Zimbabwe and South Africa, which was still in force at the time, allowed duty-free access and trade in certain goods and services between the two countries.

Product Concentration : Exports

Figure 21

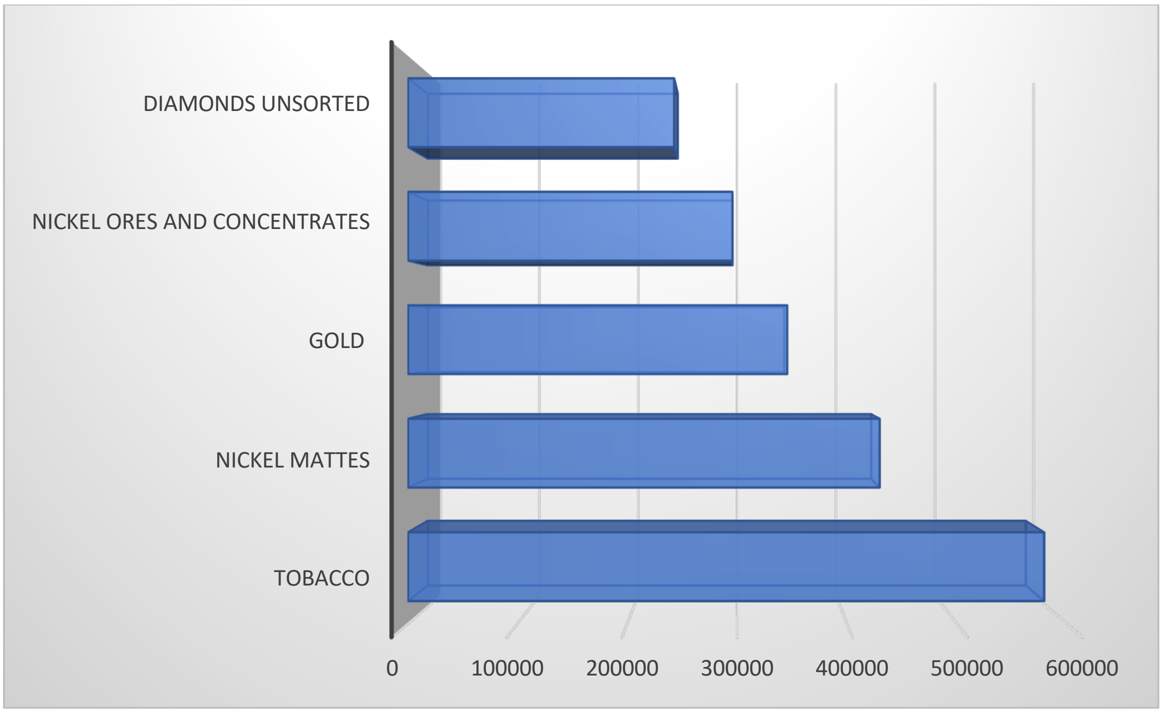


FIGURE 21: ZIMBABWE'S TOP 5 EXPORT PRODUCT CONCENTRATION 2009 TO 2013

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

The figure above shows the concentration of the country's top five export products in the period 2009 to 2013. The figure shows that tobacco was the most important product exported by the country in the period 2009 to 2013. Tobacco exports accounted for US$ 579,754 million. Over the years, tobacco has been the country's main cash crop and a major foreign exchange earner. During this period, the country has maintained its production of tobacco for export. In addition, nickel products worth US$ 429,908 million and gold worth US$ 345,663 million were exported during this period. Exports of nickel and concentrates were valued at US$295.686 million, while exports of unsorted diamonds were valued at US$242.603 million. It should be noted that the country's top five exports to other countries were mostly raw products that were not processed in any way to add value. However, this meant that the country was able to generate less revenue from these exports than from products that underwent some form of value addition. An important aspect to mention here is the impact of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), which was designed to prevent conflict diamonds from entering the legal diamond trade (Ndlovu, 2017). This helped to improve Zimbabwe's reputation as a source of ethical diamonds and increase the demand for Zimbabwean diamonds in international markets. However, the implementation of the KPCS in Zimbabwe led to stricter controls and regulations for the diamond industry (Saurombe, 2014).

Diamond producers and exporters had to fulfil the requirements of the scheme. These included registering with the government, keeping accurate records of diamond production and sales, and submitting diamonds for independent verification and certification. As a result of these measures, Zimbabwe's diamond exports declined significantly after the introduction of the KPCS. This was partly due to the suspension of diamond exports from the Marange diamond fields, which accounted for a large proportion of Zimbabwe's diamond production. The suspension was imposed due to concerns about human rights violations and a lack of transparency in mining operations.

Product Concentration: Imports

Figure 22

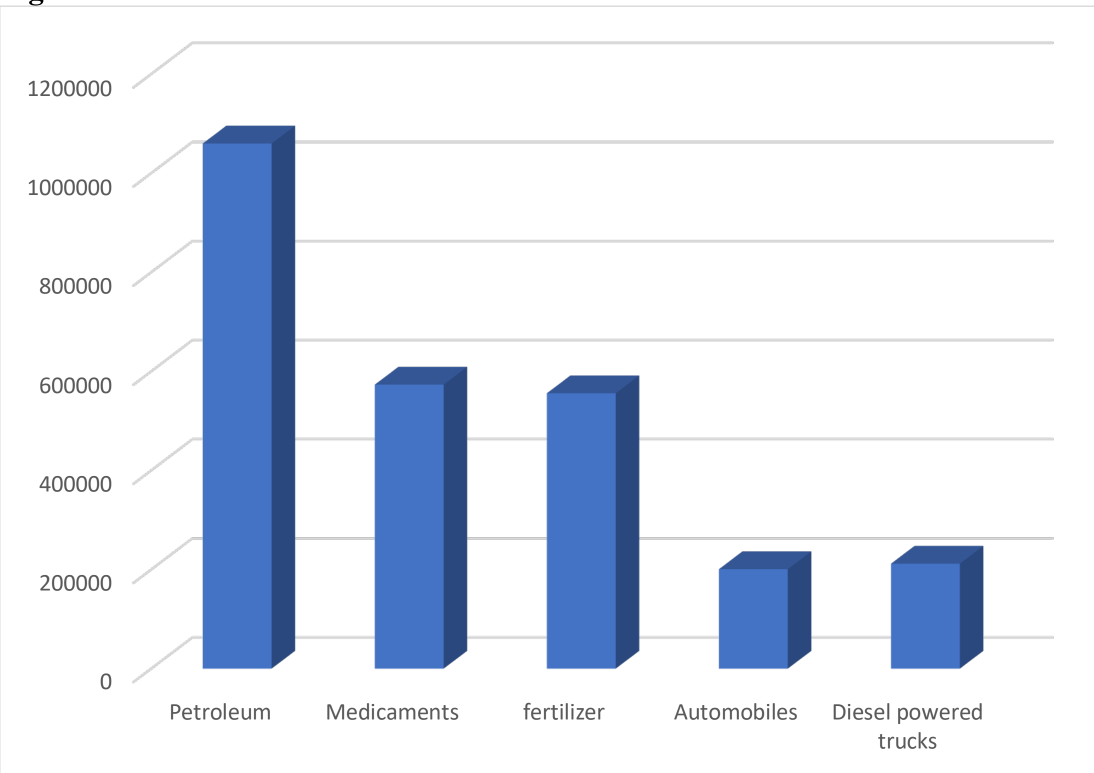


FIGURE 22: ZIMBABWE'S TOP 5 IMPORT PRODUCT CONCENTRATION 2009 TO 2013

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 22 shows the concentration of the country's 5 most important import products in the period 2009 to 2013. The figure shows that oil imports had the highest average imports compared to the other products. The value of petroleum imports totalled US$ 1,059,779,689. This is followed by pharmaceuticals with a value of US$ 573,164 million. The imported pharmaceuticals are substances for cleaning in the processing industry and health products. Imports of fertilisers used in agriculture for plant growth were valued at US$ 555,747 million, while imports of diesel-powered trucks for use in agriculture were valued at US$ 211,814 million. Finally, imports of motor vehicles were valued at US$ 200,748 million.

Industry Concentration :Imports

Figure 23

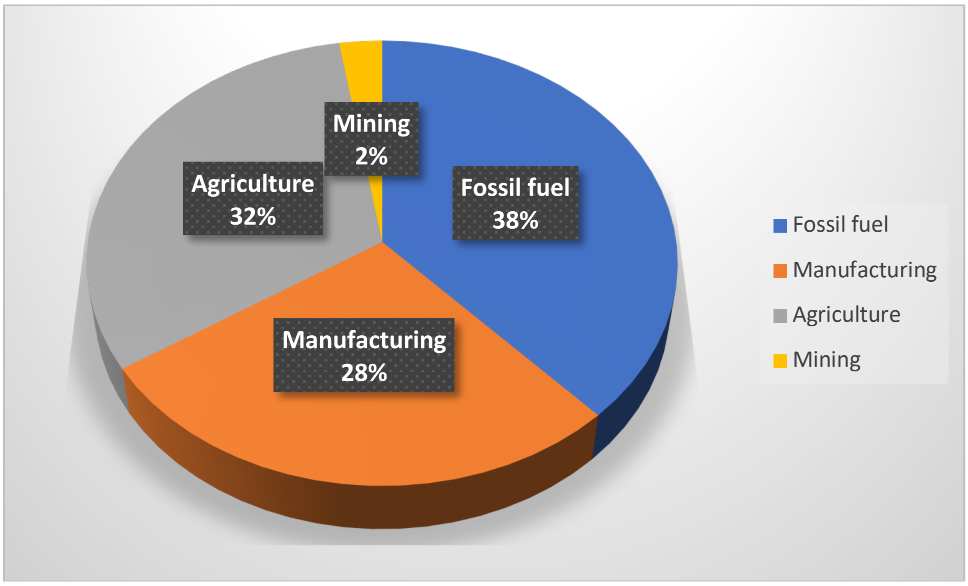


FIGURE 23: ZIMBABWE'S TOTAL IMPORTS BY INDUSTRY 2009 TO 2013
Source: Author's Computation

The figure above shows Zimbabwe's imports by sector from 2009 to 2013. The figure shows that the fossil fuel sector accounted for the largest share of imports from the country (38%), followed by imports from the agricultural sector, which accounted for 32% of imports. Imports from the manufacturing sector accounted for 28% of imports, while imports from the mining sector accounted for only 2% of total industrial imports. The above figure confirms what was shown in Figure 22, namely that oil was the largest importer between 2009 and 2013. In addition, the agricultural sector is an important sector for consumption and exports. Therefore, imports to support the sector's production and productivity were significantly higher between 2009 and 2013. In addition, some industries opened up during the same period due to favourable economic conditions, especially in 2009 and 2010 after the country's hyperinflationary phase. As a result, a significant percentage of imports, including raw materials, were realised during this period.

Industry Concentration :Exports

Figure 24

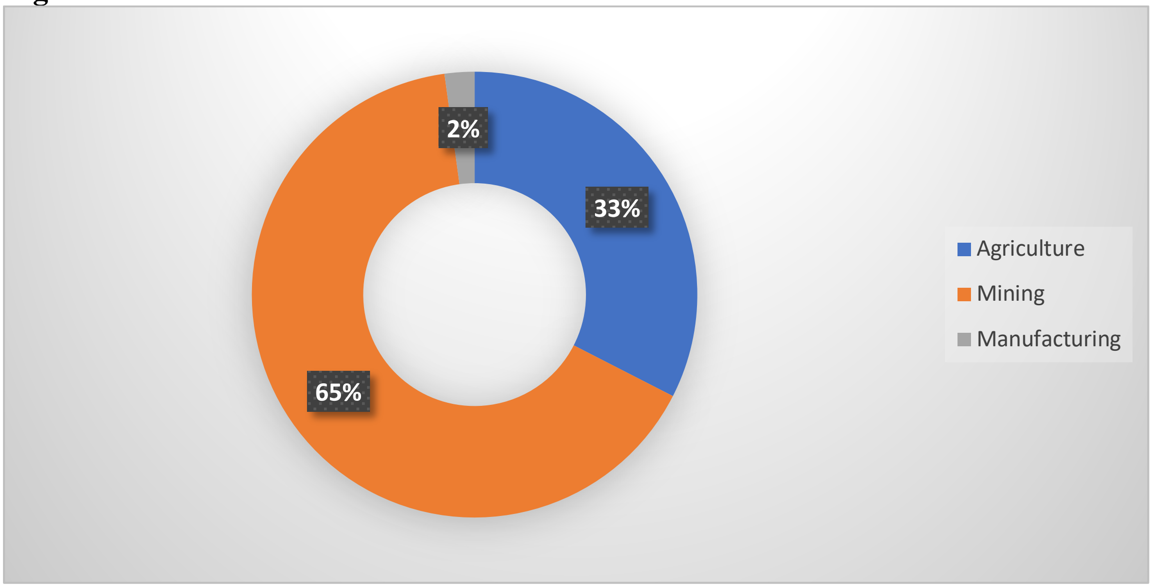


FIGURE 24: ZIMBABWE'S TOTAL EXPORTS BY INDUSTRY 2009 TO 2013
Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

The figure above shows the country's exports by sector in the period from 2009 to 2013. The figure shows that 65% of the country's exports in this period came from mining. This is based on the total exports from 2009 to 2013. This is also consistent with Figure 23, which shows that most of the country's products that were exported were raw mining products, such as gold, nickel items and unsorted diamonds. It is important that this research emphasises that during this period, illegal artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) emerged as a key sector attracting young people in Zimbabwe. While informal mining created jobs and secured livelihoods for millions of people in Zimbabwe, young people working in the sector also suffered from numerous challenges (Gwande, 2023). According to Saunders (2017), artisanal mining involves individuals or small groups extracting minerals using rudimentary tools and methods, often without proper regulation or safety measures. In Zimbabwe, artisanal mining gained prominence during this period due to several factors, including economic hardships and the collapse of the formal mining sector. However, it also brought challenges including environmental degradation, limited oversight and safety concerns (Muchemwa & Patel, 2022). These minerals are often sold to intermediaries or exported illegally, leading to concerns about transparency and accountability in the mining sector.

Moreover, exports from the agricultural sector accounted for 33% of total exports during this period, while exports from the manufacturing sector accounted for only 2% of total exports. The low percentage of manufacturing exports shows that although the country had better economic conditions compared to the previous period of hyperinflation, the manufacturing industry was still struggling to build capacity and increase production.

6.3. Discussion of Results

The formation of Zimbabwe's Government of National Unity (GNU) from 2009 to 2013 exemplifies a political settlement aimed at stabilizing a polarized political and economic environment. However, the GNU's effectiveness and impact, as viewed through the lens of the political settlement framework, reveal inherent weaknesses and partial successes.The GNU was conceptualized to oversee reforms and establish conditions for free and fair elections. However, as the political settlement framework underscores, the success of such arrangements hinges on how power is distributed among key actors and institutions. ZANU-PF retained significant de facto power despite the formal coalition with the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). This imbalance undermined the inclusivity of the settlement and hampered transformative governance. While social protection reforms, such as cash transfers and food aid programs, were initiated under MDC-led ministries, these measures were insufficient to counteract broader systemic challenges.

The introduction of a multi-currency regime under the GNU helped combat hyperinflation and stabilize the economy. From a political settlement perspective, this intervention reflected a pragmatic response to an economic crisis, enabled by an implicit consensus among political elites on the need for macroeconomic stabilization. The GNU was established at a time when the country was facing hyperinflation, a prolonged period of negative gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates and a massive devaluation of the currency (Kanyenze et al., 2017). The introduction of a multi-currency economy during this period, which included the use of the US dollar, the South African rand and the Botswana Pula, led to changes in trade dynamics, as noted by (Chinyoka & Seekings, 2016). In this paper, the researcher argue that the introduction of multiple currencies helped to combat hyperinflation during this period. This helped to stabilise prices and encouraged trade as a more reliable and stable currency was available for transactions. This can be seen in the trade flows above in Figure 15, where the value of exports increased by 129 per cent. Although the percentage increase in the value of exports (129%) was higher than the percentage increase in the value of imports (105%), imports remained higher in volume compared to exports. Political settlement in the form of the GNU in Zimbabwe had a significant impact on the country's trade flows. The formation of the GNU led to a more stable economic environment that favoured trade and investment.However, while trade flows improved during this period,evidenced by increased export values,Zimbabwe's trade patterns were more influenced by regional market conditions and external factors than by the GNU itself. The political settlement, characterized by fragile compromise, did not address structural impediments such as inconsistent trade policies, weak infrastructure, and investor distrust. These issues, rooted in the broader distribution of political and economic power, limited the settlement's capacity to foster sustainable economic transformation.

The reforms under the GNU, including efforts to liberalize trade and improve the business environment, were constrained by entrenched power struggles between coalition partners. While these reforms were not always successful, these changes facilitated trade, as shown by the increase in trade openness in Figure 14. According to Zinyama & Takavarasha (2014), there was a socio-economic slowdown and policy inconsistencies that affected business and investor confidence, deindustrialisation and job creation. However, the researcher argues that the GNU brought a degree of political stability and reduced the fear of government land confiscation and other policies that had previously deterred foreign investment. This boosted investor confidence, which in turn had a positive impact on trade and in particular on the revitalisation of the manufacturing sector. Some manufacturing industries began to recover and other new industries were established. This can be seen in Figure 15 above, as exports increased during the GNU period.

The political settlement framework highlights how the distribution of organizational power shapes the effectiveness of institutions. In Zimbabwe, the dominance of ZANU-PF over the MDC diluted the coalition’s capacity to implement cohesive and inclusive policies. For instance, tariff structures that disincentivized exports and restrictive trade policies persisted, reflecting the limits of the GNU as a transformative political settlement.From a political economy perspective and in conjunction with the political settlement analysis presented in the literature review in Chapter 3, the transformation policies implemented through STERP 1 and STERP 2 have not led to a win-win situation and inclusive development in Zimbabwe. It is worth noting that a political settlement determines the outcome of the policy. The researcher further argues that the GNU was a weak political coalition that hindered the transformation of exports in Zimbabwe.Drawing parallels with cases like Nigeria's agricultural policy failures (Atela and Mustapha, 2022), it is evident that weak political settlements often result in fragmented and ineffective policy implementation. Similarly, the GNU's inability to address Zimbabwe’s structural challenges, such as corruption, policy inconsistencies, and deindustrialization, underscores the importance of equitable power distribution in achieving developmental outcomes.

According to the political settlement paradigm, it is crucial to understand how organisational power is distributed in order to comprehend how institutions and politics influence both economics and politics (Khan, 2018). Furthermore, the political settlement paradigm outlines that resources are distributed according to institutions and politics, which can have different effects on different types of organisations (Khan, 2018). In the case of Zimbabwe, we see that the ZANU-PF regime failed to adequately share power with its main opposition during the GNU period. Therefore, institutions and policies that are most likely to endure, as well as those that are most likely to evolve, may be determined by the distribution of organisational power, as Khan (2018) argues. As Khan notes, it is important to observe how the relationships between ruling coalitions and different economic units are changing, as there may be signs that the current balance of power in political settlements is in danger or consolidating. The above issues show very well that the political balance in Zimbabwe was in jeopardy. This is clearly demonstrated by the lack of transformation of the productive capacity of the economy during the transition period. While the GNU brought a degree of political and economic stability, it fell short of achieving significant structural transformation. The political settlement framework elucidates how power asymmetries within the coalition undermined its ability to enact meaningful reforms. The GNU's focus on short-term stabilization rather than long-term institutional restructuring meant that its achievements were limited and transient. Trade dynamics during the GNU period improved marginally but were not robust enough to drive sustained economic growth, highlighting the importance of inclusive and balanced political settlements in shaping developmental trajectories.

It is important to note that the impact of the GNU on trade flows in Zimbabwe was not all positive as outlined in the results analysis section. The country still faced various economic and political challenges during this period as not all reforms and policies were effectively implemented (Mukorera, 2016). The situation evolved over time. in 2013, the GNU ended, and Zimbabwe faced different economic and political dynamics, which brings us to the next topic where we will focus on the post-GNU period. In the next period, we look at what happened to trade after the dissolution of the GNU. It is fair to say that the GNU had both positive and negative effects on trade flows in Zimbabwe during the transition to democracy.

6.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Despite the positive aspects of the GNU described above, Zimbabwe still faced structural challenges, including a lack of infrastructure, corruption and inefficiencies in the business environment (Maphoto, 2022). These problems continued to hinder trade and economic growth. It is important to note that the impact of the GNU on trade flows in Zimbabwe was not all positive, as outlined in the results analysis section. The country still faced various economic and political challenges during this period as not all reforms and policies were effectively implemented (Mukorera, 2016). The situation evolved over time. in 2013, the GNU ended and Zimbabwe faced a different economic and political dynamic, which brings us to the next topic where we focus on the post-GNU period. In the next period we look at what happened to trade after the dissolution of the GNU. It is fair to say that the GNU had both positive and negative effects on trade flows in Zimbabwe during the transition to democracy. It is true that a government of national unity can have an impact on trade flows, as trade law reforms and international treaties have been shown to have a positive effect on trade, with international treaties having a stronger effect (Gil-Pareja, Llorca-Vivero & Paniagua, 2020). Overall, the relationship between the government of the national entity and trade flows is complex and can be influenced by various factors such as trade law reforms, international treaties, economic growth and data flow regulations.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Zimbabwe was subject to sanctions by the European Union and the United States during this period. As a result, this was a contentious issue between the parties of the GNU. The volume of trade did recover from the recession as can be seen from the data presented above. It can also be concluded from the above analysis that, apart from tobacco, agricultural exports lost their dominant role in the region and the export basket became less diversified and more dependent on a narrow range of products. This is also in line with the conclusions drawn by Newfarmer & Pierola (2015) in their study analysing trade trends and patterns in Zimbabwe. The poor export performance was attributed to policy problems such as poor macroeconomic policy predictability, an unfavourable climate for private investment and trade, and restrictive policies towards services.

To summarise, political unification in the form of a GNU in Zimbabwe had both positive and negative effects on the political sphere and also on trade. While efforts were made to address the political problems and stabilise the economy, many challenges and tensions remained. The power-sharing arrangement finally ended in 2013 with elections that led to the return of ZANU-PF to a dominant position in Zimbabwean politics. This chapter looked at the development outcomes of the GNU, which did not only contribute to immediate peace or the management of national crises in Zimbabwe. This chapter adopted a critical perspective to the analysis of the phenomenon of the GNU as a political solution and its impact on trade in Zimbabwe during the transition to democracy. The researcher developed a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the historical, political and economic contexts. The next chapter looks at the three objectives for the post-GNU period (2014-2020).

7. CHAPTER SEVEN: THE POST-GNU PERIOD: A REPETITION WITHOUT CHANGE AND FURTHERING AWAY FROM DEMOCRACY [2014-2020]

7.1. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

It is common knowledge that coalition governments are used to resolve crises or imbalances in a country. However, there are cases where voters favour this type of government model to avoid abuse of power by a dominant majority party. Coalition governments are therefore the norm in some countries. GNU/coalition governments can lead to political stability. Political stability can positively influence economic conditions and have an impact on economic growth and development. It is worth noting that some GNUs do not work successfully to achieve economic development and growth. While there are few that collapse completely, their shortcomings can be seen in the quality of services provided (Dodo et al., 2012). The essence of any government is to monitor development. When this does not happen, it is either because there are no resources or because the definition of development varies. Many researchers are of the opinion that the GNU in Zimbabwe (2009-2013) failed to achieve any significant development because the ZANU-PF regime did not honour the GPA agreements (Chigora & Guzura, 2011; Nhede, 2012; Mukuhlani, 2014). Furthermore, the various political parties that formed the GNU in Zimbabwe from 2009 to 2014 pursued party interests and ignored the GPA itself. As a result, the goals of political, economic and security reforms mentioned in chapter six were not achieved. As Dodo et al (2012) put it, the Zimbabwean coalition government has literally failed as the essentials for which it was created have not been achieved or realised. This chapter seeks to examine what has happened to political relations and trade flows in Zimbabwe after the dissolution of the GNU. Has the GNU succeeded in contributing to sustainable growth and political stability in the long term? If so, or if not, how has this affected trade flows in Zimbabwe between 2014 and 2020?

Elections were held in Zimbabwe in 2013. After ZANU-PF regained control of the government in the 2013 elections, the economy slowly went downhill. Before the 2013 parliamentary elections, GDP growth (in % per year) was 14.62 in 2011, 15.74 in 2012 and 3.20 in 2013 (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2023). After the 2013 elections and ZANU-PF's return to political power, the economy slowly declined. The economic gains made under the GNU disappeared as ZANU-PF returned to waste, corruption and populism (Ndakaripa, 2020). The period after the 2013 elections saw several important developments in Zimbabwean politics. Raftopoulos (2014) argues that the radical rhetoric that had characterised ZANU-PF’s campaign for the 2013 elections gave way to a combination of a new movement towards neoliberal policies and a renewed rapprochement with the West.

After the 2013 elections, the enormous economic constraints facing the country forced the Mugabe regime to adopt a more conciliatory tone as it re-engaged with the West in search of economic support (Raftopoulos, 2014). This move was necessary as the economy was in a poor state despite all the economic reforms the Mugabe regime had implemented since the early 1990s. The constraints of victory became evident as ZANU-PF struggled to find a way through the daunting economic and political challenges (Rwodzi, 2018) that Zimbabwe faced in the post-GNU era. In a statement in May 2014, Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa made it clear that the Government of Zimbabwe “recognises that systematic engagement with all nations will be key to unlocking finance” and addressing the country’s liquidity problem (Raftopoulos, 2014). In line with the government’s continued negotiations with the IMF, which are “centred on macroeconomic stability”, Chinamasa announced:

> In short, Zimbabwe is open to Foreign Direct Investment from all Nations of the World, whether these be in the North, South, East or West. Let the message go out loud and clear that Zimbabwe is ready to re-integrate into the global economy. Zimbabwe is looking for new friendships, new opportunities while consolidating old ones. We are looking for mutually beneficial economic relationships not confrontation. We are too small a country to pursue a policy of confrontation.

However, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya (2020), the "Zimbabwe is open for business" paradigm was a mere extension of imperialism and led to extroverted economies structured to serve the needs of the outside world.

Zimbabwe has experienced major political changes between 2014 and 2020. These changes have in some ways determined the country's path into the future. This period was characterised by a change in the leadership of the ruling party from former President Robert Mugabe to the current President Emmerson Mnangagwa. However, a common feature that the country has faced during this period is the level of political instability in both the ruling ZANU-PF party and the opposition parties, which include the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance (Noyes, 2020). The MDC Alliance also faced instability during this period following the death of its founder Morgan Tsvangirai in February 2018

Between 2014 and 2020, youth activism in the country increased as the country faced an economic collapse characterised by high inflation, high cost of living, high unemployment and high poverty (Matsilele & Ruhanya 2021). A series of protests broke out in the country. The government deployed security forces to silence the protesters by arresting some and killing others. Factionalism in ZANU-PF also intensified during this period when the country's former vice president, Joyce Mujuru, was removed from office by former President Mugabe over allegations of Mugabe's attempted assassination and other corruption charges (BBC, 2014). Factionalism in ZANU-PF did not end there, as the Mnangagwa faction and another faction known as Generation -40 (G40) created instability in the ZANU-PF party. A new phase of Zimbabwean politics began in November 2017 when former President Mugabe was deposed by the army (Mutanda, 2023). Mugabe was replaced by Emmerson Mnangagwa, who had previously been expelled from the party due to factional constraints. Although the ruling party remained the same, the government became popularly known as the “New Dispensation” or “Second Republic”.

A variety of initiatives were undertaken under President Emmerson Mnangagwa, representing both continuity and change from the previous leadership. These initiatives intended to stabilize the political landscape while addressing the military's role in government and foreign relations. However, Dodo (2021) claims that the new administration adopted legislation to protect the interests of coup participants, resulting to increasing repression and a focus on retaining control over opposition. Although many contend that the fundamental structures remained the same, some contend that President Mnangagwa introduced the idea of a "Second Republic" to mark a break from Mugabe's governance. Maringira (2021) claims that the military's prominence in politics increased, implying a quasi-military governance model that threatens democratic processes. One of the significant policy developments that came with the 2017 coup was a renewed focus on fixing the country's economic issues. The shift from colonial to post-independence Zimbabwe was distinguished by policy rhetoric, political, and economic interest group contests.

The new administration sought to address these economic woes. The second significant policy change was a renewed emphasis on land reform and redistribution. Land distribution and access to land had been a contentious issue since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 .The Mugabe administration had often used land reform as a political tool, with members of the war veterans' association and other supporters of the ruling party occupying commercial farms owned by white Zimbabweans(Mashinggaidze,2021) Although Mnangagwa initially indicated that the government would not reverse Mugabe's land reforms, he allowed some compensation to be paid to white farmers whose land had been expropriated. Mazorodze (2023) notes that in 2020, Zimbabwe signed an agreement to compensate white farmers about $3.5 billion for improvements made on the farms that were taken over.

The Mnangagwa regime also promoted re-engagement with Western nations. Under Mnangagwa, Zimbabwe aimed to improve relations with Western nations, especially the U.S. and European Union, in order to remove economic sanctions and restore aid. The regime aimed to enhance relations with Western nations to alleviate sanctions and draw foreign investment, indicating a change in Zimbabwe's foreign policy strategy (Melber & Southall, 2021). Mnangagwa underscored the importance of re-engaging with international investors and financial institutions to revitalize Zimbabwe's ailing economy. This encompassed strategies to enhance foreign direct investment (FDI) and diminish regulatory obstacles for enterprises. The currency reforms aimed to stabilize Zimbabwe’s currency and terminate the hyperinflation period. In 2019, Mnangagwa’s government reinstated the Zimbabwean dollar, supplanting the U.S. dollar that had been in circulation since 2009 (Dodo, 2021).The controversial indigenization law, mandating foreign-owned companies to transfer 51% of their shares to local Zimbabweans, has been amended (Mazorodze, 2023). The legislation was amended to pertain exclusively to the diamond and platinum sectors, allowing full foreign ownership in other industries.

So, in his first days as president, Mnangagwa inspired the nation and raised hopes at home and abroad that progressive economic reforms would be introduced. With the announcement "Zimbabwe is Open for Business", he launched a new campaign of economic diplomacy, offering reforms and international co-operation as elaborated in the above paragraphs. It was widely believed that the economy would benefit from the fall of Mugabe (Ndakaripa, 2020). However, Rwodzi (2019) noted that Zimbabwe became politically polarised after the 2017 coup d'état and soon after the subsequent harmonised elections of 2018, whose presidential results were and still are disputed. After many years of de-industrialisation under Mugabe's presidency, President Mnangagwa brought with him the hope of a return to democratic rule and economic development. However, a military government cannot be trusted to govern democratically. The Mnangagwa regime remains enmeshed in so-called Mugabeism, as explained in chapter two. This term is used to describe a nationalist power matrix underpinned by party-state and party-nation constructs and held hostage by those who claim to have liberated the country from colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). This has made it very difficult for the Mnangagwa regime to reconnect and integrate with the West.

7.2. Results, Interpretations, and Analysis

This section answers all three research questions. Firstly, what was the state of political relations in Zimbabwe? Second, what are the trade flows in Zimbabwe? Third, what are the characteristics of import and export concentrations in Zimbabwe? Focusing on the period 2014 to 2020, the first part analyses and describes the state of political relations in Zimbabwe between 2014 and 2020. The second part analyses the state of trade flows in Zimbabwe between 2014 and 2020. The third part analyses the characteristics of import and export concentrations in Zimbabwe between 2014 and 2020.

7.2.1. Objective 1: Review and describe the status of political relationships in Zimbabwe between 2014-2020

Between 2014 and 2020, Zimbabwe underwent significant political developments as described in the introduction section above. These developments shaped the country's relations both domestically and internationally. Zimbabwe was also characterised by a significant political transition, economic challenges, efforts to re-engage with the international community and ongoing domestic political tensions. The country struggled with the need for reform, both politically and economically, to address long-standing issues and position itself for a more stable and prosperous future. Using a thematic analysis, this study has identified some of the key issues that emerged between 2014 and 2020, listed below in the following order: Protests, Factions, Transition, Opposition Politics, Violence and Concerns over Human Rights.

Theme 1: Protests

After the harmonised elections of 2013, in which former President Robert Mugabe emerged victorious, the country was confronted with difficult economic conditions that led to protests (Human Rights Watch, 2014). The protests that took place in the country from 2014 to 2016 were aimed at calling on the international community to put pressure on the Zimbabwean government to address the political, social and economic challenges that prevailed during this period (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). The political and economic challenges that the country faced during this period led to political movements such as the hashtag this flag which was founded in 2016. The movement had platforms on social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter where citizens could voice their concerns about the challenges the country was facing. These challenges included corruption, high levels of poverty and unemployment. The founder of this movement was a pastor of a Baptist church named Pastor Evan Mawarire.

Pastor Evan Mawarire at a press conference in Harare in June,2016. **Photograph: Philimon Bulawayo/Reuters (Source, The Mail & Guardian,2016)**

Mawarire emphasised during this period that it was time for Zimbabweans to live without fear and hold the government accountable for the political and economic challenges in the country. The movement was also founded against the backdrop of allegations of the abduction of activist Itai Dzamara by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces in 2015. Within a few months, the Hashtag this flag political movement became popular and mass protests, known as national shutdowns, began to be organised, particularly in the capital Harare (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). The Hashtag This Flag movement held several protests in the months of May, June, July and August 2016 (Chin'ono & Onishi, 2016). The movement claimed that the government had crippled the country and demanded the removal of corrupt ministers, the removal of roadblocks that were seen as a means of bribing police officers, and the payment of delayed salaries to civil servants.

A picture of an advertisement by Hashtag This flag in May 2016. (Source, The Mail & Guardian,2016)

In an interview by the Guardian on the 11th of July 2016, a leading political commentator and University of Zimbabwe lecturer, Professor Ibbo Mandaza said on the protests organised by *hashtag thisflag* that:

> Clearly there is a coincidence or intersection of national grievances across the board, economic and political. That intersection has proved lethal in the last days. We are in a new phase of politics.

The protests organised under the *#thisflag* gained popularity in the country, which led to Mawarire being arrested on 12 July 2016 for inciting political violence. However, he was released months later but re-arrested at Harare International Airport in 2017 for allegedly attempting to overthrow the government. The former president of Zimbabwe , Robert Mugabe, condemned the movement in July 2016 when he attended the funeral of a national hero, Charles Utete, with the following words:

> You can't urge people to adopt violence, violent demonstrations as the way of life or a way of solving grievances, no. We will say no, forever no. (Reuters, 2016).

In 2016, the country again witnessed the rise of another political movement known as the hashtag Tajamuka (#Tajamuka). “Tajamuka” is a colloquial Shona expression meaning “we are against", “we reject” or “we have rebelled”. Their political communication is often introduced with “Hatichada” (“We will no longer obey”) and “Hatichatya” (“We are no longer afraid”) (Mpofu & Matsilele, 2020).youth activists, civil society groups, churches and student movement groups (Accord, 2016) founded the movement in May 2016. The movement started as a campaign against the government on a number of issues including the abolition of bond notes, the creation of 2.2 million jobs promised by ZANU-PF during the 2013 election campaign, curbing corruption, the return of Itai Dzamara (who had been abducted in 2015 as mentioned above) and solving the cash crisis that was prevalent in the country

A picture of protests which took place in August 2016 *by #Tajamuka* (Source, Mail &The Guardian,2016)

The *#tajamuka* political movement held a series of protests in the country in 2016 to call on the government to address their concerns. Tajamuka members have since been arrested for inciting violence. In addition, some members of Tajamuka were arrested in the same year for allegedly burning down the Beitbridge border post warehouse (Musarurwa, 2016). The government deployed the police to arrest the protesters and disperse the crowd.

Several people who took part in these protests were the youth, as they felt the pain of the declining economy due to high unemployment the most. Some of the short term triggers of such protest movements were the government's decision to introduce Statutory Instrument (SI) 64 of 2016 which banned the importation of goods without a licence and the introduction of promissory notes to tackle the cash crisis in May 2016 (Pophihwa, 2017). The SI 64 of 2016 stipulated that imports of selected products were only allowed if local producers were unable to meet local demand. In the spirit of revitalising local industry, the regulation of imports was intended to stimulate demand.

However, according to Wiklef & Whatmore (2020), the implementation of SI 64 was negatively received by some economic actors, such as informal cross-border traders and small to medium-sized local businesses that rely on imports for their operations. The legal provisions of SI 64 have also been criticised for restricting the ability of farmers to renegotiate their property rights, which could jeopardise Zimbabwe's stability as an economic hub (Wiklef & Whatmore ,2020). Another trigger for the protests was when former President Mugabe announced in March 2016 that the country had been robbed of more than US$15 billion in revenue from diamond mining in Chiadzwa by mining companies operating in the area. In March 2016, former President Mugabe emphasised the following

> We have not received much from the diamond industry at all. Companies that have been mining diamonds have robbed us of our wealth. That is why we have now said the state must have a monopoly.

Theme 2: The emergence of factions within the ruling party

Since 2014, the ruling ZANU-PF party has been characterised by political factions that have caused instability within the party. The party had two factions: the Mujuru faction, led by former Vice President Joice Mujuru, and the Mnangagwa faction, led by the current President of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa. Mujuru was appointed Vice President by former President Mugabe in 2004 (Mangena, 2022). This appointment followed the Tsholotsho Declaration of 2004, which called on the party to be progressive and implement reforms to bring the youth into the party. In an effort to prove himself as a progressive leader, Mugabe appointed the first female vice president, Joice Mujuru, as vice president on 6 December 2004 (Mangena, 2022). Mujuru's ascension to vice president was seen as a defeat for Mnangagwa, as he was seen as an anti-women and anti-reform leader (Mangena, 2022). Mnangagwa was seen as a hardliner in the ZANU-PF party.

In 2014, it had emerged that the two factions of Mujuru and Mnangagwa were competing over who should take over the leadership when Mugabe was no longer around due to Mugabe's old age (Msindo, 2016). However, Mujuru and her faction were ousted from the party in 2014 amid accusations of plotting to assassinate former President Mugabe and allegations of corruption (Hove, 2019). Seven other ministers were also removed from the government and the party. Former

Minister of State Security Didymus Mutasa and former Energy Minister Dzikamai Mavhaire as well as former ZANU-PF spokesperson Rugare Gumbo were among the high-profile ministers removed during this period. In a statement following her removal from office, former Vice President Joice Mujuru highlighted the following on 9 December 2014:

> I have become the fly in the web of lies whose final objective is the destruction of ZANU-PF and what it stands for and ultimately the present government. A vociferous attempt has been made to portray me as 'a traitor', 'murderer' and 'sellout', yet no iota of evidence has been produced to give credence to the allegations. (Al Jazeera, 2014).

Following the dismissal of former Vice President Mujuru, former President Mugabe appointed Mnangagwa as the country's Vice President on 10 December 2014. Following his appointment in December 2014, Mnangagwa emphasised the following:

> I assured the president, I want to assure the party, its leadership, that I will remain loyal, committed and uphold the correct line of the revolution. (The Guardian, 2014).

However, this announcement was not good news for some members of the party, as Mnangagwa was seen as a hardliner who was less reform-minded (The Guardian, 2014). This led to the formation of the faction that became known as Generation 40 (G40), as described in Chapter 2. G40 was a faction of younger ZANU-PF members. The formation of the G40 faction led to continued instability in the ZANU-PF party. The faction is believed to have been led by former ZANU-PF National Commissioner, Saviour Kasukuwere, and former Minister of Higher Education, Jonathan Moyo. The faction was backed by Mugabe's family and the group was believed to have received support from Mugabe's wife Grace Mugabe.

The Zanu-PF team – Saviour Kasukuwere, Dr Qhubani Moyo, Professor Jonathan Moyo and Phillip Chiyangwa, members of the G40 faction in ZANU-PF. (Source, Nehanda Radio, April 22,2017).

Tensions between the G40 and Mnangagwa's faction (Lacoste) intensified in August 2017 when it was reported that Mnangagwa was ill and had been taken to a South African hospital for treatment. It was alleged that Mnangagwa had been poisoned by an ice cream he had consumed during a rally organised by former President Mugabe. The ice cream came from Mugabe's dairy farm (Hove, 2019). At the time, the country's second vice president, Phelekezela Mphoko, emphasised that stale food was the cause of Mnangagwa's illness and accused Mnangagwa of trying to create instability in the country because of this problem (Dube, 2017). In October 2017, the former president's wife, Grace Mugabe, became a vocal critic of Mnangagwa, starting a rumour that the former president wanted his wife to succeed him as the country's president (Dzirutwe, 2017). Furthermore, in early November 2017, during a church rally in Harare, Grace Mugabe accused Mnangagwa of plotting a coup attempt against the president since independence. This prompted former President Mugabe to remove Mnangagwa from the office of Vice President on 6

November 2017 (Al Jazeera, 2017). However, Mnangagwa fled due to rumours that he had been arrested by the police. At the time, the then commander of the army, General Constantino Chiwenga, was in China for treatment. There were also indications that the senior army officers who supported Mnangagwa were not happy about his removal from the vice presidency and the party (Al Jazeera, 2017).

When then army chief Chiwenga returned from treatment in China on 11 November 2017, police officers were dispatched to the airport to arrest him to placate possible army opposition to the removal of Mnangagwa as vice president. However, it was reported that he escaped arrest as soldiers were involved in the case. The next day, Chiwenga gave a press conference and emphasised the following

> The military were obliged to take corrective measures when the gains of the liberation struggle were threatened, and the military would not hesitate to step in to protect the revolution". "It is our strong and deeply considered position that if drastic action is not taken immediately, our beloved country Zimbabwe will definitely be headed to becoming a neo-colony again(GCBSA, 2017).

Political events in Zimbabwe came thick and fast during this period in 2017 (Mutanda, 2023). On 15 November 2017, the military carried out a military intervention that became known as "Operation Restore Legacy". Former President Mugabe was placed under house arrest, as were other G40 members. During this time, the military denied that it was a coup d'état, but rather that they were targeting "criminals" who were in the president's entourage. The military had taken over all important institutions, including the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). The then Major General Sibusiso Moyo said the following in a ZBC broadcast on 15 November 2017:

> We wish to assure our nation, His Excellency, the president of the republic of Zimbabwe and commander in chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, comrade R G Mugabe and his family, are safe and sound and their security is guaranteed. We are only targeting criminals around him who are committing crimes that are causing social and economic suffering in the country in order to bring them to justice.

In November 2017, President Mugabe was ousted by the ZANU-PF party and Mnangagwa became the new leader. Parliament had also begun to prepare impeachment proceedings against Mugabe.

Both the ruling ZANU-PF party and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supported the impeachment motion at the time. The motion emphasised that Mugabe had violated the constitution by promoting his wife to take over the reins of government and that he was too old to fulfil the duties of president of the country. Mugabe finally resigned on 21 November 2023 after pressure from the military, the Zimbabwean people and the parliament, which wanted to impeach him. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, welcomed Mugabe's resignation and emphasised the following:

> Today's decision will go down in history as an act of statesmanship that can only bolster President Mugabe's political legacy. "The African Union recognizes that the Zimbabwean people have expressed their will that there should be a peaceful transfer of power in a manner that secures the democratic future of their country. President Mugabe's decision to resign paves the way for a transition process, owned and led by the sovereign people of Zimbabwe.

A picture of Parliament celebrating as news that Mugabe had resigned came through: Source, CNN, JEKESAI NJIKIZANA/AFP/Getty Images.

In the days that followed, the people of Zimbabwe celebrated the fall of the former president by taking to the streets in large numbers to celebrate. You can see this in the following pictures:

A picture of people celebrating after Mugabe resigns : Source, CNN, JEKESAI NJIKIZANA/AFP/Getty Images.

More celebrations up till the night as people celebrated Mugabe's resignation : Source, CNN, JEKESAI NJIKIZANA/AFP/Getty Images.

After almost two weeks, Mnangagwa returned to the country on 22 November 2017 to take office as the new president. The ruling ZANU-PF party had endorsed Mnangagwa as its new leader and he was to be responsible for ushering the country into a new political phase without Mugabe. The new political phase became popularly known as the "New Dispensation" or "Second Republic"

A picture of Mnangagwa after returning from exile: Source, News24.

After his return from exile, Mnangagwa promised to work for the good of the country and to improve the living standards of millions of Zimbabweans. Mnangagwa emphasised that he would work with all opposition parties and other civil society organisations to rebuild the nation. Some of the words that Mnangagwa emphasised were as follows:

> Today we are witnessing the beginning of a new and unfolding democracy. The voice of the people is the voice of God.

Theme 3: Transition Period

The period after November 2017 was characterised by the hope of political reform and the need to restore democratic rule in the country. Cautious optimism prevailed during this period as Zimbabweans and other international members looked forward to how the new dispensation would fulfil its duties for the country in the future. In his swearing-in speech on 24 November 2017, President Mnangagwa promised Zimbabweans that he would govern and not rule the country on behalf of all citizens and that he would revive the economy (Matarise, 2017). Mnangagwa also promised that the country would re-engage with the Western world and compensate white farmers who had lost land during the land reform in the early 2000s (Moyo & Onishi, 2017). In his speech, President Mnangagwa emphasised the following:

> I intend, nay, am required, to serve our country as the president of all citizens, regardless of colour, creed, religion, tribe or political affiliation," he said, in a speech that also hailed the voice of the people as the "voice of God (Matarise, 2017).

Newly sworn in as Zimbabwe's president Emmerson Mnangagwa (L) takes the oath of office at the national sports stadium on the outskirts of Harare, on November 24, 2017 during the Inauguration ceremony. (AFP/Marco Longari): Source, The Times of Israel.

In the run-up to the 2018 elections, President Mnangagwa made changes to the electoral law reform. Mnangagwa appointed Judge Priscilla Chigumba as the new Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) (Lifang, 2018). The appointment was met with mixed feelings as some supporters of the move emphasised that a change at the top of the ZEC was long overdue. The then opposition Movement of Democratic Change (MDC) party was surprised by the appointment and sudden resignation of the previous ZEC chairperson, Justice Rita Makarau (Lifang, 2018)

Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa (R, front) and newly appointed Zimbabwe Electoral Commission chairperson Priscilla Chigumba (L, front) attend the swearing-in ceremony in Harare, Zimbabwe, Feb. 1, 2018.

Theme 4: Opposition Politics

In an effort to defeat ZANU-PF in the 2018 elections, the political opposition parties in Zimbabwe formed an alliance on 6 August 2017 (Dube, 2017). The new party became known as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-A) Alliance Party. At that time, the leaders of the MDC-A Alliance Party included MDC-Tsvangirai leader Morgan Tsvangirai, MDC-Ncube leader Professor Welshman Ncube and People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader Tendai Biti. MDC-T leader Tsvangirai highlighted the following at the launch of the MDC Alliance at the Zimbabwe ground on 6 August 2017:

> Faced with a failed leadership that has abandoned the people, today we gather here in this political mixture that can only give hope and confidence to a despondent nation. It is you, the people who demanded this unity and today, we have come here to publicly

testify that we heeded your call. We have not closed the door to anyone and more will join this huge people’s train to stability, peace and growth.

Zimbabwe Opposition Launches MDC Alliance Ahead of 2018 General Elections Leaders of the MDC Alliance. Picture: MDC: (Source, Voice of America (VOA),August 6,2017).

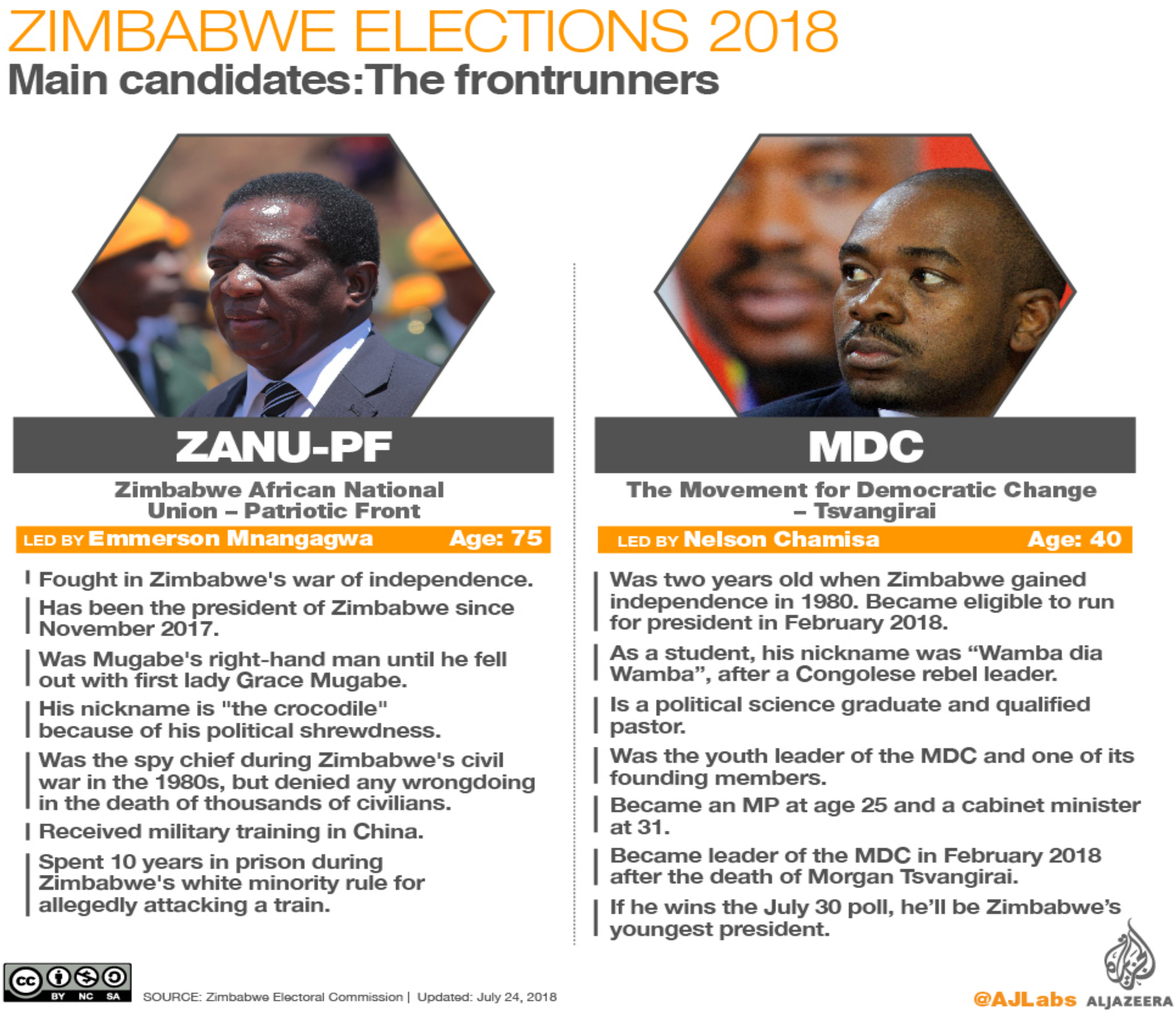
During this time, however, the MDC Alliance was not yet registered as a political party as the leaders who had come together were still in the process of finding the best way to manoeuvre. Tsvangirai was supported as the leader of the alliance. However, with the death of MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai on 14 February 2018 (Winter, 2018), opposition politics in the country went through a difficult time: the opposition leader had been battling colon cancer since 2016 when it was discovered. After his death, President Mnangagwa emphasised that Tsvangirai's family would receive a state funeral. President Mnangagwa also emphasised that Tsvangirai would be remembered for his important role as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe during the Government of National Unity (GNU) from 2009 to 2013 (The Namibian, 2018). President Mnangagwa also emphasised the following about Tsvangirai:

> A national figure who obdurately insisted on free, fair, credible and non-violent elections as a way of strengthening our democracy and our overall re-engagement with the rest of the world.

Following the death of MDC Alliance leader Morgan Tsvangirai, Nelson Chamisa took over the leadership of the party. Chamisa had previously been appointed acting leader of the MDC Alliance by Tsvangirai himself in January 2018 before seeking treatment for cancer (Ndlovu, 2018). However, Chamisa's rise to the top was not well received by other MDC members who were part of the MDC Alliance such as Thokozani Khupe, the MDC-T vice president, and other MDC members such as Elias Mudzuri and Douglas Mwonzora (Mwonzora & Hodzi, 2021). This prompted these party members to turn away from the MDC alliance and run under the MDC-T party banner. Chamisa was thus faced with the challenge of uniting the MDC Alliance as the party was unstable a few months before the national elections scheduled for August 2018.

Theme 5: Post-Election Violence

President Mnangagwa , the country's president, and the leader of the MDC Alliance, Nelson Chamisa, were the main contenders in Zimbabwe's 2018 elections. The pre-election campaign was categorised as peaceful by international observers. President Mnangagwa needed to win the 2018 elections to legitimise his government, which was still seen by some critics as a military-installed government. At the same time, Chamisa presented himself to Zimbabweans as a young and energetic leader as he emphasised that it was time for the country to involve the youth in political and governmental decision-making processes (Dzirutwe, 2018).



A picture of the main contenders of the Zimbabwe 2018 elections, President Emmerson Mnangagwa of ZANU-PF and Nelson Chamisa of MDC-Alliance. (Source: Aljazeera, July 24 ,2018).

President Mnangagwa won the 2018 elections with 50.8% of the presidential vote, while Chamisa received 44.3% (Burker, 2018). However, the opposition leader rejected the results and challenged the results in court. As the courts are dominated by the ruling ZANU-PF, it was obvious that Chamisa would not win the case. Verheul (2020) notes that the courts in Zimbabwe have been used by ZANU-PF to legitimise its rule and maintain its power, particularly through the use of judicial strategies and discourses of sovereignty. The coexistence of constitutionalism and legality with paralegal and supralegal political action has enabled ZANU-PF to ensure its political survival and undermine opposition challenges by using the legality of constitutionalism to disguise unconstitutional means of retaining power (Booysen, 2003). The election results led to demonstrations in the capital on 2 August 2018, during which six people were killed by the army. The military was deployed on the streets to disperse protests against the results announced by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC).

A soldier fires shots towards demonstrators, on August 1 2018, in Harare, as protests erupted over alleged fraud in the country's election. Protests in Zimbabwe's historic elections turned bloody on August 1 as a man was shot dead during demonstrations over alleged vote fraud and the president appealed for calm. The man died after soldiers fired live ammunition during opposition protests in downtown Harare, AFP reporters saw. / AFP PHOTO / Zinyange AUNTONY. Source, The Citizen.

Many international organisations have condemned the post-election violence and called on the country to focus on peace for the good of the country. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, and the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom (UK), Harriett Baldwin, expressed deep concern about the violence and called on the country's leaders to resolve the issue to avoid civilian deaths (Burke, 2018). The then acting Secretary General of Amnesty International, Colm O Cuanachain, called for an investigation into the military crackdown in Harare and emphasised that citizens had the right to demonstrate and should not be subjected to violence.

MDC Alliance leader Chamisa approached the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe to challenge the election results. Chamisa claimed that the results were invalid and rigged in favour of Mnangagwa. After days of court sessions, the Chief Justice of the court, Luke Malaba, declared that Mnangagwa had won the elections and that Chamisa had failed to provide adequate evidence to support the hypothesis that the elections were rigged (Daily Maverick, 2018).

Theme 6: International concern on Human Rights.

Although the country experienced a political transition from former President Robert Mugabe to the current President Mnangagwa, citizens continued to face human rights abuses by the state (Roth, 2022). A 130% increase in the price of petrol in the country led to protests by citizens in January 2019 against the increase in the price of petrol , the high cost of living and the high unemployment rate in the country. The price of petrol rose from US$ 1.43 per litre to US$ 3.31 per litre, while the price of diesel rose from US$ 1.38 per litre to US$ 3.11 per litre (Ndlovu, 2019). The state responded by using military force to silence the protesters. The government eventually shut down the internet and social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook to control the protests that lasted for about three days in the country (Samaita, 2019). Some protesters died and others were seriously wounded. The government defended its actions by emphasising that it was responding to violence emanating from citizens. The then Minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting Monica Mutsvangwa highlighted the following on 21 January 2019:

> I can confirm that three people have died. The events of the past 36 hours have been characterised by well-co-ordinated criminal behaviour, destructive and violent pattern which includes the murder of a police officer, Constable Mane of ZRP Entumbane, Bulawayo, who was stoned to death in cold blood and the injury of several others, barricading of roads and extorting money from motorists (The Chronicle,2019).

Furthermore, the government accused opposition MDC supporters of causing the violence that occurred at that time in January 2019. The presidential spokesperson, George Charamba, also pointed out the following during this time:

> It is a false narrative to suggest a causal link between the fuel price review and the violence unleashed in the streets by the MDC and its allies. For over a month-and-a-half, the MDC leadership has been consistently pushing out the message that they will

> use violent street action to overturn the results of the ballot, or failing that, to force a Government of National Unity. This in itself puts paid to any reading that links the fuel price review to the violence.

However, human rights groups such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association condemned the violence and emphasised that the security forces had killed more than 12 demonstrators. Other international organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch called for an investigation into the protests in the country.

Zimbabwe has a long history of political violence, with victims of past attacks waiting in vain for justice. A picture of a protester who was beaten by the security forces. Source: The NewsHawks.

Furthermore, in May 2020, members of the MDC Alliance, Joanna Mamombe, Netsai Marova and Cecilla Chimbiri, were abducted and sexually assaulted by suspected security agents for participating in protests. The three were attacked and dropped off about 80 kilometres from the capital Harare. While in hospital, the three women were arrested again by the police for allegedly making false statements against the government (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

It is clear from the above issues that the period from 2014 to 2020 was characterised by the ruling party being the main culprit fuelling political violence. This affected the perception of the ruling government by the citizens and the international community. Thus, the political economy during this period had a huge impact on the Zimbabwean economy and ultimately on trade flows. In the next two sections, I focus on the state of trade flows and the characteristics of import and export concentration during this period when Zimbabwe was actually moving further away from democracy. Contrary to what President Mnangagwa promised Zimbabweans when he first came out of exile to the public. He promised that Zimbabweans would witness a new and unfolding democracy.

7.2.2. Objective 2: To investigate the state of trade flow in Zimbabwe between 2014-2020.

This section analyses the state of trade flows in Zimbabwe for the period 2014 to 2020. The section identifies the trends in trade and discusses the possible policy developments leading to such trends.

Figure 25

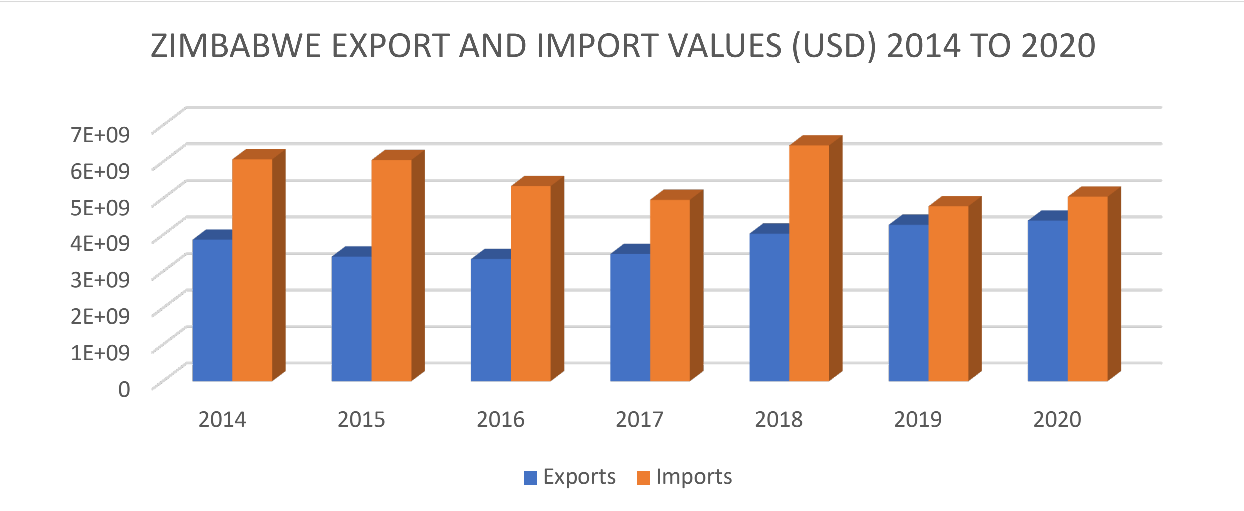
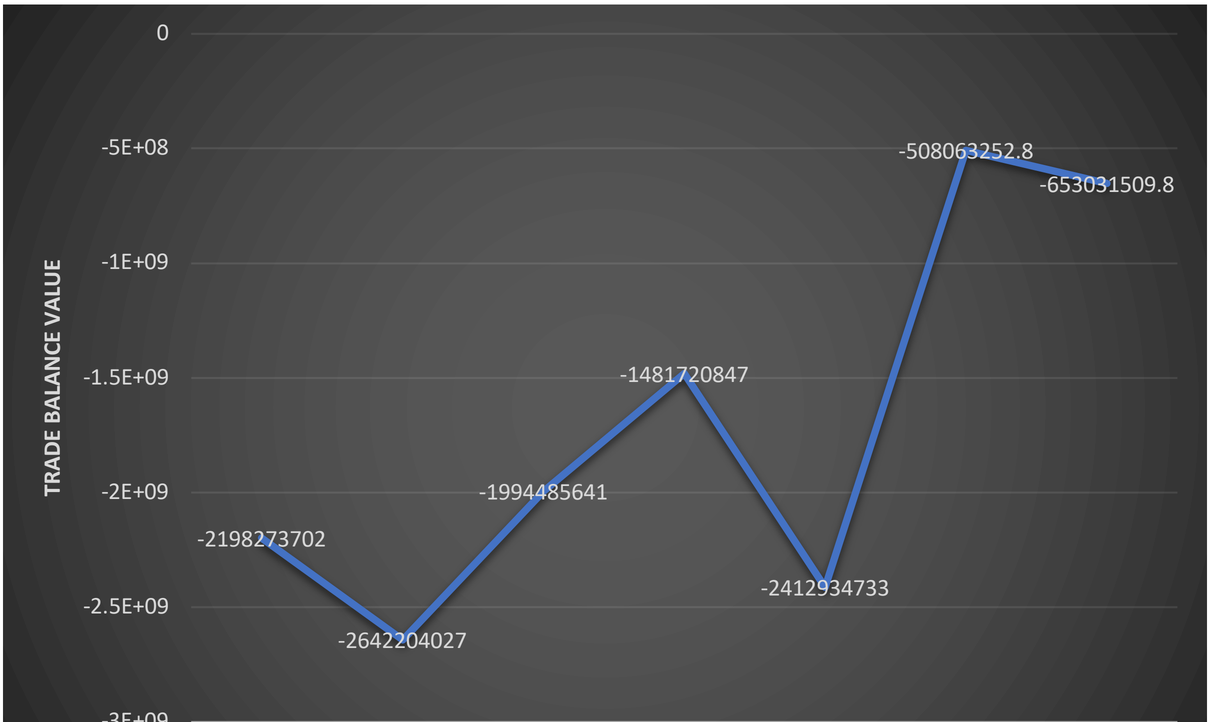


FIGURE 25: ZIMBABWE EXPORT AND IMPORT VALUES (USD) 2014 TO 2020
Source: Author's Computation

Figure 25 above shows Zimbabwe's total export and import values from 2014 to 2020. In the period from 2014 to 2020, goods and services coming into the country exceeded goods and services exported to other countries by comparison. The figure shows that exports fell from USD 3.9 billion in 2014 to USD 3.4 billion in 2015. This corresponds to a 12% decline in exports during this period. The decline in exports during this period could be due to the decline in manufacturing production.

Makoshori (2015) highlighted that a survey conducted by the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) in the manufacturing sector revealed that capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector declined from 36.5% in 2014 to 34.3% in 2015. In addition, imports declined over the same period from 2014 to 2015 from US$ 6 069 848 027.00 in 2014 to US$ 6 052 863 157.00 in 2015. This corresponds to a 1% decrease in imports. It should be noted that the highest import values were recorded in 2018, when the country imported US$ 6 450 201 803 worth of goods and services. In addition, the country's exports began to increase in 2017, when goods and services worth US$ 3 480 381 867.00 were exported. The country's exports reached a value of US$ 4 394 837 097 in 2020.

Figure 26



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Series1	-2198273702	-2642204027	-1994485641	-1481720847	-2412934733	-508063253	-653031510

FIGURE 26: TRADE BALANCE FOR ZIMBABWE 2014 TO 2020
Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 26 shows the country's trade balance for the period 2014 to 2020. The figure shows that the country's trade balance is in the red from 2014 to 2020. This means that the country has had a trade deficit from 2014 to 2020. In 2014, Zimbabwe's trade balance was –US$ 2 198 273 702. In 2015, the country's trade deficit increased to –US$ 2 642 204 027. The country's trade deficit decreased in 2016 and reached –US$ 1 994 485 641 and –US$ 1 481 720 847 in 2017. However, in 2018, the country's trade deficit increased and reached –US$ 2 412 934 733. In 2019 and 2020, the country's trade deficit improved, reaching –US$ 508 063 252 in 2019 and slightly decreased in 2020, reaching –US$ 653 031 509. It can be seen that a large part of these trade deficits are due to the country importing more goods and services than it exports, as shown in Figure 25 above.

Figure 27

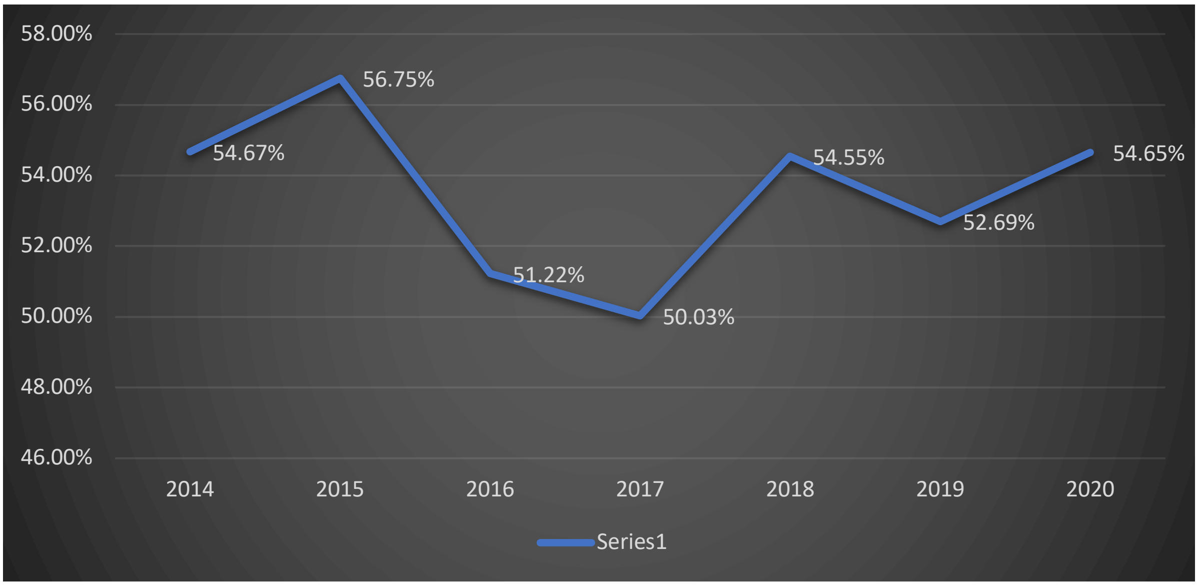


FIGURE 27: ZIMBABWE'S TRADE AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP 2014 TO 2020
Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 27 shows the country's trade as a percentage of gross domestic product in the period from 2014 to 2020. The figure shows that there have been fluctuations in the country's trade as a percentage of GDP values. The country's trade as a percentage of GDP increased from 54.67% in 2014 to 56.75% in 2015. However, the indicator decreased and reached 50.03% in 2017. In 2020, trade as a percentage of GDP for Zimbabwe stood at 54.65%. Trade as a percentage of GDP is important as it shows how intertwined the country is with other regional and international countries. Zimbabwe's trade as a percentage of GDP shows that there is still room for improvement for the country to integrate and trade more with other countries. Trade as a percentage of GDP includes both goods and services that the country has traded. For a breakdown of the country's trade in goods and services from 2014 to 2020, see Figures 28 and 29.

Figure 28

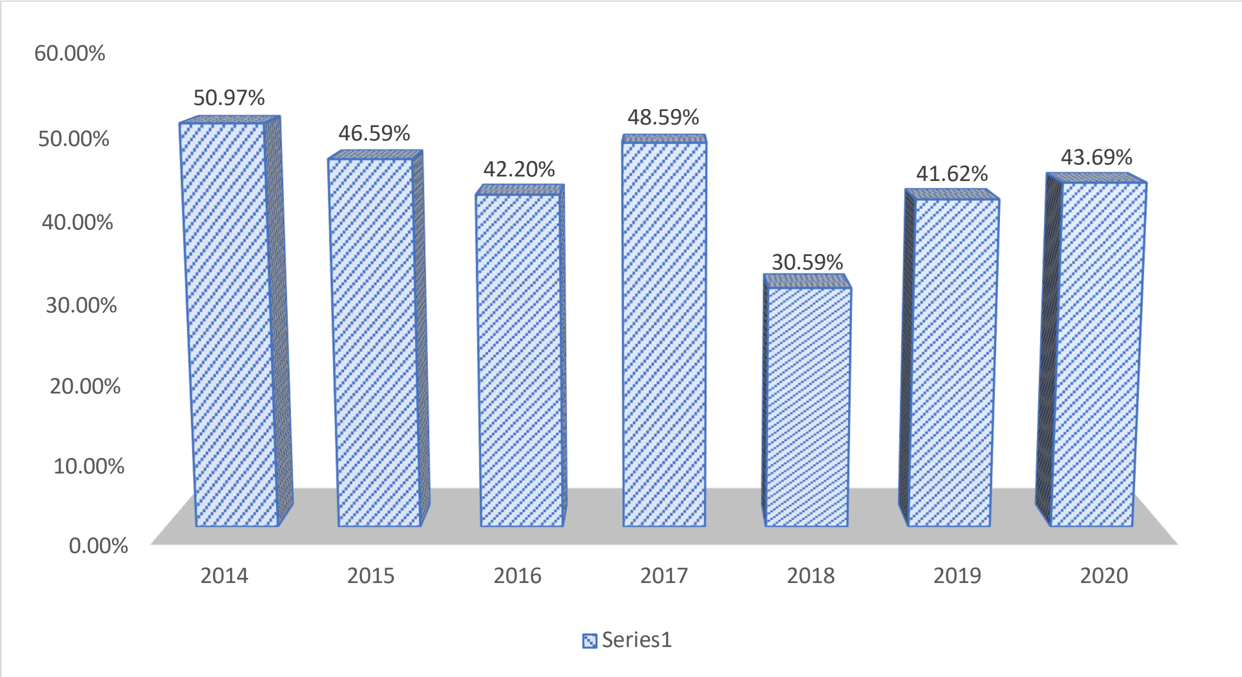


FIGURE 28: ZIMBABWE'S MERCHANDISE TRADE AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP 2014-2020

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 28 shows the country's trade in goods as a percentage of GDP in the period from 2014 to 2020. The figure shows that the country's trade in goods as a percentage of GDP fell from 50.97% in 2014 to 42.20% in 2016. Furthermore, the percentage increased to 48.59% in 2017 before dropping to the lowest percentage of 30.59% in 2018. The share of goods trade in GDP increased in 2019 and 2020, reaching 41.62% and 43.69% respectively. The percentages show that the country's trade fluctuated depending on the circumstances and the development of the economy. Trade in goods was affected by the country's economic decline. Bhebhe (2015) highlighted that CZI attributed the decline in merchandise trade to the decline in manufacturing production in the country. The manufacturing sector was affected by factors such as severe power outages, high cost of doing business and the government's policy on indigenous products. The country's indigenisation policy was first introduced in 2008 and required companies to offer 51% of their shares to local Zimbabweans (Gochero & Kadira, 2015).

Figure 29

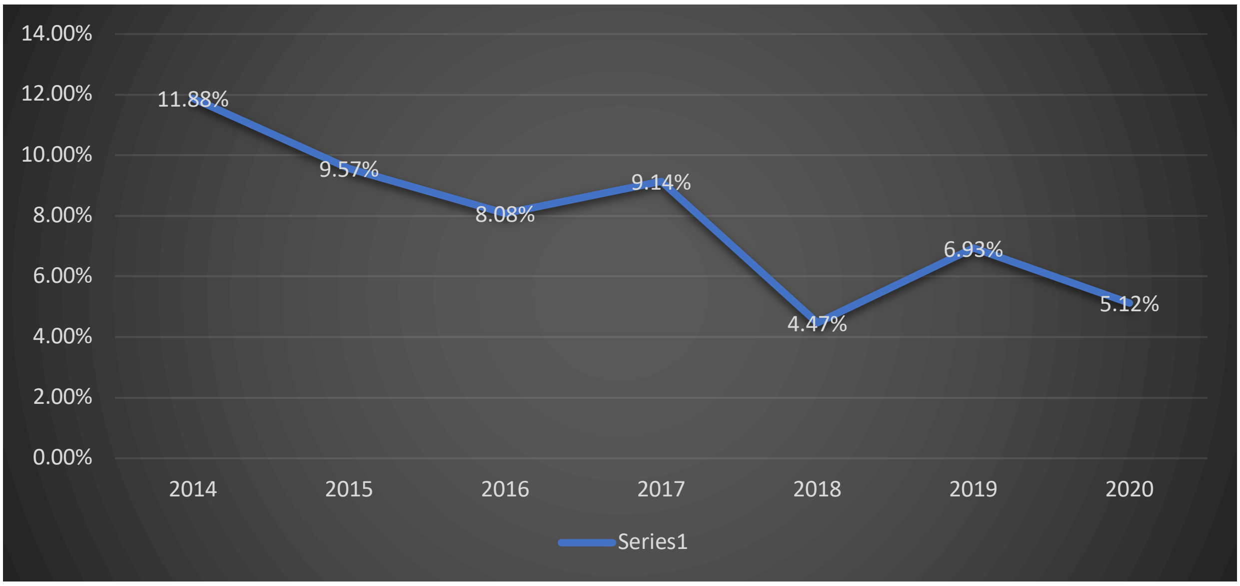


FIGURE 29: ZIMBABWE'S TRADE IN SERVICES AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP 2014-2020

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 29 shows the country's trade in services as a percentage of GDP in the period from 2014 to 2020. The figure shows that trade in services decreased from 11.8% in 2014 to around 8% in 2016. In addition, trade in services increased in 2017, reaching 9.1% in 2017, but then declined in 2018, reaching 4.47%. Furthermore, trade in services was 5.12% in 2020. In general, trade in –services was less significant for the country than trade in goods. However, trade in services provides the country with an important platform for trade and brings revenue to the country in return. The services sector can be an important sector for a country's economic growth and poverty reduction in society (WTO, 2023).

7.2.3. OBJECTIVE 3: TO ANALYSE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPORT AND EXPORT CONCENTRATION IN ZIMBABWE BETWEEN 2014 TO 2020

This section analyses the characteristics of import and export concentration in Zimbabwe for the period 2014 to 2020. This objective focuses on identifying product, industry and market concentration. The focus of this objective is to examine export and import market concentration, product concentration and industry concentration in Zimbabwe. The first part of the study focuses on import and export market concentration. The second part focuses on product concentration. The third part deals with industry concentration.

Market Concentration: Exports

Figure 30

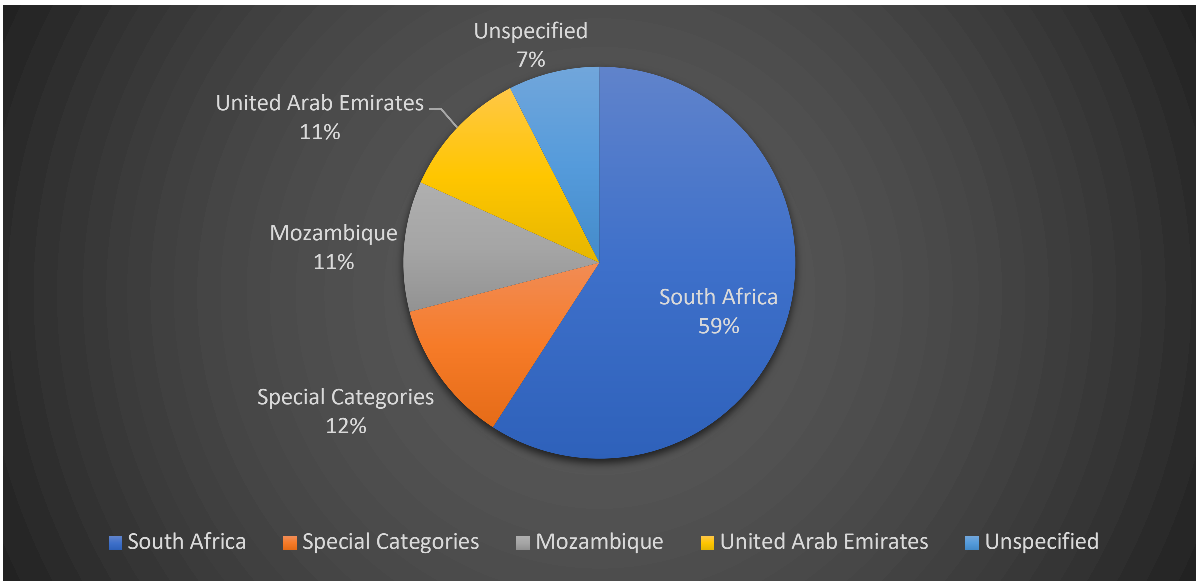


FIGURE 30: ZIMBABWE'S MAJOR 5 EXPORT DESTINATIONS 2014-2020
Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 30 shows Zimbabwe's top 5 export destinations in the period 2014 to 2020. The figure shows that South Africa (59%) receives the most exports from Zimbabwe. This is followed by special categories with 12%. Special categories refer to countries that trade unique or sensitive products with Zimbabwe. In addition, 11% of goods and services were exported to Mozambique between 2014 and 2020. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) also received 11% of products from Zimbabwe during this period. Due to the proximity between the two countries, trade between Zimbabwe and South Africa is strong. This is evident from the trade statistics between these two countries. Although the 1964 trade agreement between South Africa and Zimbabwe was cancelled in 2018 (Tshuma, 2018), trade between the two countries has not declined.

Market Concentration: Imports

Figure 31

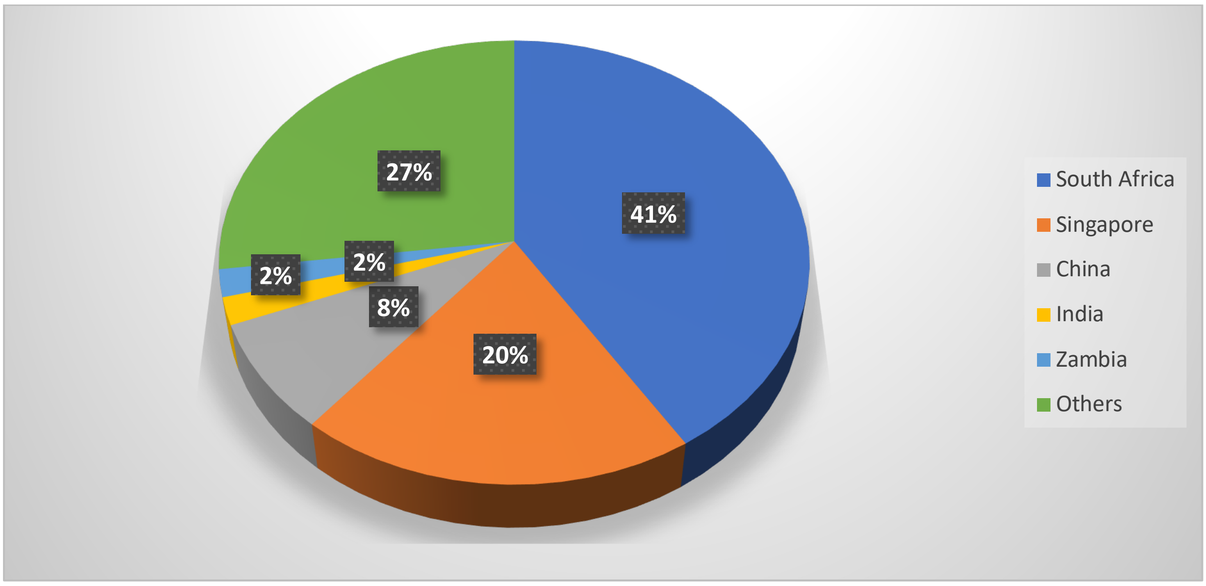


FIGURE 31: ZIMBABWE'S MAJOR FIVE IMPORT DESTINATIONS 2014 TO 2020
Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 31 shows the country's top five import destinations in the period 2014 to 2020. The figure shows that 41% of imports into the country came from South Africa. In addition, imports from Singapore accounted for 20% of all imports. Imports from China totalled 8%, while imports from India and Zambia accounted for 2%. Imports from countries such as China, Singapore and India show the growth of the Look East policy pursued by the government. The Look East Policy was introduced by the Zimbabwean government in 2003 to overcome dependence on the Western economy and build strong relations with Eastern European and Asian countries (Ojakorota & Kamidza, 2018). The Look East policy was also intended to strengthen trade and investment between Zimbabwe and Asia and Eastern European countries.

Product Concentration : Exports

Figure 32

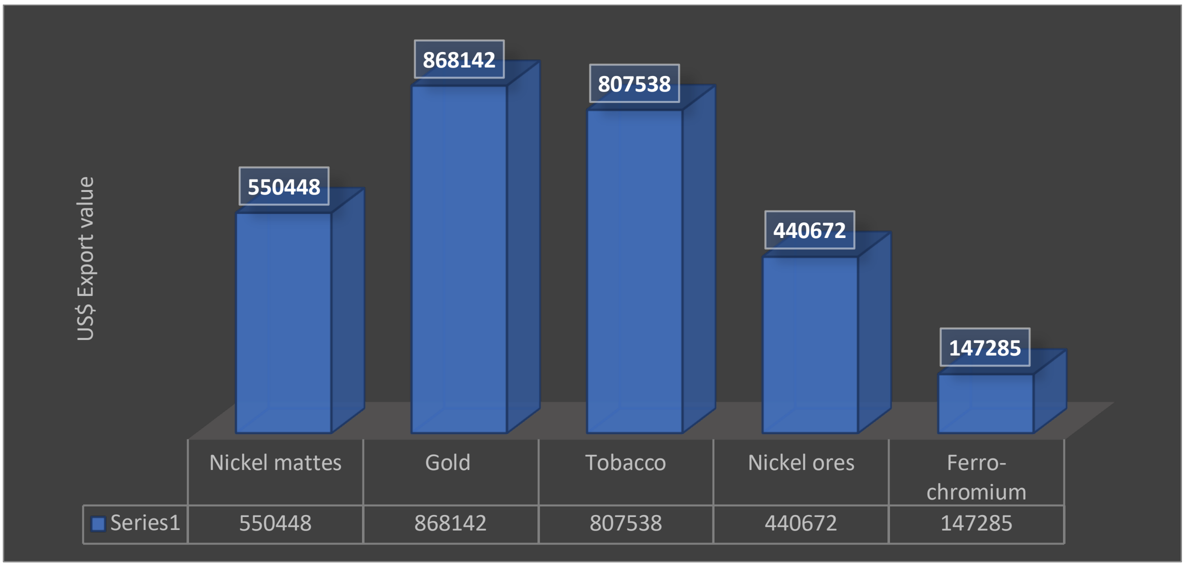


FIGURE 32: ZIMBABWE'S TOP 5 EXPORT PRODUCT CONCENTRATION 2014 TO 2020

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 32 shows the country's five main production centres in the period 2014 to 2020. The figure above shows that, on average, gold was exported the most compared to other products during this period. Gold exported by Zimbabwe in the period 2014 to 2020 averaged US$8 681 423 143. Tobacco was in second place, exported for an average of US$8 075 382 986 between 2014 and 2020. Average exports of nickel matte during this period totalled US$ 55,044,852 and nickel ores US$ 440,672. Exports of ferrochrome totalled US$ 147,285. Trade statistics show that the country's main exports were raw materials and not value-added products.

Product Concentration : Imports

Figure 33

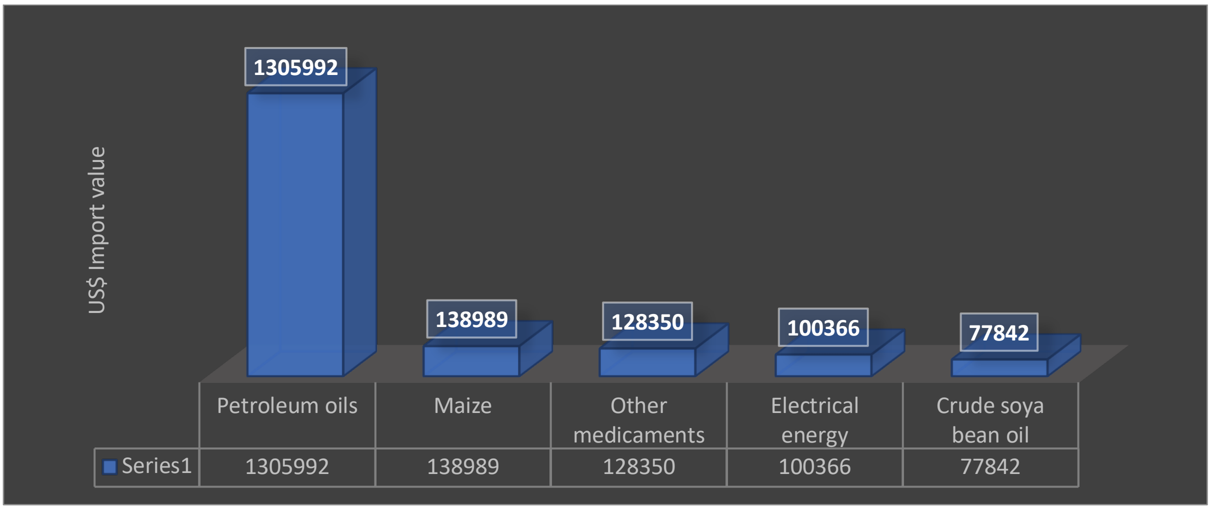


FIGURE 33: ZIMBABWE'S TOP 5 IMPORT PRODUCT CONCENTRATION 2014 TO 2020

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 33 shows the concentration of the country's five most important imported products in the period from 2014 to 2020. The figure shows that crude oil was imported the most on average compared to other products. On average, petroleum oils amounted to US$ 1 305 992. In addition, imports of maize totalled US$ 138 989 and imports of other medicines amounted to US$ 128 350. Imports of electrical energy totalled US$ 100,366, while imports of crude soybean oil amounted to US$ 77,842. During this period, the country had to contend with power outages, which affected both industrial production and the supply of electricity to households. The government therefore decided to import electricity from other neighbouring countries such as Mozambique and South Africa.

Industry Concentration :Exports

Figure 34

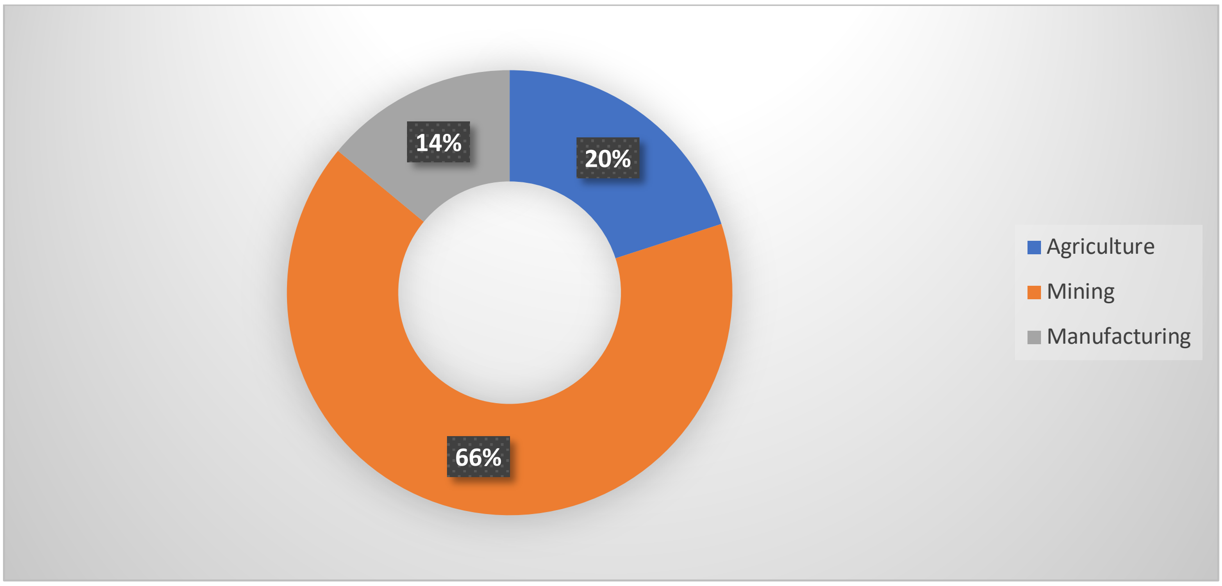


FIGURE 34: ZIMBABWE'S EXPORTS BY INDUSTRY 2014 TO 2020
Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 34 shows the country's exports by industry from 2014 to 2020. The figure shows that most of the country's exports to other regional and international countries come from the mining industry. The mining industry accounted for 66% of the country's exports in the period 2014 to 2020. This is in line with Figure 8 on product concentration, which shows that most of the country's exports consisted of gold and nickel mats. In addition, exports from agriculture accounted for an average of 20% of total exports. Manufacturing exports accounted for only 14% of total exports on average. This illustrates the challenges faced by the manufacturing industry in terms of increasing capacity utilisation during this period.

Industry Concentration :Imports

Figure 35

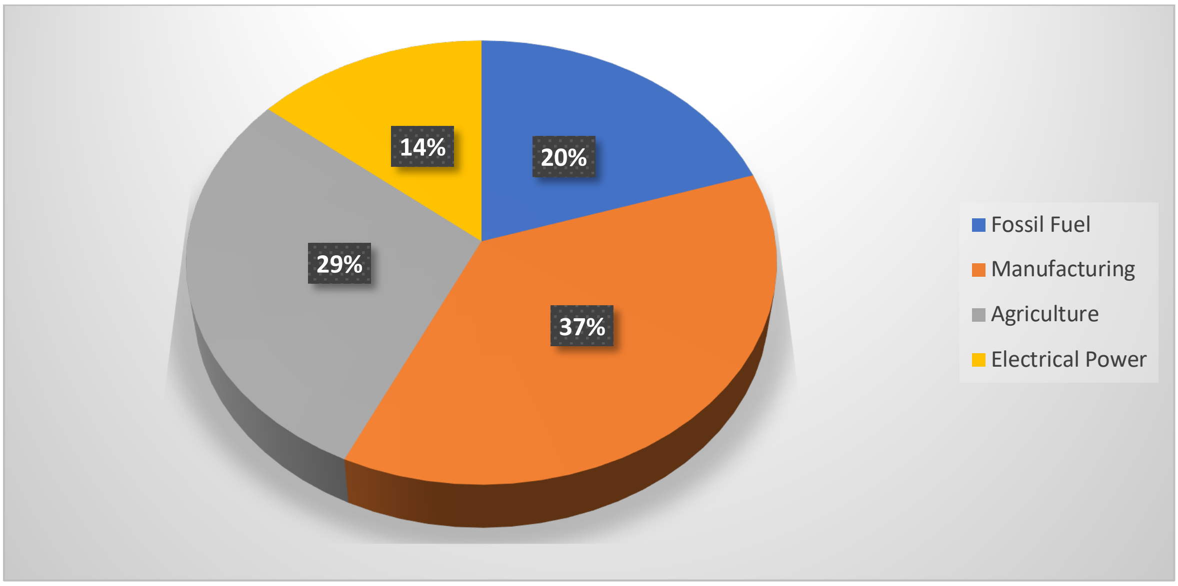


FIGURE 35: ZIMBABWE'S IMPORTS BY INDUSTRY 2014 TO 2020
Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS, 2023)

Figure 35 shows the country's imports by industry for the period 2014 to 2020. The figure shows the composition and type of imports coming into the country by industry. The figure shows that imports for the manufacturing industry accounted for an average of 37% of total imports during this period. In addition, imports from agriculture totalled 29% and imports from fossil fuels 20%. Fossil fuel imports included the oil imports mentioned in Figure 33. Manufacturing imports consisted largely of raw materials that can be used for production in manufacturing plants, such as the medicines mentioned in Figure 33.

7.3. Discussion of Results

In 2014, Zimbabwe remained under the leadership of President Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), which had held power since independence in 1980. This prolonged rule reflected the intersection of political power and economic decline. Mugabe's presidency, marked by political controversies and an economic downturn, underscored how state power shaped and constrained economic outcomes. Between 2007 and 2017, Zimbabwe faced unprecedented economic deterioration and international isolation. This isolation, driven by authoritarian governance and contentious policies, severely affected trade flows and economic stability. Internally, the weakened economy influenced local politics and public perception of the government, while externally, Zimbabwe's strained international relations limited its integration into global trade networks.

Under Mugabe's successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, the anticipated economic revival failed to materialize, largely due to governance failures. The new administration's overt authoritarianism, lack of political and economic reforms, and international skepticism perpetuated Zimbabwe's isolation. This dynamic illustrates how power relations at both domestic and international levels can stifle trade and economic growth. As Ndakaripa (2020) highlights, Zimbabwe's isolation restricted access to international capital, technology, and markets, deepening economic decline and exacerbating poverty. Despite efforts to attract local and foreign investors, the government's failure to uphold the rule of law and protect property rights undermined trade prospects. Despite these changes, critics argue that the fundamental issues of governance and accountability persist, indicating that the new policies may not lead to genuine democratic reform but rather reinforce existing power dynamics.Mnangagwa's administration, continuing Mugabe's legacy of authoritarianism and governance shortcomings, further hindered economic recovery and trade integration. Although the Mnangagwa government has encouraged local and foreign investors, traders and businesses to capitalise on opportunities in Zimbabwe to increase fiscal space, exports and ultimately the happiness index for Zimbabweans, the government has failed to uphold the rule of law and human and property rights as outlined in the themes in section 7.2.1 above.

Trade data from 2014 to 2020 reveals a persistent trade deficit, demonstrating the structural weaknesses in Zimbabwe's economy. For example, the trade deficit widened from US$ 2.2 billion in 2014 to US$ 2.6 billion in 2015, narrowing slightly in subsequent years but remaining significant. This deficit reflects the imbalance between high imports of consumption goods and low exports of raw materials, underscoring the lack of industrial capacity and value-added production. The reliance on exporting raw materials, such as gold and tobacco, highlights the extroverted nature of Zimbabwe's trade structure, a pattern shaped by historical power dynamics within the global economy. The failure to develop forward and backward linkages in domestic industries has limited job creation and economic accumulation, entrenching a disarticulated economy dependent on external markets.Manufacturing production also declined during this period, with capacity utilization falling from 36.5% in 2014 to 34.3% in 2015, according to Makoshori (2015). This decline was driven by policy inconsistencies, high costs of doing business, and infrastructure challenges, including severe power shortages. The indigenization policy, requiring foreign investors to cede 51% of ownership to locals, exemplifies how government power has directly disrupted economic activity. Contradictory policy signals, as illustrated by conflicting statements from government officials in 2015, further undermined investor confidence and trade flows. This policy volatility reflects how power struggles within the state have destabilized the economic environment, deterring foreign direct investment and trade.

Zimbabwe's trade as a percentage of GDP, fluctuating between 50% and 57% from 2014 to 2020, reflects limited integration into global trade networks. South Africa emerged as the dominant trade partner, receiving 59% of Zimbabwe's exports, highlighting regional dependencies shaped by historical and geographic power dynamics. The Look East Policy, adopted to reduce dependence on Western markets, expanded trade with Asian countries but failed to address structural economic challenges. The policy's limited success reflects how global power relations and sanctions, such as the U.S. ZIDERA sanctions, have constrained Zimbabwe's trade and economic options. Sanctions have restricted access to international financial markets, further weakening trade flows and economic performance.Corruption and governance failures have compounded these challenges, particularly in key sectors such as manufacturing and mining. Zimbabwe's export basket remained narrow, dominated by raw materials with little value addition, reflecting a lack of investment in processing and industrialization. This reliance on primary commodity exports and the absence of diversified economic activity highlight the enduring legacy of colonial economic structures, perpetuated by domestic and international power imbalances under neoliberalism.

Ultimately, Zimbabwe's trade performance during this period demonstrates how power intersects with the economy, both domestically and globally. Governance failures, policy inconsistencies, and international sanctions have shaped trade flows, undermining economic growth and deepening societal inequities. Addressing these challenges requires not only economic reform but also a reconfiguration of power relations to enable a more inclusive and sustainable trade regime. ZANU-PF attained its strategic objectives by employing a mix of ostensibly conflicting strategies, which encompassed persuasion, intimidation, and clientelist inducements. The ZANU-PF government permitted certain fundamental aspects of democracy, such as regular multiparty elections; however, the state demonstrated significant democratic deficiencies. It combined legitimate forms of political activity and organisation with coercive methods to ensure support. To that end, it is imperative that one comprehends the nature of political coalitions and arrangements that underpin state power.

In 2014, Zimbabwe remained under the leadership of President Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), which had held power since independence in 1980. This prolonged rule reflected the intersection of political power and economic decline. Mugabe’s presidency, marked by political controversies and an economic downturn, underscored how state power shaped and constrained economic outcomes. Between 2007 and 2017, Zimbabwe faced unprecedented economic deterioration and international isolation. This isolation, driven by authoritarian governance and contentious policies, severely affected trade flows and economic stability. Internally, the weakened economy influenced local politics and public perception of the government, while externally, Zimbabwe’s strained international relations limited its integration into global trade networks.

Under Mugabe’s successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, the anticipated economic revival failed to materialize, largely due to governance failures. The new administration’s overt authoritarianism, lack of political and economic reforms, and international skepticism perpetuated Zimbabwe's isolation. This dynamic illustrates how power relations at both domestic and international levels can stifle trade and economic growth. As Ndakaripa (2020) highlights, Zimbabwe’s isolation restricted access to international capital, technology, and markets, deepening economic decline and exacerbating poverty. Despite efforts to attract local and foreign investors, the government's failure to uphold the rule of law and protect property rights undermined trade prospects. Despite these changes, critics argue that the fundamental issues of governance and accountability persist, indicating that the new policies may not lead to genuine democratic reform but rather reinforce existing power dynamics.Mnangagwa’s administration, continuing Mugabe’s legacy of authoritarianism and governance shortcomings, further hindered economic recovery and trade integration. Although the Mnangagwa government has encouraged local and foreign investors, traders and businesses to capitalise on opportunities in Zimbabwe to increase fiscal space, exports and ultimately the happiness index for Zimbabweans, the government has failed to uphold the rule of law and human and property rights as outlined in the themes in section 7.2.1 above.

Trade data from 2014 to 2020 reveals a persistent trade deficit, demonstrating the structural weaknesses in Zimbabwe's economy. For example, the trade deficit widened from US$ 2.2 billion in 2014 to US$ 2.6 billion in 2015, narrowing slightly in subsequent years but remaining significant. This deficit reflects the imbalance between high imports of consumption goods and low exports of raw materials, underscoring the lack of industrial capacity and value-added production. The reliance on exporting raw materials, such as gold and tobacco, highlights the extroverted nature of Zimbabwe's trade structure, a pattern shaped by historical power dynamics within the global economy. The failure to develop forward and backward linkages in domestic industries has limited job creation and economic accumulation, entrenching a disarticulated economy dependent on external markets.Manufacturing production also declined during this period, with capacity utilization falling from 36.5% in 2014 to 34.3% in 2015, according to Makoshori (2015). This decline was driven by policy inconsistencies, high costs of doing business, and infrastructure challenges, including severe power shortages. The indigenization policy, requiring foreign investors to cede 51% of ownership to locals, exemplifies how government power has directly disrupted economic activity. Contradictory policy signals, as illustrated by conflicting statements from government officials in 2015, further undermined investor confidence and trade flows. This policy volatility reflects how power struggles within the state have destabilized the economic environment, deterring foreign direct investment and trade.

Zimbabwe's trade as a percentage of GDP, fluctuating between 50% and 57% from 2014 to 2020, reflects limited integration into global trade networks. South Africa emerged as the dominant trade partner, receiving 59% of Zimbabwe's exports, highlighting regional dependencies shaped by historical and geographic power dynamics. The Look East Policy, adopted to reduce dependence on Western markets, expanded trade with Asian countries but failed to address structural economic challenges. The policy's limited success reflects how global power relations and sanctions, such as the U.S. ZIDERA sanctions, have constrained Zimbabwe's trade and economic options. Sanctions have restricted access to international financial markets, further weakening trade flows and economic performance.Corruption and governance failures have compounded these challenges, particularly in key sectors such as manufacturing and mining. Zimbabwe's export basket remained narrow, dominated by raw materials with little value addition, reflecting a lack of investment in processing and industrialization. This reliance on primary commodity exports and the absence of diversified economic activity highlight the enduring legacy of colonial economic structures, perpetuated by domestic and international power imbalances under neoliberalism.

Ultimately, Zimbabwe's trade performance during this period demonstrates how power intersects with the economy, both domestically and globally. Governance failures, policy inconsistencies, and international sanctions have shaped trade flows, undermining economic growth and deepening societal inequities. Addressing these challenges requires not only economic reform but also a reconfiguration of power relations to enable a more inclusive and sustainable trade regime. ZANU-PF attained its strategic objectives by employing a mix of ostensibly conflicting strategies, which encompassed persuasion, intimidation, and clientelist inducements. The ZANU-PF government permitted certain fundamental aspects of democracy, such as regular multiparty elections; however, the state demonstrated significant democratic deficiencies. It combined legitimate forms of political activity and organisation with coercive methods to ensure support. To that end, it is imperative that one comprehends the nature of political coalitions and arrangements that underpin state power.

7.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

From 2014 to 2020, Zimbabwe was ruled by President Robert Mugabe, who had held the reins of power since the country's independence in 1980. In November 2017, however, Mugabe decided to step down following a military intervention and under pressure from the ruling ZANU-PF party. This event heralded a significant change in Zimbabwe's political landscape. Emmerson Mnangagwa, the former vice president and loyal supporter of Mugabe, took over the presidency following the resignation of his predecessor. Mnangagwa's tenure as president was characterised by his commitment to implementing economic reforms and his efforts to attract foreign investment. Mnangagwa promised a new era characterised by political and economic change. He promised to tackle issues such as corruption and human rights violations, which were among the biggest challenges under Mugabe's leadership. Nonetheless, the political climate remained complicated and the nation continued to struggle with economic hurdles, including rampant inflation, widespread unemployment and a struggling agricultural sector. Zimbabwe's trade dynamics during this period were characterised by a mix of domestic policies, international relations and economic circumstances. The country struggled with trade deficits. Its trade structure included the export of minerals (e.g. platinum, gold), tobacco and agricultural goods, while importing commodities such as fuel, machinery and foodstuffs.

Zimbabwe's economic environment was destabilized by hyperinflation, reaching historic highs and undermining purchasing power and price stability. Hyperinflation reduced consumer confidence, eroded savings, and led to a shortage of foreign currency, essential for imports and facilitating trade. The economic instability disincentivized foreign investment, as high inflation creates uncertainty in the value of returns on investments. With a weakened currency and limited access to foreign credit markets, Zimbabwe faced challenges in acquiring imports, further hampering trade. The lack of access to competitive export financing and currency volatility diminished Zimbabwe's export capacity, creating barriers to establishing reliable trade relationships. Also, Zimbabwe's strained relations with Western countries, particularly following the imposition of sanctions in response to political and human rights issues, had a profound impact on trade. These sanctions limited Zimbabwe's access to foreign investment and international markets, restricting its ability to engage with some of its historically significant trade partners. Sanctions not only deterred Western companies from conducting business with Zimbabwe but also impacted the broader regional perception, potentially discouraging other foreign investors wary of secondary sanctions or reputational risks. Consequently, Zimbabwe sought new alliances, particularly with China and Russia, which offered alternative trade and investment opportunities. However, these partnerships did not fully compensate for the loss of access to Western markets and investors, leading to a constrained trade environment. The Mnangagwa administration initiated a series of economic reforms aimed at attracting foreign investment and enhancing trade as already highlighted in the introduction above. Notable initiatives included relaxing certain business regulations, aiming to increase transparency, and promoting privatization efforts. However, the impact of these reforms on trade was slow, as the international community remained cautious due to concerns over governance, transparency, and stability. While reforms were a positive step, they were often seen as insufficient to rebuild investor confidence rapidly, especially without robust anti-corruption measures and political reforms. Additionally, structural issues such as high inflation and currency instability continued to pose barriers to effective trade and economic recovery.

The post-2018 election period in Zimbabwe was marred by violence, including allegations of human rights abuses and crackdowns on opposition leaders and civilians as noted by the themes identified in the section above. This period of instability weakened Zimbabwe’s global reputation, discouraging foreign businesses and potential investors concerned with ethical governance and political risk. The accusations of human rights abuses further entrenched sanctions and strained relations with Western countries, exacerbating Zimbabwe's isolation in international trade. Governance concerns also extended to economic management, as corruption and inefficiencies in public administration continued to deter business confidence. The result was a cycle where political instability and governance issues hindered meaningful economic recovery, which in turn limited Zimbabwe’s ability to participate actively in global trade markets. While some reforms were introduced, they were undermined by governance and economic instability, delaying any significant positive impact on trade. This chapter looked at the political conditions in Zimbabwe after the dissolution of the GNU. It also examined the state of trade flows, the characteristics of import and export concentrations between 2014 and 2020. In the next chapter, we present conclusions derived from this research and make recommendations and suggestions for future research.

8. Chapter Eight: Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research

8.1. Introduction

The formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Zimbabwe from 2009 to 2013 is a good example of how political trends in Africa are evolving. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) led the process that led to the unification of the former political rivals after many years of bitter political rivalry characterised by aggressive political manoeuvring. The main objective of this thesis was to analyse the different realities of the political economy and trade flows, taking into account that the years before the GNU (2005-2009), especially the first decade of the new millennium, and the years after the inclusive government (2014-2020) were marked by severe political and economic crises. It also clarifies the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The first section of this chapter lays an overview of the evolution of trade and economic policies in Zimbabwe since 1980.This overview is interesting before we summary and describe the entire work. Zimbabwe's political and economic problems in the years 2005–2020 are summarised in section 8.2. The overall findings of the study are summarised in section 8.3 and the implications and proposed actions are presented in section 8.4. The limitations of the study are described in section 8.5, as are the proposed areas for further research. The overall conclusion of the study is presented in section 8.6.

8.1.1 Zimbabwe's trade and economic policies since 1980

The economic and trade policy evolution of Zimbabwe since its independence in 1980 has been shaped by a series of complex and often tumultuous political dynamics, social needs, and economic challenges which have had far-reaching implications for the country's trade patterns and overall economic performance. The evolution of Zimbabwe's trade and economic policy reflects a complex interplay of political imperatives, economic strategies, and external influences, with significant impacts on its economic landscape.

Early-Independence Era (1980-1990)

After gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1980, Zimbabwe, under Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, initially adopted socialist-oriented policies. The government emphasized state intervention in the economy, focusing on redistributing land, providing social services, and establishing state-owned enterprises (Mutenga & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022).Zimbabwe implemented protectionist trade policies, maintaining high tariffs and quotas to protect domestic industries. According to Mutenga and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2022) the government also controlled foreign exchange, limiting imports of non-essential goods. During this period, Zimbabwe's economy was relatively diversified, with robust agricultural and mining sectors. Trade patterns favored exports of agricultural products, especially tobacco, and minerals like gold and nickel. The government aimed to address historical inequalities and improve access to education, healthcare, and land.The trade policy was inward-looking, focusing on import substitution to support local industries and reduce dependence on foreign goods. High tariffs and trade restrictions were imposed to protect domestic industries.Although this approach boosted social services and infrastructure development, the economy struggled with inefficiencies, high government expenditure, and limited foreign investment. Saungweme (2013) posits that during the period 1980-1990, the economy of Zimbabwe was characterised by strong economic linkages, the backward and forward sectoral connections stimulated growth and development. The dual agricultural sector was heavily supported by the government to provide the much need food and raw materials to the manufacturing sector. The manufacturing sector was the chief economic growth driver, followed by agriculture and the retail and hotel industry. The average sectoral contribution to gross domestic product (GDP)for the period 1985-1990 (Saungweme ,2013). The real annual growth rates during this period ranged between 3-4%, with the highest growth rate of 7.6% recorded in 1988(Saungweme ,2013).

Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) (1991-1996)

In response to economic stagnation and pressure from international financial institutions, Zimbabwe adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in 1991, with support from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The program aimed to liberalize the economy by reducing state involvement, promote private sector growth, and increase exports.Key reforms included trade liberalization, reducing tariffs, cutting government spending, deregulating industries, and privatizing state-owned enterprises (Mukoka,2023). The government also introduced a more flexible exchange rate system. The government hoped to boost exports and attract foreign investment. While the policy changes opened Zimbabwe's economy to global trade, the immediate impact was economic hardship. While ESAP ushered in a flexible framework for adjustable and progressive reform of the economy, the first few years of the reform did not live up to expectations (Ndlela,2011). Industrial output declined, and many state-owned enterprises struggled to compete and export performance did not improve significantly, and the country faced increasing trade deficits (Mukoka,2023). Unemployment and poverty also rose, as industries that could not compete globally laid off workers. The devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar caused inflation to rise sharply.ESAP was succeeded by ZIMPREST (1996-2002), whose objective was to complete and consolidate all achievements of ESAP in a way that would impress the nation (Saungweme,2013). However, by as early as 1998, the country started to experience effects of economic slowdown and subsequently entered into a recession in 2000.

Land Reform and Economic Crisis (Late 1990s-2000s)- Covers Period one of This Thesis

The late 1990s and early 2000s were marked by growing political pressure on Mugabe's government. Faced with a declining economy and increasing political opposition, the government embarked on a controversial and often violent land reform program in 2000. This involved the seizure and redistribution of white-owned commercial farms to landless black Zimbabweans. However, the policy's chaotic implementation led to a collapse of commercial agriculture(leading to a sharp decline in output of key export crops, such as tobacco and maize) which had been the backbone of the economy (Chingwaru,2015). The disruption in agriculture, combined with international sanctions and a loss of investor confidence, triggered an economic crisis marked by hyperinflation, a plummeting currency, widespread unemployment, and food shortages. By 2008, annual inflation was estimated to be in the millions of percent. Trade patterns shifted as Zimbabwe became increasingly dependent on imports of food and other essentials, as agricultural exports dwindled 9Saunggweme & Odhiambo,2018). The land seizures and human rights abuses led to international condemnation and targeted sanctions from Western countries, further isolating Zimbabwe from global trade and financial markets. The country faced hyperinflation and a collapsing currency, which decimated savings and further damaged trade prospects.The country became heavily reliant on imports for basic goods, worsening the trade deficit.The folding of major agricultural activities after the government’s fast track land reform programme in 2000 paralysed the backward and forward linkages especially with the manufacturing sector. As such, the contribution of the manufacturing sector to GDP fell by atleast 90% between 1997 and 2008

(Saungweme,2013). The production capacity fell to levels below 11% by the end of 2008. During the period 2000 to 2008, inflation soared to one million and imports outweighed exports (this will be described in full in results analysis of period one, 2005 to 2008). Further to that the economy plunged into serious account deficit which reached to 5billionn by the end of 2011 (Saungweme,2011).

Dollarization and Partial Recovery (2009-2013)-Period Two of This Thesis

In February 2009, Zimbabwe went through a political transition giving birth to the Government of National Unity.In the same year, it abandoned its own currency in favor of a multi-currency regime, primarily using the U.S. dollar and South African rand. This move helped stabilize the economy, curb hyperinflation, and restore some level of economic normalcy and investor confidence(Mukuhlani,2014).The GNU implemented some economic reforms to boost investment and trade. The dollarization era saw moderate improvements in trade, with the government encouraging export diversification and foreign direct investment (FDI).There was modest economic recovery, with growth in sectors like mining and services.Trade improved slightly due to economic stabilization. However, economic growth remained subdued due to persistent political instability and inadequate infrastructure (Chinyoka & Seekings,2016). The country's reliance on mineral exports, particularly platinum and gold, increased during this period. Agriculture remained in recovery, but structural challenges limited competitiveness in global markets.

Post-GNU Period and Continued Challenges (2014-2020) Period Three of This Thesis

Following the end of the GNU, economic policies fluctuated between attempts to attract investment and measures that deterred investor confidence(Chinyoka & Seekings,2016).. Raftopoulos et al (2020) are of the view that inconsistent policies, corruption, and economic mismanagement continued to plague the country. Robert Mugabe's ouster in 2017 brought Emmerson Mnangagwa to power, promising economic reforms and re-engagement with the international community. However, political dynamics remain complex, with questions about democratic governance and policy consistency. According to Ndakaripa (2020) Mnangagwa's government has pursued economic reforms, including efforts to revive agriculture, attract FDI, and boost industrial output. The "Zimbabwe is Open for Business" campaign aimed to re-establish global trade ties, but policy inconsistencies and concerns about corruption have limited progress

(Nyamunda,2023). Despite efforts to promote exports, the trade balance remains problematic, with imports still outstripping exports. The reintroduction of the Zimbabwean dollar in 2019 led to renewed currency instability, causing inflation to resurface and affecting trade and investment. The government has oscillated between using the local currency and allowing U.S. dollar transactions to manage economic pressures.

8.2. THE ZIMBABWE PROBLEM (2005-2020)

The socio-economic and political problems facing Zimbabwe and their effects have existed since the early 1990s. Zimbabwe has been struggling with major political, economic and social difficulties for almost thirty years. Zimbabwe, once considered the shining light of Africa, is now more often associated with negative headlines worldwide (Marumahoko & Chigwata, 2020). Mhlanga & Ndlovu (2021) claim that the region has seen many unplanned migrations due to Zimbabwe's problems, which have led to numerous issues such as xenophobia in South Africa and protests in Botswana, where people blame foreigners for the country's high poverty and unemployment rates. Little attention has been paid to the consequences of the 2000 land reform programme, which aimed to correct historical inequalities in land ownership. One of the main pillars of the economy, agricultural production, declined as a result of the chaotic land reform policy. Those who benefited from land reform often lacked the infrastructure, resources or expertise to maintain production levels. This and inadequate funding and support. Chakona & Mushangai (2021) point out that Zimbabwe went from being a breadbasket of Southern Africa to a nation struggling with food insecurity and dependent on international aid. In contrast, Zambia and Mozambique, which have absorbed Zimbabweans, especially white farmers displaced under land reform, appear to have benefited significantly from increased agricultural production (Mhlanga & Ndlovu, 2021).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya (2020) note that the problems facing Zimbabwe are complex and encompass politics, economics, governance and humanitarian concerns. The colonial legacy, which includes the authoritarian colonial state, its institutions and policies that have seriously affected the wellbeing of the black population, is often cited as one of the main causes of this problem (Muzondidya 2009). However, according to Raftopoulos (2009), part of the problem in Zimbabwe can be attributed to the political legacy of African nationalism. The ruling party and its supporters often point to imperialism as the main cause of the problem, citing the punitive measures (which some see as sanctions) imposed on Zimbabwe by Western nations (Thompson, 2019). Some blame ZANU-PF for the current situation in Zimbabwe. They often cite ZANU-PF's poor policies, corruption and economic mismanagement as some of the main reasons for the ongoing political and economic problems. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya (2020), it is important to recognise the role that the ruling elite has played in this problem.

Deeper structural problems were the cause of hyperinflation in Zimbabwe, which peaked in 2008 and was not just the result of poor monetary policy. Apart from the aforementioned disruption of agricultural production, the government's aggressive land reform policy from 2000 onwards also led to international sanctions and a withdrawal of foreign investment. To cover the deficits, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe printed more money, which only exacerbated inflation. The effects were catastrophic as they drastically affected daily life, eroded savings and completely devalued the Zimbabwean dollar. Many people were no longer able to afford food, fuel or other essentials, leading to severe shortages. The lack of basic goods and the inability of hospitals and schools to function led to a sharp decline in living standards.

Zimbabwe was ruled by the GNU as the country entered its fourth decade of independence. By introducing greater availability of goods in the shops, including food, the GNU was able to stabilise the political and economic environment. The introduction of a multi-currency system, centred on the US dollar, curbed inflation. The first indigenous constitution, promising to improve the lot of ordinary people, was also successfully brought to adoption by the GNU. But even after the adoption of the new constitution, the problem in Zimbabwe remained unresolved. Shortly after the harmonised elections of 2013, which were won by ZANU-PF and ended the GNU's rule, things started to go backwards. Whether deserved or not, electoral votes alone are not enough to solve Zimbabwe's fundamental problems. The country's stagnant economy is perhaps the biggest obstacle facing the country's political leadership since the 2013 elections.

The country experienced a dramatic change in constitutional and political order in November 2017, ending the 37-year rule of former President Robert Mugabe. Former Mugabe's right-hand man, Emmerson Mnangagwa, became head of state and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF). He was re-elected in the harmonised elections in July 2018, albeit under questionable circumstances. According to Nyoni (2018), the fall of Robert Mugabe offered

Zimbabwe the chance to put its history behind it and expectations for the emergence of a new Zimbabwe have risen. The military's intervention in 2017 to depose Mugabe and install Emmerson Mnangagwa was a watershed moment that demonstrated the influence of the security forces on Zimbabwean politics. Although the move was initially welcomed, it quickly became apparent that the change in leadership would not always be followed by democratic reforms. Mnangagwa, a long-time Mugabe ally and influential member of the ruling party, was accused of using similar strategies to stay in power. The Mnangagwa government uses a variety of methods to maintain control, including manipulation of the judiciary, security forces and the media. The ruling ZANU-PF party has entrenched itself in all aspects of Zimbabwean life, making any opposition not just political but existential (Tofa, 2020).

Between 2005 and 2020, Zimbabwe faced numerous difficulties that deeply damaged both the country's economy and society. While there have been brief periods of optimism and calls for change, serious problems such as political oppression, economic instability and human rights violations persist. According to Ndakaripa (2021), the post-Mugabe era has not yet brought the profound changes that many observers from abroad and within Zimbabwe had hoped for. Beyond Zimbabwe's borders, Zimbabwe's situation has had an impact on regional stability and economic performance. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) were faced with the difficult task of addressing governance and human rights issues without exacerbating the already precarious situation in the region, while neighbouring countries were confronted with an influx of refugees. At the international level, the situation in Zimbabwe was a test for foreign policy as it had to find a balance between humanitarian engagement and aid as well as sanctions and pressure for reform. The legacy of colonialism, the struggle for independence and the difficult process of becoming a stable, democratic post-colonial state are all closely linked to Zimbabwe's problems (Nyambi, Mangena & Ncube, 2022).

8.2.1 THE ECONOMIC INTERESTS AND IDEOLOGIES OF ZANU-PF

The ZANU-PF government in Zimbabwe, led initially by Robert Mugabe and then by Emmerson Mnangagwa after 2017, maintained a blend of economic policies and political ideologies that heavily impacted trade flows, economic growth, and international relations. According to Lewanika (2019) ZANU-PF's economic interests and policies were shaped by a mix of anti-colonial ideology, nationalism, and elite-centered resource control. This complex blend of state control and rhetoric around empowerment and sovereignty influenced the country's approach to trade, both regionally and internationally, with significant repercussions. Bushu and Kufakurinani (2024) argue that the roots of the Zimbabwe's economic challenges are arguably deeply embedded in the country's rugged political terrain and misgovernance. Having inherited a relatively stable economy in 1980, ZANU-PF, exerted much of its energies toward consolidating political power through repression and violence throughout the years in power (Bushu & Kufakurinani, 2024).

Looking at the way ZANU-PF contested political power during the period 2005 to 2020, it is only fair to conclude that ZANU-PF's policies were driven by an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist ideology, a central narrative since the liberation struggle. To begin with, the Fast-Track Land Reform Program, which began in 2000, aimed to reclaim land from white farmers and redistribute it to black Zimbabweans. Although this policy took shape before 2005, its effects persisted through 2020, shaping land ownership and agricultural output which impacted trade flows of the country. This policy restricted Zimbabwe's trade flows, leading to limited foreign investment, a decline in agricultural exports, and dependency on Chinese trade Similarly, the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act of 2008 sought to transfer ownership of businesses to black Zimbabweans by requiring 51% local ownership in enterprises. Introduced in 2008, the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment (IEE) policy mandated that foreign companies cede at least 51% of their shares to indigenous Zimbabweans (Saunders, 2023). The ZANU-PF government implemented the 'Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment' policy, aiming to domesticate foreign firms and promote resource nationalism. These policies primarily benefited local elites and foreign companies, reflecting a performative political function amid economic crises rather than genuine transformation. The policy was primarily beneficial to local ZANU-PF elites rather than the broader community (Saunders,2023).

While nationalist rhetoric drove ZANU-PF's policies, the party also pursued elite economic interests through mechanisms of patronage. Resources, particularly in mining sectors like diamonds and gold, were often controlled by the military and political elites, with substantial corruption and limited accountability. The state's stake in these resources was ostensibly for national development, but revenue frequently enriched select elites rather than promoting economic development. As already noted, due to hyperinflation in the early 2000s, Zimbabwe abandoned its currency in 2009, opting to use a multi-currency system, including the US dollar.

By 2019, however, the government reintroduced the Zimbabwean dollar, reflecting its interest in reclaiming monetary sovereignty. This reintroduction exacerbated inflation, leading to economic instability and further disruptions to trade. The government's policies were largely driven by a need to maintain power and control, often at the expense of economic stability and growth. The government's policies, especially around currency management and trade, were often influenced by the need to maintain political control and support. While ZANU-PF's policies aimed to address historical injustices, they often prioritized regime survival over genuine economic transformation (Saunders,2023; Nyamunda,2021).

Chawarika, Madzokere, and Murimbika (2022) assert that regional trade agreements are essential for the development and economic growth of developing countries, including Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe participates in various regional trade agreements that are essential for the growth of multiple sectors within its economy. From 2005 to 2020, Zimbabwe engaged in numerous significant trade agreements at both bilateral and multilateral levels. Zimbabwe is a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which established a Free Trade Area in 2008. The agreement sought to lower tariffs and enhance intra-regional trade among member states, including Zimbabwe. The SADC promotes trade harmonisation and collaboration in sectors such as energy, tourism, and infrastructure (Songamla,2022). Zimbabwe is a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which comprises 21 member states in the eastern and southern regions of Africa. The COMESA Free Trade Area, established in 2000, provides tariff reductions for member states, facilitating preferential market access for Zimbabwean goods. COMESA promotes trade integration through initiatives aimed at harmonising economic policies. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was formally launched in 2018, with Zimbabwe ratifying it in 2019 (Gawe,2021). This agreement seeks to establish a unified African market to promote intra-continental trade. Zimbabwe's involvement in AfCFTA facilitates access to an expanded African market, characterised by diminished tariffs and enhanced trade collaboration (Joseph, 2023). Zimbabwe, as a member of the WTO, adheres to international trade regulations that facilitate open trade among nations. Zimbabwe also engages in multilateral agreements via the WTO, including the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and utilises dispute resolution mechanisms.

Zimbabwe has entered into bilateral agreements. The Zimbabwe-South Africa Bilateral Trade Agreement seeks to lower tariffs and enhance trade relations between Zimbabwe and its primary trading partner, South Africa. The two nations collaborated to lower tariffs on agricultural and industrial goods, facilitating exports between Zimbabwe and South Africa. Kambudzi et al. (2023) note that China and Zimbabwe entered into multiple bilateral agreements, with China being a major investor in Zimbabwe. The agreements conferred preferential treatment for Zimbabwean exports and facilitated increased access for Chinese companies to sectors such as mining and construction in Zimbabwe. According to Mukoka (2023) Zimbabwe and Botswana have established agreements aimed at enhancing cross-border trade and investment. In 2019, the two nations executed supplementary agreements concerning transport and logistics, facilitating the more efficient movement of goods and services (Kambudzi et al., 2023). Zimbabwe established agreements with Malaysia to enhance trade and investment, specifically in sectors such as mining and agriculture. The aforementioned trade agreements illustrate Zimbabwe's strategic initiatives to utilise regional and international partnerships for trade diversification, market access, and economic growth.It is perplexing that, despite Zimbabwe's participation in numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements, the country's trade flows and partner concentrations did not exhibit significant improvement during the studied period, as discussed in empirical chapters 5, 6, and 7. This study posits that the contemporary political landscape in Zimbabwe, particularly the policies of ZANU-PF and the actions of its elites, constitutes a significant barrier to the nation's ability to enhance regional and international partnerships for trade diversification, market access, and economic growth.

The political elite in Zimbabwe, particularly members of the ruling ZANU-PF, have long controlled key sectors of the economy. This control has been maintained through patronage networks and economic policies that often favor party affiliates over genuine development initiatives. As a result, these elites have historically prioritized short-term gains and personal enrichment over sustainable, diversified economic growth.This focus on elite interests over national interests led to policies and practices that did not encourage competitive or open trade practices. Key sectors, such as mining and agriculture, were monopolized by politically connected individuals, which limited the potential for competitive international trade.For instance, the role of Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) cannot be ignored. It is responsible for facilitating trade and implementing the country's customs regulations and has been used by politicians for rent-seeking purposes. Also, corruption within government and state-owned enterprises also impeded Zimbabwe's ability to effectively utilize bilateral and multilateral agreements. Funds and resources intended for development and trade were frequently diverted to benefit the elite, leading to inefficiencies in implementing trade agreements and investing in necessary infrastructure. The prevalence of bureaucratic hurdles discouraged both domestic and foreign investment. High levels of corruption increased operational costs, reduced transparency, and discouraged potential trade partners, who were concerned about the risks associated with doing business in Zimbabwe.

To conclude this section, I argue that Many of Zimbabwe's policies were driven by the ruling party's (ZANU-PF) focus on economic nationalism and the desire for sovereignty, often framed as resistance to Western influence and sanctions. Policies were frequently shaped by the interests of political elites. Corruption and the capture of state resources, especially in sectors like mining and agriculture, played a significant role in policy implementation and outcomes. This weakened the potential benefits of trade policies and reforms aimed at economic recovery. The ZANU-PF government's focus on maintaining political power through economic control mechanisms often conflicted with the need for economic reforms that could enhance trade flows. While regional trade agreements provided some relief, the overall trade environment remained constrained by domestic policies that prioritized political over economic objectives. Zimbabwe signed and ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) during the time under study. It also joined the SADC Free Trade Area when it was launched in 2008. It has participated in successive Doha Round of talks taking place under the auspices of the WTO. It is part of COMESA trade agreements and the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement between East and Southern Africa and the EU. I can safely say the attitude of the political elite towards the industrial policy determines, in a significant, the country's trade performance. This duality highlights the complex interplay between governance and economic performance in Zimbabwe during this period 2005 to 2020 and ZANU-PF has been the biggest stumbling block disturbing the developmental coalition in Zimbabwe.

8.3. *SUMMARY OF FINDINGS*

This thesis investigated the political economy of political regime and trade in Zimbabwe. It answered the following three research questions:

i. What was the status of political relationships in Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2020?
ii. What were the trade flow levels in Zimbabwe between 2005 to 2020?
iii. What are the characteristics of the import and export concentrations in Zimbabwe between 2005-2020?

The study covered three periods. The first period covered the years 2005 to 2008, i.e. the time before the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). The second period analysed the years 2009 to 2013. A period under the GNU. In this study, I found that the second period facilitated the transition to a more peaceful Zimbabwe under the GNU. Period three looked at the period after the dissolution of the GNU, the years 2014 to 2020. Each period answered all the three questions above. This qualitative study was based on an exploratory design and relied on secondary data to investigate the above three research questions. To answer the first research question, the study relied on analysing documentary and historical data to show the state of political relations. To answer the second research question, the study used descriptive analysis as the key to describing the development of trade flows, taking into account the underlying theoretical framework of political economy. Finally, the third research question was based on trend analysis. The study analysed which sectors or industries contribute the most to imports and exports. For this purpose, the data was categorised into sectors such as agricultural products, minerals, manufactured goods, etc. The study also analysed the geographical distribution of trade concentration by identifying Zimbabwe's major trading partners and assessing how concentrated trade is with specific countries or regions. Using time trend analysis, the study analysed how import and export concentration patterns have changed since 2005 to 2020.

8.3.1. *PERIOD ONE: HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY FINDINGS*

Between 2005 and 2008, trade relations between Zimbabwe and other countries were unstable due to the country's political climate and orientation. This affected the country's economic growth and sources of income. As mentioned in the topics mentioned in objective one, the study period was characterised by international isolation. As a result, Zimbabwe lost trading partners and the ability of local industry to obtain finance for retooling and production was negatively affected. The country's ability to produce goods for both domestic consumption and export was severely affected. Zimbabwe had to import more than it could export. Between 2005 and 2008, the country became a net importer of products and services. This thesis showed how ZANU-PF's haphazard land reform and the fact that the new farm owners were not adequately prepared for production - they lacked capital, essential machinery and other inputs - led to disruption of agricultural production and unstable trade balances.

The trade trends identified in this study suggest that Zimbabwe's political environment has an impact on trade flows. In Zimbabwe, policies and environmental factors affected the economy, which in turn affected global trade. In addition, the political climate had an impact on the government's trade policy. Due to its socio-economic instability, it was difficult for Zimbabwe to implement trade policies that would have effectively liberalised its economy. Zimbabwe's export industry was severely damaged by the country's economic crisis and the ZANU PF-led land reform programme. This led to a decline in agricultural productivity, which was a major export commodity for Zimbabwe, and a decline in revenue from agricultural commodities. Consequently, this research argues that trade in Zimbabwe suffered from the consequences of the political economy during the period under study.

In 2005-2008, the Zimbabwean government was faced with the challenge of protecting domestic industry from foreign competition as capacity utilisation in the industry declined. Capacity utilisation in the manufacturing industry fell from 35.8% in 2005 to 10% in 2008 (CZI, 2010). To counter the shortage of foreign exchange in the country, the government introduced import restrictions and exchange control measures during this period. Unfortunately, these policy measures had a negative impact on trade flows, as companies found it difficult to obtain foreign currency to import raw materials and export goods.

Furthermore, the results of the study on trends in Chapter Five indicate that the trade sector has performed poorly. This research cites the underperformance of the ruling regime (ZANU-PF) as the main reason for the poor performance of the Zimbabwean trading sector. Due to the neopatrimonial nature of the Zimbabwean ruling regime, significant development is difficult to achieve. This is also consistent with an assertion by (Bonga, 2021). According to Bonga, neopatrimonialism hinders development because it is associated with corruption and poor institutions. Neopatrimonial rule cannot be isolated from Zimbabwe. In this paper, I argue that there is clear evidence linking the neopatrimonial political climate in Zimbabwe to the poor performance of the trading sector. This is also supported by Erdmann & Engel (2006) who argue that neopatrimonial rule belongs in the category of authoritarian regimes. During the period under study, Zimbabwe was one such country. They are of the opinion that meaningful development in Zimbabwe is not possible without genuine political and economic reforms. Between 2005 and 2008, the country experienced a political regime characterised by authoritarian rule and unrest, which had a significant impact on trade. During these years, the country experienced a severe economic crisis characterised by hyperinflation, trade restrictions, foreign exchange controls and widespread poverty. Trade flows were severely affected by the political economy. Over time, Zimbabwe fell into political and economic difficulties that eventually led to the country's collapse.

8.3.2. PERIOD TWO: HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY FINDINGS

As mentioned in Chapter Six, the government of national unity in Zimbabwe, which lasted from 2009 to 2013, undoubtedly had a major impact on political relations. This thesis argued that the introduction of multiple currencies by the GNU helped to combat hyperinflation. This encouraged trade and helped to keep prices stable. This is evidenced by the trade flows in Chapter Six, where the value of exports increased by 129 percent. Imports continued to outpace exports in volume terms, although the percentage increase in the value of imports (105 percent) was lower than that of exports (129 percent). Trade flows were significantly affected by the political settlement in Zimbabwe that led to the formation of the GNU. The formation of the GNU led to a more stable economic environment that favoured trade and investment.

As a result of the opposition party MDC's connections to international organisations and donors, the implementation of social protection reforms in the second period led to a greater opening up of trade. Admittedly, the GNU provided some political stability and allayed concerns about government land confiscation and other measures that had deterred foreign investment in the past. With the revitalisation of the manufacturing sector, trade benefited from increased investor confidence. During the GNU period, there was a noticeable increase in exports. A win-win situation and inclusive development in Zimbabwe were not brought about by the transformation policies implemented with STERP 1 and STERP 2. From a political economy perspective and in conjunction with the political settlement analysis presented in chapter three of the literature review, the transformation policies implemented through STERP 1 and STERP 2 have not brought about a win-win situation and inclusive development in Zimbabwe. This research argues that the GNU was a weak political coalition and has hindered significant transformation of the commercial sector in Zimbabwe. The failure of the ZANU-PF regime to share power fairly with the main opposition during the GNU era is another reason why the trade sector has not recovered significantly. ZANU and MDC have not been able to resolve their political differences to create a democratic society. Rather, as the political relations issues mentioned in Chapter Six show, they have exacerbated the conflict. The issues mentioned in Chapter Six make it clear that political unity in Zimbabwe was in jeopardy

The analysis of trade trends and political relations in Chapter Six has shown that political inadequacies are the main cause of the manufacturing downturn in Zimbabwe and the poor export performance. Trade trends show that the agricultural sector, - which is important to Zimbabwe, recovered somewhat during the GNU, which is reflected in an increase in exports. However, as the country's trade deficits persisted, the agricultural sector was unable to realise its full potential. With some support for commercial farmers, land reforms were reassessed to promote more sustainable and productive farming practises, which improved trade. Also, trade volumes recovered from the recession during this period as shown in the data presentation. In the researcher's humble opinion, the increase in exports was unimpressive and did not lead to significant growth. Furthermore, it is clear from the above analysis that agricultural exports - apart from tobacco - have lost their prominent position in the region and the export basket has become less diverse and more dependent on a small number of products. Political problems such as low efficiency have been blamed for the poor performance of the export industry

8.3.3. Period Three: Highlights of key findings

This study has demonstrated that in the last ten years of President Mugabe's rule, from 2007 to 2017, Zimbabwe experienced an unprecedented economic downturn and global isolation. Zimbabwe's domestic politics and international relations affected trade flows both internally and externally. On the other hand, foreign trade affected the country's economy, and the economy in turn affected local politics, which influenced citizens' perceptions of the government. It is also worth noting that the second republic/new government under Mnangagwa did not deliver much in terms of trade and integration. This is due to the government's legitimacy crisis and its apparent authoritarianism, failure to implement political and economic reforms and the persistent negative perception of Zimbabwe in the international community.

In the third period, Zimbabwe experienced sluggish economic growth and a decline in living standards for many citizens, pushing them into poverty. The Mnangagwa government sought to boost the economy by inviting both local and foreign investors, traders and companies to capitalise on opportunities in the country. This was meant to expand fiscal space, increase exports and improve the overall happiness index for Zimbabweans. However, these efforts were hampered by the government's failure to uphold the rule of law, human rights and property rights, as described in chapter seven. As in the other periods, imports were higher than exports in the third period. This situation worsened in November 2016 when the surrogate bond was introduced. The decline in exports during this period could be due to the fall in manufacturing production. The country's trade balance was negative from 2014 to 2020, meaning that Zimbabwe had a trade deficit from 2014 to 2020. Much of these trade deficits were caused by the country importing more goods and services than it exported, as this study shows. The study also shows that in the third period, gold was exported the most compared to other products during this period. Tobacco was in second place. Trade in goods was affected by the country's economic decline. The manufacturing industry was affected by factors such as severe power outages, high business costs and the government's domestic policies

In the third period, South Africa still received the most exports from Zimbabwe. And Zimbabwe also imported most of its imports from South Africa. Due to the proximity of the two countries, trade between Zimbabwe and South Africa was strong. This is evident from the trade statistics between these two countries. Although the 1964 trade agreement between South Africa and Zimbabwe was cancelled in 2018, trade between the two countries has not declined. Imports from countries such as China, Singapore and India show that the government's Look East policy is bearing fruit. The Look East policy was introduced by the Zimbabwean government in 2003 to move away from economic dependence on the West and build strong relations with Eastern European and Asian countries.

In addition, the trade sanctions imposed by ZIDERA make it difficult for the country to access foreign markets, especially the US market, through foreign trade financing. The study also suggests that the contradictory policies of the ruling regime have had a negative impact on the country's trade flows. For example, the lack of clarity on indigenisation and economic empowerment policies. These policy inconsistencies had a negative impact on trade as they had a negative impact on foreign companies doing business in Zimbabwe. These policies also led to some of the companies leaving the country as the operating environment was no longer conducive.

In addition, the corrupt state organs also posed the greatest economic challenges for the Mugabe regime in the post-GNU period. The manufacturing sector faced major obstacles for so long. All this impacted on imports and exports, as the above analysis of results clearly shows. The longer-term trends in trade are worrying. Export growth in the period 2014 to 2020 was lacklustre. Agricultural exports, with the exception of tobacco, have lost their once dominant role in the region and manufacturing is in a continued secular decline as mentioned in Chapter Seven above. In addition, Zimbabwe's export basket has become less diversified and more dependent on a narrow range of mineral and agricultural products. This poor trade balance can be attributed to several policy problems, including poor macroeconomic policy predictability, an unfavourable tariff structure and restrictive services policies. The political climate in the third period remained complicated and the country continued to struggle with economic hurdles, including rampant inflation, widespread unemployment and a struggling agricultural sector. Despite the promises of President Mnangagwa's new government, the country struggled with trade deficits. The trade structure included the export of minerals (e.g. platinum, gold), tobacco and agricultural goods, while at the same time importing raw materials such as fuel, machinery and foodstuffs

8.4. IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Warwick (2013) suggests that sustainable growth and economic diversification in Zimbabwe could be achieved through the implementation of trade and industrial policy reforms by the government. In order to improve trade flows, the government needs to adopt reforms that reshape incentives across the economy and trade and industrial policies. Currently, Zimbabwe is not fully realising its trade potential to benefit from trade as a driver of economic growth and development. The government's previous inward-looking trade policy focussed on protecting domestic industry from unfair import competition, but there is now a shift towards balancing trade interests through strategic business openings to promote two-way trade and investment. However, President Mnangagwa's mantra "Zimbabwe is open for business" lacks ideological clarity and is criticised by Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ruhanya (2020) for its anti-nationalist approach.

Zimbabwe's economy is primarily linked to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Southern African Development Commission. This dependence on intra-African trade could potentially prevent Zimbabwe from fully realising the benefits of global trade. In order to increase its economic growth, Zimbabwe should consider working with international partners and stakeholders to establish itself as a major player in the global economy. However, this will pose a significant challenge to the Zimbabwean government as research suggests that democratic governance promotes economic growth and prosperity, while autocratic regimes can stifle progress.

Zimbabwe needs to adopt effective policies to capitalise on its abundant natural and human resources to increase production and export earnings. The current focus on commodity exports must shift to high value-added goods and services. The government should actively attract local and foreign investors to set up production facilities in Zimbabwe that cater for both the domestic and international markets. It is important that the government does not make abrupt policy changes to gain political advantage as this creates uncertainty and discourages investment. The country already has many favourable policies in place, but inconsistency hinders economic growth and discourages potential investors. According to Makochekanwa et al., (2012), a nation's trade policy must be consistent if it is to benefit from trade. Long-term benefits begin to accrue even though there may be short-term negative effects (such as lower government revenue). It is also important to remind policy makers that trade liberalisation should be viewed as a process and not an event. Therefore, the development and implementation of trade liberalisation measures requires a long-term horizon.

The Government of Zimbabwe should take full advantage of the preferences and opportunities arising from membership of the SADC, COMESA, African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) and World Trade Organisation (WTO) trade agreements to significantly and sustainably increase trade beyond current levels. Zimbabwe’s export performance has remained largely subdued over the years and falls short of its potential to boost the country's economic growth and development. As outlined in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, there is need to end the over-reliance on a single country as the main trading partner. New and diverse trading partner countries must always be developed. South Africa is Zimbabwe's main trading partner in both imports and exports and exposes Zimbabwe to major macroeconomic shocks as even the slightest disruption in the South African economy has a major impact on economic operations in Zimbabwe. This policy recommendation also relates strongly to the implementation and advocacy of appropriate trade policies within the country as this determines who your trading partners could be. It has been shown that a developing country's economy can be influenced by its trading partners and that it can benefit greatly from trade with developed countries. If Zimbabwe takes full advantage of trade agreements with other countries, it can diversify its trading partners and not just depend on one country. There is a lesson to be learnt from China, as the country has changed its trade behaviour significantly to its own advantage.

It is critical that policy makers in Zimbabwe recognise the following factors identified in this study as impacting on the country's trade. To create an investment-friendly environment, the Zimbabwean government needs to address the country's political and economic problems

A. Inconsistent trade policies and practices.

B. Challenges to competitiveness arising from high production costs in the global market.

C. Limited investments and limited opportunities for value addition and beneficiation because of inadequate technology.

D. The challenges related to Zimbabwe's balance of payments and the ongoing sanctions against the country impact the acquisition of trade finance facilities and the handling of international payments.

The good news emerging from the study is that it is in the hands of the Zimbabwean government to address these policy shortcomings. If the government were to enact reforms that reshape incentives across the economy as well as trade and industrial policies, it could promote sustainable growth, economic diversification and empowerment of the Zimbabwean people.

8.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Given the nature of the study and the upcoming elections in 2023, it was not possible for the researcher to obtain primary data through case studies and interviews with ZANU-PF party politicians. The current political climate in Zimbabwe is not conducive to conducting interviews with ZANU-PF politicians. The democracy debate in the country is highly contentious, with the outcome of the 2018 and 2023 presidential elections endlessly disputed, making any research on the topic of political regime dangerous. However, despite the shortcomings mentioned above, the findings of this study are useful in making an informed assessment of the political regime in Zimbabwe over the years. Suggestions for further research would be to include primary data collection from politicians (top elites), industry experts and business people. Conducting case studies and interviews with key stakeholders such as government officials, industry experts and business representatives can provide valuable qualitative data and insights into the factors influencing trade. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the research area, future studies can also calculate trade intensity indices and concentration indices to measure the degree of concentration in imports and exports, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the field. The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) is a common index that can be used to gain insights into market concentration and the dominance of certain products or markets. A comparative analysis would be an interesting addition, comparing trade flows from Zimbabwe with regional and global patterns. This can provide a broader context for understanding the uniqueness or commonality of Zimbabwe's trade patterns under the current regime. In addition, a comparative analysis can be conducted to assess the direction, intensity and composition of Zimbabwe's trade relations with specific countries, such as China.

8.6. CONCLUSION REMARKS OF STUDY

This study examined the interaction between political regimes and trade flows in Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2020. Put simply, the study examined how political regimes affect economic policies, institutions and economic management. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between politics and trade. The study significantly contributes to understanding how a country's political environment affects its trade performance and overall economic wellbeing. This study makes a significant contribution to scholarship in the field of political economy in terms of helping us understand how the theatre of politics within a country can impact on the country's trade performance and its overall economic wellbeing (empirical contribution). In addition, by examining the interplay between political dynamics and the formulation of trade policy, this study sheds light on the complex factors that shape trade policy at both the national and international levels. Despite the breadth and depth of the existing literature on political economy and trade, there is still a need for further research and analysis through synthesizing existing research and analysing key theoretical frameworks that provides a comprehensive understanding of the political economy of trade.

The situation in Zimbabwe at the time of writing this thesis is one of the worst crisis situations in the second decade of the 21st century faced by countries in the global South. The economic and political crisis calls into question the fact that Zimbabwe had a government of national unity between 2009 and 2013, which was supposed to act as a transitional government in a period of transition in terms of economic and political reconstruction of the country (Chinyere, 2020). However, the researcher understands the difficulties that Zimbabwe was and is still facing as it is difficult for governments to implement democracy when people are struggling with poverty and when there are extreme inequalities that make social cohesion unthinkable. Zimbabwe is still at a crossroads and faces the same political and economic difficulties as in 2008 when the GPA was signed. Issues of governance, legitimacy and democracy remain central to Zimbabwean politics and have consequently impacted on the country’s integration with other states. The revolutionary mentality within ZANU-PF is an obstacle on the road to democracy that continues to stifle liberalisation.

It is true that most African countries have taken trade policy measures at various levels (bilateral, regional and multilateral). Zimbabwe’s experience does not match the policies implemented by the ruling ZANU-PF government in the years under review. While the government has committed itself to a variety of trade liberalisation agreements, from regional (the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)) to multilateral (the World Trade Organisation (WTO)), the implementation of these agreements has proved more problematic and has not made any significant contribution to Zimbabwe's trade, as evidenced by the poor trade patterns highlighted in the previous chapters. From this study, the researcher concludes that the political factors have influenced trade patterns, economic outcomes and policy decisions in Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2020.

This study also concludes that the political environment in which economic actors operate has an important influence on the success of the economic reforms implemented by the government. This view is also shared by Rodrik (2018). For any economic reform, be it trade policy, to be successful, it must be underpinned by sound institutions, which include secure property rights, agencies that regulate behaviour in the goods, services, labour, asset and financial markets, as well as fiscal and monetary institutions to maintain macroeconomic stability, which will have a positive impact on economic prospects and trade. However, this has not been the case in Zimbabwe. The political economy in Zimbabwe is hindering democratic development and therefore the country's trade flows.

The political environment in Zimbabwe is characterised by severe restrictions on political and civil liberties, as the issues of political relations from 2005 to 2020 show. The issues identified in this study such as political tensions, economic challenges and power struggles, factions within the ruling ZANU-PF, protests and post-election violence, to name a few, acted as a barrier to attracting investors and working with more trading partners. This all had a negative impact on the development of trade in Zimbabwe. From the data presented in the previous chapters, it is fair to conclude that export performance since 2005 has fallen far short of its potential to drive the Zimbabwean economy to high growth rates. This poor performance can be linked to the prevailing neopatrimonial policies in Zimbabwe: The country's one-party government has determined the economy's trade policy throughout the period under review (2005-2020). The country's economic reforms were designed to benefit individual politicians of the ruling ZANU-PF and not necessarily the economy. Neopatrimonialism became the dominant form of state and governance in Zimbabwe. Under neopatrimonialism, the ruling regime, ZANU-PF, had the ability to divert public resources to serve private interests rather than enlightened interests. The distribution of resources in neopatrimonialist systems is always motivated by the patron's incentive to secure his tenure and this was the ploy of the ruling ZANU-PF regime. This has further affected trade, as shown by the summarised growth rates of imports and exports in Figures 36 and 37, respectively.

Figure 36

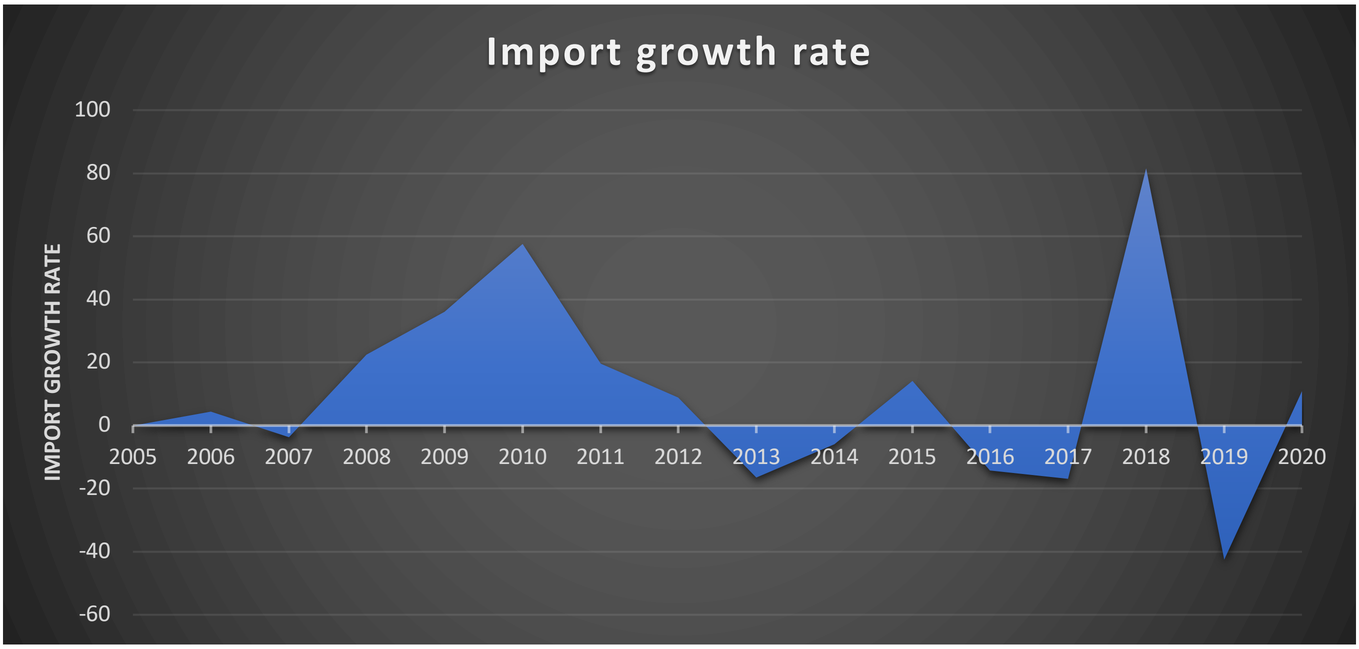


FIGURE 36: IMPORT GROWTH RATE FOR ZIMBABWE 2005 TO 2020
Source: Author's Computation

Figure 37

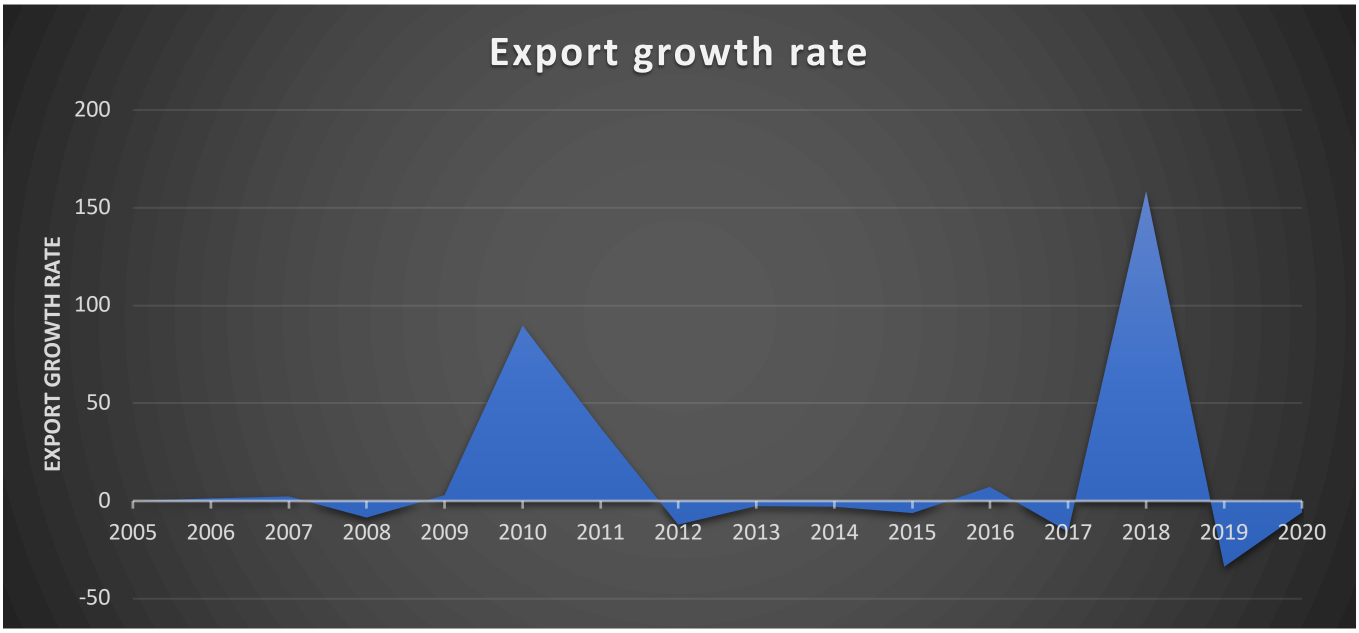


FIGURE 37: EXPORT GROWTH RATE FOR ZIMBABWE 2005 TO 2020
Source: Author's computation

According to the political settlement paradigm, it is crucial to understand how organisational power is distributed in order to grasp how institutions and politics influence both economics and politics (Khan, 2018). Furthermore, the political settlement paradigm outlines that resources are distributed according to institutions and policies, which can have different effects on different types of organisations (Khan, 2018). By applying the political settlement analysis, which examines the distribution of power, formal and informal institutions and the accumulation of incentives, I conclude that they have had different effects on Zimbabwe's economic progress. There were fluctuations in the volume of trade and contrasting patterns of trade as shown in the data presented in chapters five, six and seven. The Zimbabwean political economy introduced various policies that affected trade. In addition, the political events in Zimbabwe affected trade flows. While trade volumes have recovered well from the deep recession of 2007-2008, this cannot compensate for other worrying longer-term trends identified in this study.

Based on Acemoglu and Robson's views on political institutions set out in Why Nations Fail, this study concludes that ZANU-PF has over the years been an extractive institution in which a small group of people exploit the rest of society in the Marxian sense. This is also in line with the assertions of Dzionek-Kozlowska & Matera (2021). Zimbabwe's political structure is not sufficiently centralised to deliver basic public services, which has impacted on the volume of imports and exports. Export growth in the period under review was lackluster and did not significantly drive economic growth. As the data analysis in the previous section shows, Zimbabwe's export basket is less diversified and more dependent on a narrow range of products. In short, exports have become less diversified and less technologically sophisticated. In this study, the causes of this poor performance of the trade sector are attributed to various political economy issues such as poor economic policies that have created an unfavourable climate for private investment and trade; industrial policies (especially indigenisation policies) that undermine investor confidence and discourage private investment.

This study further claims that the heterodox economic planning of the ruling government from 2005 to 2020 led to a mixture of redistribution and indigenisation policies on the one hand and the acceptance of neoliberalism on the other. The introduction of STERP as part of the reconstruction and neoliberal reform agenda led to positive economic growth, but this was supported by political stability under the GNU. It should also be noted that at the time of this study, the country is still struggling to stabilise its economy after a long period of governance problems and international isolation. Economic reforms, including the introduction of a multi-currency regime in 2009 with the US dollar as the main currency, had contributed to the country's economic recovery with double-digit GDP growth rates and ended hyperinflation. However, in a difficult socio-economic context, Zimbabwe then introduced restrictions on foreign direct investment in 2012 under the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act. As a result, foreign investment was curbed and the economy has returned to modest growth since 2013. In order to save foreign currency, the Zimbabwean government introduced foreign exchange control measures in addition to import restrictions. As a result of all the trade restrictions imposed on Zimbabwe in recent years, the importance of trade for the country's economy has decreased significantly

This study concludes by noting that Zimbabwe has experienced several decades of political and economic challenges as outlined in this thesis. These challenges can largely be attributed to the political and economic decisions made by the ruling ZANU-PF elites. This view is also shared by Marumahoko & Chigwata (2020) who point out that very few in the ruling ZANU-PF or those close to the party are willing to acknowledge or take the blame for their role in Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis. The fall of Robert Mugabe in November 2017 provided the country with an opportunity to move on from its ugly past and embark on a new development path. Mugabe's successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, announced himself on the international stage as a reformist who is ready to change the political and economic course that has turned the former breadbasket of Southern Africa into a basket case. Mnangagwa heralded the birth of a 'Second Republic', bringing with it clean governance, an open business environment and an expanded scope for the exercise of basic human rights as well as freedoms. However, the process of change has been slow and painful, as noted in the themes of political relations and trade trends in the third period (Chapter Seven). This has resulted in the post-Mugabe era being indistinguishable from the old dispensation. Until the new Mnangagwa and the ruling ZANU-PF start walking the talk of change, Zimbabwe will remain a basket case.

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