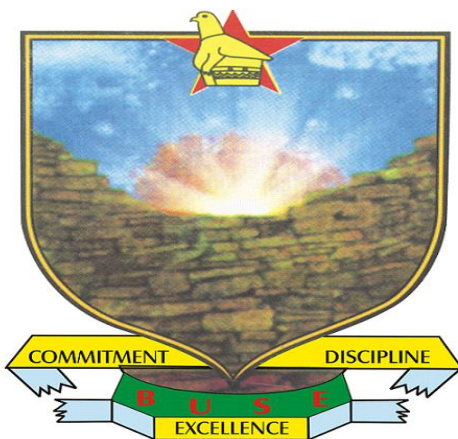


BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES



**The Impact of Civil Unrests in Shaping Political Outcomes. A Case Study of Zimbabwe
(2018 – 2023).**

By

Elaine Tseriwa

B211719B

**A Dissertation Submitted To The Department Of Peace And Governance In Partial
Fulfilment For The Requirements For The Bachelor Of Science In Peace And
Governance Degree**

Supervisor: Mr. Mhuri

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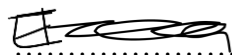
ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the impact of civil unrest on political outcomes in Zimbabwe from 2018 to 2023. The focus was on the interplay of social, economic, and political factors that shaped this period. The study highlights how civil unrest, driven by political grievances, economic hardship, and governance failures, manifested in various forms, including protests, riots, and strikes. Key events, such as the 2018 election-related protests and 2019 fuel price demonstrations, illustrated the public's response to perceived injustices. The study revealed that the Zimbabwean government consistently employed repressive tactics, including excessive use of force, arbitrary detentions, and restrictive laws, to suppress dissent. This heavy-handed approach deepened public disillusionment and heightened political polarization, undermining trust in state institutions. The research utilized a qualitative methodology, employing in-depth interviews with diverse stakeholders, including political leaders, activists, and civil society members. This approach provided rich insights into the complexities of civil unrest and its implications for governance. Findings indicated that ongoing civil unrest had significant outcomes, such as increased political tension, weakening of opposition forces, and a rise in social media activism as a means of organizing dissent. The potential for continued unrest remained high, fuelled by unresolved grievances and economic instability. To address these challenges, the dissertation recommended fostering meaningful dialogue, implementing electoral reforms, and strengthening human rights protections.

DECLARATION FORM

I, Elaine T. Tseriwa (B211719B), hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own research and study, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgments and references included in the body of the paper, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

Elaine T. Tseriwa



.....

Student Name

Signature

Date

Mr. Mhuri



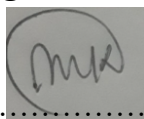
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Supervisor

Signature

Date

Dr. Kurebwa



...01/09/2025.....

Chairperson

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents Midia Tseriwa and Terrentius Tseriwa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to almighty God. I would also like to thank my supervisor Mr. Mhuri for his guidance and mentorship.

I would also like to thank my friends Morelet Chitsike, Natasha Maruve and Geraldine Chakanyuka for their support during my studies.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CCC - Citizens Coalition for Change

MDC - Movement for Democratic Change

MOPA - Maintenance of Peace and Order Act

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

POSA - Public Order and Security Act

SADC - Southern African Development Community

UN - United Nations

ZANU-PF - Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Civil unrests occur across the world. According to (Braha, 2024) they usually emerge in response to political, economic and social grievances. Internationally, civil unrests are often triggered by lack of political freedom, human rights violations, corruption and lack of accountable governance. Civil unrests do not always lead to political changes. In some instances, governments are able to successfully quell unrest and prevent changes from occurring by implementing harsh response measures. Governments that crack down severely through tactics such as the use of live ammunition against protesters, mass arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and internet shutdowns are often able to stamp out unrest in the short term through generating fear and intimidation (Ekelund, 2023). Overly oppressive public order laws that criminalize dissenting voices and prolonged states of emergency also constrain the scale and sustainability of civil unrest. Rapid deployment of security forces to demonstrations with a visible show of force deters further mobilization, as opposition actors calculate the risks of confronting overwhelming state coercion (Ekelund, 2023). Preemptive arrests of protest leaders and opposition figures also weakens coordination of unrest and dissipates momentum. Strategic internet blackouts and media censorship limit global scrutiny of government crackdowns (Ekelund, 2023).

Civil unrests in Africa have been a significant phenomenon, often arising from deep-seated social, economic, and political issues. These conflicts can escalate into full-fledged civil wars, leading to immense suffering and displacement of populations (Sacco, 2023). The root causes of civil conflicts in Africa are multifaceted, stemming from historical inequalities, ethnic tensions, resource competition, and governance challenges. Scholars have highlighted

the detrimental effects of civil wars on state institutions, societal cohesion, and economic development in the region (Sacco, 2023). Understanding the dynamics of civil unrests in Africa is crucial for addressing the underlying issues and promoting peace and stability on the continent. Civil unrests in Africa have, in certain instances, resulted in coup d'états and violent changes of government. These turbulent political shifts can destabilize entire regions and have far-reaching consequences on governance structures and societal stability (Walker & Cramer, 2024). The outcomes of such violent upheavals can impact the trajectory of a nation's development and its relationships with neighbouring countries and international partners.

Domestically, Zimbabwe has faced civil unrest in response to political and economic grievances in recent years. From 2018-2023, the country experienced a volatile political environment and rising tensions amidst an economic crisis. This was exacerbated by accusations of electoral fraud, corruption, and human rights violations under the government of President Emmerson Mnangagwa (Motau & Tshifhumulo, 2023). Civil unrest in Zimbabwe has taken the form of protests, strikes, and dissent movements led by opposition groups, civil society, and citizens. They have put pressure on the government and shaped political outcomes during this unstable period. Key events that have triggered unrest include disputed elections, a fuel price hike, and allegations of state capture. The government's often repressive response to civil unrest, including the use of force, arrests, and internet shutdowns, has further polarized the country's politics (Motau & Tshifhumulo, 2023). The use of oppressive public order and security laws to ban protests and criminalize dissent, as well as declaration of prolonged states of emergency, constrain the scale and sustainability of unrest. This has worked for some regimes. Rapid and overwhelming deployment of military and security forces to demonstrations also deters further mobilization through a visible show of force, as opposition calculates the risks of confronting overwhelming coercion. This research aims to provide insights into these dynamics of unrest and political instability in Zimbabwe from 2018-2023.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study aims to explore the role of civil unrests in shaping political outcomes in Zimbabwe.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

While civil unrests have the potential to shape political outcomes and drive democratic reforms, the Zimbabwean government's repressive response to dissenting voices has polarized the country's political landscape and undermined citizens' civil liberties. According to Helliker & Murisa (2020) the government's consistent crackdown on protests through forceful suppression, mass arrests, internet shutdowns and draconian security laws has discouraged citizens from exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. This is problematic as it violates democratic principles and marginalizes critical voices. Additionally, the lack of tolerance for opposition parties and dissenting views has created deep tensions between the ruling ZANU-PF and opposition groups like CCC (Motau & Tshifhumulo, 2023). If left unaddressed, this polarization risks escalating social conflicts and instability that could undermine the consolidation of democracy. A further problem highlighted by Tembo and Singh (2023) is that restrictive policies have limited the meaningful participation of civil society in public policy issues. Yet civic engagement plays an important role in advocating for citizens, holding the government accountable, and strengthening democratic processes. Unless urgent steps are taken to foster inclusion, ensure protection of civil liberties and allow for open debate between diverse political viewpoints, the repressive environment will continue adversely impacting Zimbabwe's fragile democratic transition and long-term stability. There is need for constructive dialogue and national reconciliation to resolve the root causes driving tensions.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To explore the types of civil unrests that have emerged in Zimbabwe from 2018 – 2023.
2. To uncover how the Zimbabwean government responded to civil unrests during the period in time.
3. To ascertain the outcomes of civil unrests that have emerged from 2018 – 2023.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What types of civil unrests have emerged in Zimbabwe from 2018 – 2023?
2. How has the Zimbabwean government responded to civil unrests during the period in time?
3. What have been the outcomes of civil unrests that have emerged from 2018 – 2023?

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

1. There is political instability and low tolerance of civil unrest in Zimbabwe.
2. Civil unrests have the potential to cause political changes.
3. Civil unrests are disruptive in nature.
4. Zimbabwe has experienced multiple civil unrests over the time period.

1.7 Significance of the Study

For policymakers, this study will serve as a valuable resource to gain insights into the dynamics of civil unrest and political stability in Zimbabwe. The findings of this study can inform the development of evidence-based policies and strategies aimed at promoting political stability, fostering dialogue between different political factions, and strengthening democratic institutions in Zimbabwe.

For the academic community, this study offers an opportunity to delve into the complexities of civil unrest and political dynamics in Zimbabwe. Additionally, the study may inspire further research projects, collaborations, and interdisciplinary inquiries. For peace practitioners, the study will serve as a valuable tool for understanding the complex dynamics of civil unrest and political stability in Zimbabwe.

For civil societies and NGOs, the study will provide valuable insights into the dynamics of civil unrest and political stability in Zimbabwe from 2018 to 2023. This can help inform advocacy strategies and programs to support democratic governance and citizens' rights.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The study specifically focused on the period of 2018 to 2023, excluding events and developments that occurred before or after this timeframe. The research centred on Harare as the primary case study, limiting the analysis to the political dynamics and civil unrest within the country's borders. The study elaborated on civil unrests in the form of protests, demonstrations and dissent movements. It did not include other forms of unrest like armed rebellion or insurgency which present different dynamics.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The study faced challenges in terms of data collection. The sensitivity of the topic may present challenges for the study. Citizens and activists who were involved in protests/unrest may fear reprisal and not participate or provide full disclosure in interviews. This had the potential to limit the study's findings. To counter this challenge, the researcher assured participants that their identities would be protected and emphasized the confidentiality of their responses. To ensure that adequate data is collected, the researcher also used multiple sources of data to ensure that comprehensive data is collected. Another limitation was that political

dynamics and situations may continue evolving after the study period, limiting the findings to the 2018-2023 period only. The researcher did an in-depth and exhaustive study of this period to ensure various aspects of the research problem are covered.

1.10 Definition of Key Terms

Civil society refers to the section of society composed of voluntary, non-profit organizations and institutions that operate independently of government to serve the interests and needs of citizens (Helliker & Murisa, 2020). These include NGOs, community groups, labor unions, faith-based organizations, and social movements.

Civil unrest refers to public disturbances, protests, demonstrations, or acts of resistance by a group of individuals within a society (Hou et al., 2021). These are done against perceived injustices, inequalities, or grievances, often taking place in the context of political, social, or economic tensions (Hou et al., 2021).

Democratic governance refers to a system of government based on principles of popular participation, majority rule, minority rights, and checks and balances (Islam, 2024). Key aspects include regular free and fair elections, protection of civil liberties and political pluralism.

Political outcomes are the results or consequences of civil unrests on the political landscape and dynamics within a country (Calder, 2021). Political outcomes of civil unrests may include changes in government or leadership, policy reforms, concessions to opposition demands, shifts in electoral outcomes, or changes in the ruling party's political control/legitimacy over the long run (Calder, 2021).

1.11 Dissertation Outline

Chapter 1 provides an introduction and background to the study. It provides the statement of the problem, limitations and delimitations of the study. These are essential in providing context for the study.

Chapter 2 shall review related literature and theoretical frameworks. The aim is to discuss what has been shared about the study by other scholars. The chapter will also highlight research gaps that exist currently. Examples of civil unrests will also be provided.

Chapter 3 will elaborate on the research design and methodology. It will elaborate on the data collection tools and instruments that will be used in the study. It will also focus on the study area and participants in the study.

Chapter 4 provides the findings of the study. The data will be collected from various stakeholders and it will be presented in this chapter. There will also be a discussion and analysis of the findings.

Chapter 5 will provide concluding remarks to the study. It will also provide recommendations and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Civil unrest and social movements have played a significant role in shaping societies and challenging established systems of power and authority throughout history. In this chapter, the research will delve into the theoretical framework of Political Opportunity Theory, which sheds light on the factors influencing the emergence and escalation of civil unrest. By exploring various types of civil unrest, such as protests, riots, strikes, and insurrections, the aim is to understand the diverse forms of collective action that individuals and groups utilize to express grievances, demand change, and advocate for social justice.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Political Opportunity Theory

Political Opportunity Theory, often associated with social movements and protests, posits that the political environment plays a significant role in the emergence and escalation of civil unrest. It was propounded by Doug McAdam in 1982 (Porta, 2020). According to this theory, certain political conditions can either facilitate or inhibit the mobilization of collective action by dissatisfied groups within society (Scott, 2023). These conditions include the openness of the political system, the availability of channels for expressing grievances, and the receptivity of decision-makers to demands for change (Kufakurinani, 2021). One key element of the Political Opportunity Theory is the role of political elites and institutions in shaping the opportunities for protest and resistance (Scott, 2023). When political leaders are responsive to the grievances of marginalized groups and demonstrate a willingness to engage in dialogue and address their concerns, the likelihood of civil unrest decreases. On the other hand, when political elites are perceived as unresponsive or repressive, it can fuel discontent and mobilize

opposition forces (Kufakurinani, 2021). Moreover, the presence of external factors, such as economic crises, social inequalities, and global events, can also influence the political opportunities for civil unrest. Economic downturns, for example, may create conditions of hardship and deprivation that drive individuals and communities to protest against perceived injustices. Social inequalities, exacerbated by discriminatory policies and practices, can further fuel tensions and contribute to the mobilization of collective action (Scott, 2023). As stated earlier, civil unrests emerge as a result of various grievances or social factors that are unsatisfactory. Therefore, they can emerge when people have queries or complaints about their governments. Therefore, in Zimbabwe, civil unrests have by and large emerged because of the economic hardships. (Kufakurinani, 2021). Most of the civil unrests in Zimbabwe can be traced to dissatisfaction with the socioeconomic situation in the country. Conversely, the Zimbabwean government has responded heavy handedly because they have perceived the threats as ploys for regime change (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). This creates a paradoxical situation where the population feel they need to protest against perceived injustices while the government aims to deal with the regime change agenda.

2.3 Types of Civil Unrest

2.3.1 Protests

As stated by Grill (2021) protests are peaceful gatherings of individuals or groups to express grievances, advocate for change, or raise awareness about specific issues. Protests can take the form of rallies, marches, sit-ins, or demonstrations. They serve as a platform for individuals or groups to voice their concerns, demand change, or raise awareness about social, political, or economic issues. Protests can take various forms, including marches, rallies, vigils, and demonstrations. Participants may carry signs, chant slogans, and engage in collective actions to convey their messages effectively (Grill, 2021). Protests can be spontaneous or

planned in advance, mobilizing diverse segments of society to come together and advocate for common goals. When conducted peacefully, protests can be powerful tools for promoting social justice, influencing public opinion, and pressuring authorities to address grievances. One notable example of protests that captured global attention is the Black Lives Matter movement. Following the tragic death of George Floyd in the United States, protests erupted across the country and around the world, demanding an end to systemic racism and police brutality (Grill, 2021). The impact of these protests led to widespread discussions about race relations, police reform, and social justice, highlighting the importance of raising awareness through collective actions.

2.3.2 Riots

Riots are characterized by spontaneous and often chaotic displays of public disorder, involving acts of violence, vandalism, and destruction of property. Riots typically emerge in response to perceived injustices, grievances, or grievances that have escalated tensions within a community (Keith, 2023). They can be fuelled by anger, frustration, or underlying social issues, leading to unruly behavior and clashes with law enforcement. Rioters may engage in looting, arson, and confrontations with authorities, resulting in damage to infrastructure, businesses, and public spaces (Scott, 2023). Riot control measures, such as curfews, deployment of security forces, and use of crowd control tactics, are often implemented to restore order and protect public safety. Riots pose challenges for maintaining social stability and require coordinated efforts to address the root causes of unrest and prevent further escalation of violence (Scott, 2023). An example would be the Sri Lankan riots of 2022. The Sri Lanka protests of 2022 were triggered by severe economic crises that gripped the country, prompting mass demonstrations and unrest among the population. The deteriorating economic conditions, exacerbated by factors such as inflation and rising living costs, fuelled discontent

and frustration among the people, leading to widespread protests against the government (Ruwanpura, 2024). The protests escalated into riots as demonstrators stormed government buildings, demanding the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The intensifying public pressure and calls for accountability reached a tipping point, compelling President Rajapaksa to ultimately flee the country and tender his resignation (Ruwanpura, 2024). This significant turn of events marked a pivotal moment in Sri Lanka's political landscape and underscored the power of collective action in effecting change (Abenante, 2023). The resignation of President Rajapaksa not only reflected the grievances of the people but also raised questions about the country's governance, stability, and future trajectory (Abenante, 2023). The aftermath of his resignation ushered in a period of transition and uncertainty, as Sri Lanka grappled with the implications of a leadership change and the need to address the underlying issues that precipitated the protests (Abenante, 2023).

2.3.3 Strikes

Strikes are organized labor actions in which workers or labor unions withhold their services or labor to demand better working conditions, wages, or benefits from employers. Strikes are a form of protest commonly utilized by workers to address grievances such as low wages, poor working conditions, and lack of benefits. Workers collectively withhold their labor as a means of pressuring employers to negotiate and address their demands (Grill, 2021). Strikes can have significant economic and social impacts, drawing attention to labor issues and advocating for fair treatment in the workplace. Strikes can occur in various sectors, including industries, public services, and educational institutions, disrupting normal operations and impacting productivity (Porta, 2020). There are different types of strikes, such as general strikes, where workers from different industries participate collectively, and wildcat strikes, which are unauthorized actions taken by workers without union approval. Strikes are often

preceded by negotiations or disputes between labor and management, reflecting conflicting interests and demands (Porta, 2020). Strikes can lead to economic losses for employers, employees, and the broader economy, underscoring the need for effective labor management relations and mechanisms for resolving grievances (Grill, 2021). By leveraging their collective bargaining power, workers use strikes as a tool to assert their rights, advocate for fair treatment, and address workplace issues through dialogue and negotiation (Grill, 2021).

2.3.4 Insurrections

An insurrection is an organized and often violent uprising against an established authority, government, or ruling power. According to Vlahoplus (2023) this act of rebellion is typically aimed at achieving significant political, social, or economic change. Vlahoplus (2023) further states that insurrections can manifest in various forms, including armed conflicts, protests, and civil disobedience, and they may occur in response to perceived injustices, oppression, or the failure of authorities to address the needs and rights of the population. Examples of insurrections would be the Arab Springs Protests that emerged from 2010. The Arab Spring was a series of pro-democracy uprisings and demonstrations that swept across the Middle East and North Africa region in late 2010 and early 2011 (Jha & Kirsanli, 2024). The wave of protests was characterized by widespread discontent with authoritarian regimes, political repression, corruption, and socioeconomic inequalities prevalent in many Arab countries (Jha & Kirsanli, 2024). The Arab Spring protests were largely fueled by the aspirations of the people for greater political freedoms, human rights, and economic opportunities (Jha & Kirsanli, 2024). Inspired by successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, where longstanding autocratic rulers were toppled, citizens in countries like Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain also took to the streets to demand political reforms and regime change (Grewal, 2023). The protests were largely organized through social media and grassroots

movements, galvanizing diverse groups of people from different backgrounds and ideologies to come together in solidarity against oppressive regimes (Grewal, 2023). The unprecedented scale and momentum of the Arab Spring demonstrations captured the attention of the world and showcased the power of collective action in mobilizing for change (Jha & Kirsanli, 2024). However, the outcomes of the Arab Spring were mixed, with some countries witnessing successful transitions to more inclusive governance, while others descended into violent conflicts and protracted instability (Grewal, 2023). As stated by Vlahoplus (2023) the complexities of post-revolutionary transitions, foreign interventions, and regional power dynamics have influenced the varying trajectories of countries affected by the Arab Spring, highlighting the challenges and complexities of democratic transitions in the region. Insurrections can have far-reaching consequences, reshaping political systems, social norms, and the distribution of power within society (Vlahoplus, 2023). While some insurrections succeed in bringing about positive transformation and progressive change, others can result in prolonged conflict, instability, and human suffering (Vlahoplus, 2023). Understanding the motivations, strategies, and outcomes of insurrections is essential for examining the complexities of political upheaval and the pursuit of justice and liberation in the face of entrenched authority.

2.3.5 Social Media Campaigns

Social media campaigns can significantly influence civil unrest by mobilizing, organizing, and amplifying dissenting voices. These campaigns often utilize platforms like Twitter and Facebook to spread information rapidly, coordinate protests, and raise awareness about social injustices, thereby transforming individual grievances into collective action (Castells, 2018). For instance, movements such as Black Lives Matter and the Arab Spring exemplify how social media serves as a catalyst for civil unrest, facilitating real-time

communication and fostering community solidarity (Castells, 2018). The ability to share live updates and personal stories enhances visibility and urgency, often leading to larger participation and sustained activism (Bennett & Segerberg, 2019). As a result, social media has become a critical tool for modern civil disobedience and social movements, shaping the landscape of political engagement in the digital age. When citizens are unable to meet in person, social media platforms offer a vital alternative for organizing dissent (Bennett & Segerberg, 2019). These digital spaces enable individuals to share information, mobilize supporters, and coordinate actions without the constraints of physical gatherings (Bennett & Segerberg, 2019). As demonstrated during the Arab Spring protests, social media campaigns can lead to significant political upheaval, including the toppling of governments (Tufekci, 2017). The rapid spread of information and the ability to mobilize large groups of people in a short time frame made social media a powerful tool for dissent in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya (Tufekci, 2017). Activists utilized platforms to document abuses, share calls to action, and create a sense of solidarity among protesters, which ultimately challenged authoritarian regimes (Tufekci, 2017).

2.4 African Context

2.4.1 Civil Unrests in South Africa

In the contemporary context, unrests sometimes occur in South Africa. The civil unrest in South Africa has been a recurring issue in recent years, with various events highlighting the challenges faced by the country. One significant example of civil unrest in South Africa was the recent protests and looting that took place in July 2021 (Phungula, 2021). This unrest was sparked by the arrest of former President Jacob Zuma and quickly escalated into widespread violence and destruction (Phungula, 2021). It is estimated that close to 300 people died during these protests and there was damage to property worth more than 1 billion dollars (Phungula,

2021). In cases where the civil unrests have become severe, the government has been compelled to respond with policy changes. In the Jacob Zuma situation, the charges were dropped. According to Kali (2023) the main causes of the civil unrest in South Africa can be attributed to high levels of inequality, unemployment, corruption, and political instability. These underlying issues have created a sense of frustration and anger among the population, leading to outbreaks of violence and unrest. Another notable example would be the xenophobic attacks that occur in South Africa. Historically, the xenophobic attacks occurred in 2008, when widespread violence erupted against immigrants from other African countries (Kali, 2023). The root causes of xenophobic attacks in South Africa are multifaceted and they include high levels of unemployment, inequality and perceptions of foreigners as competitors for scarce resources (Akinrinde, 2023). These attacks are often fuelled by economic woes and exacerbated by political rhetoric that scapegoats foreign nationals for the country's challenges. The impact of xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals is devastating, leading to loss of life, physical harm, and emotional trauma (Akinrinde, 2023). Additionally, these attacks have broader implications for South Africa's reputation on the international stage, inviting criticism and calls for action to address the underlying causes of xenophobia (Phungula, 2021). The effects of the civil unrest in South Africa are far-reaching and include economic damage, loss of life, and a breakdown of trust in government institutions (Phungula, 2021). The looting and destruction of businesses have had a devastating impact on the economy and have further exacerbated the existing challenges faced by the country (Phungula, 2021). In comparison, the 2019 protests in Zimbabwe were marked by looting (Nyama & Ruhanya, 2024). This shows that the dynamics of protesting in Zimbabwe have sometimes changed to copy patterns from other countries.

2.4.2 Civil Unrests in Nigeria

Civil unrest in Nigeria has been a recurrent challenge that has plagued the country for years, stemming from various social, economic, and political factors. One notable event of civil unrest in Nigeria was the EndSARS protests in October 2020, where citizens took to the streets to demand an end to police brutality and systemic corruption (Aboh, 2024). The root causes of civil unrest in Nigeria are diverse and include issues such as government corruption, economic inequality, ethnic tensions, and lack of social services (Aboh, 2024). These underlying factors have fuelled discontent among the population and have led to outbreaks of violence and protests across the country (Aboh, 2024). Civil unrests in Nigeria are also caused by Islamic fundamentalism. According to Emoedumbe et al. (2023) the influence of Islamic fundamentalism in Nigeria has had significant implications on the country's social, political, and cultural landscape. The rise of extremist groups such as Boko Haram has led to violence, insecurity, and fear among Nigerian citizens, particularly in the northern regions of the country. These groups have carried out attacks on both Muslims and non-Muslims, leading to loss of lives and displacement of communities (Emoedumbe et al., 2023). The economic crisis and high unemployment rates, particularly among the youth, play a significant role in fueling discontent and protests in Nigeria. According to recent statistics, the unemployment rate in Nigeria stands at 15%, with a disproportionately high number of young people unable to find stable employment opportunities (Aboh, 2024). This lack of economic opportunities not only hinders individual growth and development but also breeds frustration and disillusionment among the youth population. As a result, many young Nigerians turn to protests and demonstrations as a means of expressing their grievances and demanding change from the government. In response to the demonstrations, the government has tried to repress the demonstrations violently (Uwalaka, 2024).

2.5 Instances of Civil Unrests in Zimbabwe

2.5.1 August 1 Protests

In the context of the study, the first instance of civil unrests ensued after the 2018 elections. Following the July 2018 general elections in Zimbabwe, which marked the first national vote since the ouster of long time president Robert Mugabe, widespread unrest erupted over allegations of electoral fraud (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). The opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by Nelson Chamisa, claimed the election results were manipulated in favor of President Emmerson Mnangagwa and his ruling ZANU-PF party (Mhandu & Ojong, 2022). Protests broke out in the capital, Harare, leading to a violent crackdown by security forces. The government deployed the military to disperse demonstrators, resulting in the deaths of at least six people and numerous injuries (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). On August 1, 2018, protests broke out as supporters of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) demanded the release of election results. The military intervened, resulting in clashes that led to the deaths of at least six people and numerous injuries. Security forces were criticized for their heavy-handed response, which included live ammunition. As stated by Nyama and Ruhanya (2024) the government's justification for using force was to prevent chaos and maintain order. An official commission of inquiry was established to investigate the events, but it faced criticism over its perceived lack of independence and impartiality (Nyama & Ruhanya, 2024). Sithole (2020) asserts that the heavy-handed response of security forces, including the use of live ammunition, sparked international condemnation and added to the turmoil in the country. Subsequent reports revealed a pattern of violence, intimidation, and harassment targeting opposition supporters, with incidents of arrests and detentions reported across various regions (Sithole, 2020). These actions underscored the fragile political landscape in Zimbabwe and raised serious concerns

about human rights violations under the administration of President Emmerson Mnangagwa (Sithole, 2020).

2.5.2 2019 Fuel Protests

In January 2019, civil unrest resurfaced when President Mnangagwa announced a steep increase in fuel prices more than 150% which made Zimbabwe's fuel the most expensive in the world at the time. As stated by Pigou (2019) on 12 January, in response to persistent fuel shortages compounded by manipulation and mismanagement of a currency crisis, President Emmerson Mnangagwa announced a fuel price hike of over 200 per cent to \$3.31 per litre – making the country's petrol price the highest in the world. The move, intended to address the country's dire economic crisis, instead ignited public anger and triggered nationwide protests and strikes, especially in urban areas like Harare and Bulawayo (Mhandu & Ojong, 2022). The massive rise sparked a general strike, along with widespread protests, which in many areas was characterised by violence and considerable destruction of property (Pigou, 2019). Those behind the strike did not call for demonstrations, but thousands, especially young people, took to the streets, with many looting shops and burning cars or buildings (Pigou, 2019). Protests were concentrated in and around the main opposition strongholds, the capital Harare and Bulawayo, but also appeared in cities elsewhere across the country (Pigou, 2019). In turn the government ordered a vicious clampdown and deployed soldiers as well as police. The government responded with a brutal crackdown, deploying security forces who used live ammunition, rubber bullets, and tear gas against protesters. Reports emerged of mass arrests, beatings, and abductions of activists, with estimates of at least 12 people killed, dozens injured, and over 1,000 detained (Nyama & Ruhanya, 2024).

To further suppress dissent, the government imposed an internet blackout, restricting access to social media and communication platforms, drawing condemnation from both local

and international human rights organizations (Mhandu & Ojong, 2022). On 18 January, the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum was able to publish consolidated statistics counting 844 human rights violations during the general strike (Pigou, 2019). These numbers include at least twelve killings, at least 78 gunshot injuries, at least 242 cases of assault, torture or inhumane and degrading treatment, including dog bites (Pigou, 2019). There were also 466 arbitrary arrests and detentions and many displacements (Pigou, 2019). Other violations are invasion of privacy, obstruction of movement, and limitation of media freedoms and access to information. The government and media have accused the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), trade unions and civil society groups backed by foreign funders of orchestrating the protests as part of a campaign to undermine the government and elevate the MDC's leader, Nelson Chamisa, into office (Nyama & Ruhanya, 2024). It is also important to note that the demonstrations were organized on social media. This highlights the role that social media can play in the escalation of civil unrests.

2.5.3 2020 Economic Protests

In July 2020, a new wave of unrest emerged amid growing frustrations over government corruption and mismanagement, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Hlatshwayo, 2020). In 2020, Zimbabwe witnessed a series of protests that were spurred by a variety of factors, including economic challenges, government corruption, and human rights violations (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). These protests, led by disgruntled citizens, sought to address issues such as rising inflation, widespread unemployment, and lack of basic services. The demonstrators called for President Emmerson Mnangagwa's administration to be more accountable and transparent in its governance (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). Activists called for protests against alleged corruption in the procurement of pandemic-related supplies and the broader governance failures of the Mnangagwa administration (Hlatshwayo & Marongera,

2020). As highlighted by Nyama and Ruhanya (2024) in July 2020, opposition groups in Zimbabwe, notably the MDC Alliance and various activist organizations, made announcement to stage protests against government corruption and the worsening economic conditions in the country (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). The planned demonstrations aimed to draw attention to the issues of mismanagement, lack of accountability, and the hardships faced by ordinary citizens (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). According to Nyama and Ruhanya (2024) the announcement of these protests sparked a mixture of anticipation and apprehension among the population, with concerns about potential reprisals from the government and security forces. The opposition groups sought to harness public discontent and mobilize widespread support for their cause, emphasizing the need for transparency and reforms in the government (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). Leading up to the planned demonstrations, the Zimbabwean government escalated its crackdown on dissent by targeting activists, journalists, and opposition leaders (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). Security forces carried out a series of arrests, citing concerns over public health amid the COVID-19 pandemic as a justification for their actions. These arrests were seen as a deliberate attempt to stifle opposition voices and prevent the protests from gaining momentum. The government, declared the protests illegal and arrested prominent opposition figures and activists, including journalist Hopewell Chin'ono and politician Jacob Ngarivhume, on charges of inciting public violence (Hlatshwayo & Marongera, 2020). Security forces were deployed to enforce lockdown measures, and there were widespread reports of intimidation, arrests, and assaults on civilians (Hlatshwayo & Marongera, 2020). The government also restricted internet access and conducted mass detentions to pre-emptively quash any significant demonstrations, leading to further criticism over human rights violations and suppression of free expression.

2.6 Legal Frameworks for Civil Unrests in Zimbabwe

The Maintenance of Peace and Order Act (MOPA) of 2019, which replaced the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), brought about significant changes in regulating public gatherings. As stated by Kabonga et al. (2022) this act not only introduced stricter regulations but also emphasized the necessity of obtaining police approval for protests. Kabonga et al. (2022) also highlights that under the MOPA, law enforcement agencies were granted broader powers to ensure the maintenance of peace and order. This has raised concerns about potential impacts on the rights to assemble and express dissent. From this legislation, one can deduct that the Zimbabwean government has intolerance towards civil unrests. Furthermore, the MOPA has been a subject of debate, with critics arguing that it could potentially infringe upon constitutional rights such as freedom of assembly and expression (Kamete, 2023). The requirement for police approval before holding public gatherings has been a point of contention, as it could be used as a tool to suppress dissenting voices and limit the right to peaceful protest. Additionally, the expanded powers granted to law enforcement agencies have led to fears of potential abuses of power and excessive use of force during public gatherings and protests (Kamete, 2023). The Zimbabwe Constitution of 2013 upholds the right to peaceful assembly and expression as fundamental rights of the citizens. However, these rights are frequently constrained by the laws governing public order and security in the country. This leads to contradictions between constitutional guarantees and legislative limitations. While the constitution explicitly recognizes the rights to assemble and express, these rights are often curtailed by laws such as the Maintenance of Peace and Order Act (MOPA)

2.7 Factors Contributing to Civil Unrest

2.7.1 Economic Disparities

Civil unrest can stem from various factors that trigger social upheaval and turmoil within communities. Among these factors, economic inequality stands out as a significant contributor to civil unrest. Abu et al. (2024) asserts that disparities in wealth distribution can create a sense of injustice and disparity among different socio-economic groups. When a small percentage of the population controls the majority of resources and wealth, while others struggle to meet their basic needs, feelings of frustration, resentment, and agitation can brew (Abu et al., 2024). This disparity often manifests in access to quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, further entrenching social divides (Abu et al., 2024). Large gaps in wealth can lead to perceptions of injustice and unfairness. When individuals see others accumulating significant wealth while they face financial struggles, it can foster resentment and anger (Prince et al., 2024). This perception is often exacerbated by visible symbols of wealth and privilege in the community, leading to a sense of alienation among the economically disadvantaged (Prince et al., 2024). Economic inequality often correlates with limited social mobility, where individuals find it difficult to improve their economic status despite hard work (Prince et al., 2024). This lack of opportunity can create a sense of hopelessness and frustration. When people believe that the system is rigged against them, they may resort to protests or other forms of civil unrest as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction.

2.7.2 Political Corruption

Civil unrest can be triggered by a myriad of factors, one of which is political corruption. As discussed by Kryshchapovych (2015) political corruption refers to the misuse of public power for private gain, often resulting in a lack of transparency, accountability, and trust in government institutions. When citizens witness or experience corrupt practices within their

government, it breeds a sense of injustice, disenchantment, and betrayal of public trust (Kryshtapovych, 2015). The prevalence of political corruption erodes the credibility and legitimacy of authorities, leading to a breakdown in the social contract between the government and its citizens. As corruption continues unchecked, it perpetuates inequality, hinders economic development, and deprives individuals of essential services and opportunities (Kryshtapovych, 2015). The perception that government officials prioritize personal gain over the well-being of the populace can provoke feelings of anger, frustration, and disillusionment among the public (Kryshtapovych, 2015). Liu et al. (2023) asserts that this erosion of trust in government due to political corruption can serve as a catalyst for civil unrest and protests. When citizens feel that their voices are marginalized, their interests are disregarded, and the institutions meant to serve them are compromised by corruption, they may be compelled to take to the streets to demand accountability, transparency, and ethical governance (Liu et al., 2023). Protests against political corruption can serve as a powerful expression of citizens' desire for a more just and equitable society. Corruption can manifest in electoral manipulation, where elections are rigged or marred by fraud, disenfranchising voters and undermining democracy (Liu et al., 2023). When people believe that their votes do not matter due to corruption, it can lead to mass protests demanding fair elections and political reform. Corruption often breeds a political elite that prioritizes its interests over those of the broader population. This can create a disconnect between leaders and citizens, as the elite may become increasingly out of touch with the challenges faced by ordinary people (Kryshtapovych, 2015). The perception that leaders are more concerned with maintaining power and wealth than with addressing public needs can fuel anger and motivate protests.

2.7.3 Oppressive Regimes

Civil unrest is often exacerbated by oppressive regimes, which are characterized by authoritarian governments that suppress fundamental rights and freedoms of their citizens. In such environments, individuals may face severe restrictions on their freedom of speech, assembly, association, and expression (Grasse et al., 2021). These limitations create a climate of fear, censorship, and political repression that stifle dissent and impede civic engagement (Grasse et al., 2021). Authoritarian governments exert control through heavy-handed tactics, including censorship of media and online communications, arbitrary arrests and detentions of dissidents, and the use of security forces to quell protests and demonstrations (Grasse et al., 2021). The absence of democratic processes and institutions, along with the concentration of power in the hands of a few, further entrenches the oppressive nature of such regimes (Grasse et al., 2021). Pukallus et al. (2020) concurs that citizens living under oppressive regimes often feel marginalized, silenced, and deprived of their basic human rights. As a result, they may mobilize and demand greater political freedoms, accountability, and respect for their inherent dignity. Pukallus et al. (2020) further states that protests against oppressive regimes serve as a manifestation of this desire for change and a pushback against repressive practices. Examples of rights that are frequently restricted or violated under oppressive regimes include the right to freedom of speech, assembly, and association, as well as the right to participate in free and fair elections. When these rights are curtailed, citizens are left with few avenues to voice their grievances and hold their leaders accountable for their actions.

2.8 Political Outcomes of Civil Unrests

2.8.1 Policy Reforms

Civil unrest often prompts governments to implement various policy reforms in response to public demands. Policy reforms play a crucial role in shaping the socio-political

landscape by addressing pressing issues and meeting the needs of the public (Hui, 2020). Two common approaches to policy reforms include incremental changes and legislative reforms, both of which can have significant impacts on society. Governments may opt for incremental changes in response to public demands, addressing specific grievances such as economic inequality, police reform, or environmental policies. These gradual adjustments to existing policies or structures allow for a more measured approach to reform, often balancing the interests of various stakeholders and minimizing potential disruptions to the status quo (Prince et al., 2024). Incremental changes can be instrumental in laying the foundation for broader reforms by building public trust, testing policy effectiveness, and gauging societal acceptance. For instance, the Black Lives Matter movement has led to significant police reforms in several U.S. cities, including measures to increase accountability and transparency in law enforcement practices (Prince et al., 2024). Similarly, the protests in France in 2018 against fuel tax hikes, which evolved into broader discontent with economic inequality, resulted in the government suspending the tax increase and introducing measures to boost the purchasing power of citizens. In other cases, sustained protests, such as those seen during the Arab Spring, have driven countries like Tunisia to adopt significant legislative changes aimed at improving civil rights and living conditions (Prince et al., 2024). These examples illustrate how civil unrest can serve as a catalyst for both incremental and substantial reforms, reflecting the power of collective public action in shaping policy.

2.8.2 Regime Change

Regime change, characterized by the overthrow of authoritarian leaders or regimes, is a transformative process that can have profound implications for the political landscape of a nation. Stacher (2020) asserts that in extreme cases, prolonged unrest and civil uprisings can culminate in the removal of oppressive rulers, paving the way for new governance structures

and a fresh chapter in the country's history. Stacher (2020) further adds that the overthrow of authoritarian leaders often symbolizes a triumph of popular will and a rejection of repressive governance. Prolonged unrest and mass mobilization can create a groundswell of momentum that ultimately leads to the downfall of entrenched regimes (Soliman, 2020). However, the process of regime change is not without challenges, as power vacuums, political instability, and the risk of violent conflict may arise in the aftermath of a regime's collapse. A prominent example is the Arab Spring, where widespread protests in countries like Egypt culminated in the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak in 2011. This upheaval not only removed an entrenched leader but also sparked calls for democratic reforms across the region (Soliman, 2020). Following such regime changes, transitional governments are often established to guide the nation toward democracy and stability. In Tunisia, after the fall of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, a transitional government was formed, which successfully oversaw the drafting of a new constitution and the holding of free elections, setting a precedent for democratic governance in the region (Soliman, 2020). These instances highlight how civil unrest can fundamentally alter political landscapes, paving the way for new governance structures and the potential for democratic development.

2.8.3 Repression and Crackdown

In times of civil unrest, authoritarian governments may resort to repressive measures to maintain control and suppress dissent, perpetuating a cycle of violence and repression that undermines democratic principles and erodes civil liberties (Hui, 2020). When faced with unrest, governments may employ tactics such as violent crackdowns, increased surveillance, and restrictions on civil liberties to quell dissent and assert authority (Hui, 2020). These repressive measures can have far-reaching consequences, instilling fear, silencing opposition, and curtailing fundamental rights guaranteed by democratic constitutions (Hui, 2020). The use

of excessive force, arbitrary arrests, and censorship can deepen divisions within society, alienate marginalized groups, and sow seeds of resentment that fuel further protests. For example, during the 2019 protests in Hong Kong against a proposed extradition bill, the government deployed heavy police presence and used tear gas and batons to disperse crowds, leading to widespread condemnation and further unrest (Gasparini, 2021). Such authoritarian responses often result in the erosion of democratic rights and freedoms, as seen in countries like Belarus, where the government has intensified its crackdown on opposition following protests against the 2020 presidential election (Gasparini, 2021). This cycle of unrest and repression can create a volatile political environment, where dissent is stifled and citizens feel increasingly marginalized, ultimately undermining the very stability that the government seeks to achieve.

2.8.4 International Intervention

Civil unrest can serve as a catalyst for international attention, with foreign governments, multilateral organizations, and non-governmental entities leveraging their influence to urge regimes to implement reforms or uphold human rights standards (Zambakari, 2023). Through targeted diplomatic initiatives, economic sanctions, or public condemnations, external actors can exert pressure on authoritarian regimes to address grievances, foster dialogue, and respect the rights of their citizens (Zambakari, 2023). Foreign pressure can play a constructive role in promoting accountability, facilitating negotiations, and preventing further escalation of conflicts. For instance, the protests in Venezuela against President Nicolás Maduro's government have led to widespread condemnation from various countries, resulting in diplomatic efforts and economic sanctions aimed at encouraging democratic reforms and humanitarian assistance (White, 2024). In more severe situations, international bodies may take more direct actions, such as imposing sanctions that target specific officials or sectors of the

economy, as seen in Myanmar following the military coup in 2021, where global leaders sought to isolate the junta through economic measures (White, 2024). In extreme cases, military intervention may occur, as seen in Libya in 2011 when NATO intervened to protect civilians during a civil uprising against Muammar Gaddafi's regime. These forms of international intervention underscore the complex interplay between domestic unrest and global political dynamics, highlighting how civil disturbances can prompt external actions aimed at fostering stability and protecting human rights (White, 2024).

2.9 Research Gap

Despite extensive studies on civil unrest and its political implications, there remains a notable gap in understanding the nuanced interplay between specific socioeconomic factors and the varied responses of governments in different contexts, particularly in Zimbabwe. While existing literature addresses the manifestations of civil unrest, such as protests, riots, and strikes, there is limited exploration of how these forms of unrest interact with unique local conditions such as historical grievances, cultural contexts, and the role of social media in mobilization. Furthermore, the impact of international influences, such as global economic trends and foreign policy on domestic unrest, has not been adequately addressed. Most studies tend to focus on immediate triggers of unrest without delving into the sustained socio-political dynamics that lead to ongoing civil unrest, especially in the Zimbabwean context where economic hardships are persistent.

2.10 Summary

In conclusion, examining Political Opportunity Theory and the various forms of civil unrest such as protests, riots, strikes, and insurrections provides valuable insights into the complexities of social movements and their societal implications. Analyzing specific events like the 2022 Sri Lankan riots and the Arab Spring protests demonstrates the power of

collective action in driving change and revealing underlying socio-political tensions. This analysis underscores the importance of addressing grievances, promoting dialogue, and fostering inclusive governance to mitigate the risk of widespread unrest. Continuing to study civil unrest as a lens for understanding societal challenges and opportunities for reform is essential. By learning from past movements and their outcomes, the pursuit of a more equitable and just world can be advanced, where grievances are addressed, voices are heard, and collective action leads to positive change.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology employed to explore the impact of civil unrests on political outcomes in Zimbabwe from 2018 to 2023. Given the complex and multifaceted nature of civil unrest, a qualitative approach was deemed most suitable for capturing the rich, lived experiences of individuals directly affected by these events. The study adopted an interpretive research philosophy, emphasizing the importance of understanding participants' subjective perspectives and the meanings they attach to their experiences. Also a case study research design was used in order to delve into the intricate dynamics of civil unrest within the specific context of Zimbabwe. This chapter outlines the philosophical underpinnings, methodological choices, data collection strategies and ethical considerations that guided the research.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the overarching belief system or framework that guides how researchers approach their studies (Finlay, 2020). It encompasses the assumptions about the nature of knowledge, reality, and what constitutes valid research. The study adopted an interpretive research philosophy. As stated by Finlay (2020) this approach focuses on understanding the subjective experiences and meanings that individuals attach to their social contexts. In the context of the study, the focus was on understanding the trends surrounding civil unrests. The interpretive paradigm emphasizes the importance of exploring how participants perceive and make sense of their experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 2018). Prioritizing these perspectives allows for deeper insights into the phenomenon under investigation. One significant advantage of this approach is its ability to capture the complexity of human behavior

and social interactions, fostering a rich understanding that quantitative methods may overlook (Finlay, 2020). Another advantage of the interpretive paradigm is its emphasis on qualitative data and methods. Using techniques such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, and content analysis, researchers can capture the richness and complexity of human experiences in ways that quantitative approaches cannot (Finlay, 2020). This qualitative data was invaluable for uncovering hidden patterns, revealing underlying meanings, and gaining insights into social phenomena often overlooked in traditional research paradigms.

3.3 Research Methodology

Qualitative research methods were used in the study. According to Stake (2019) qualitative research as a systematic investigation of phenomena through the collection of data that is primarily non numeric. This methodology allowed for an in-depth exploration of the specific case within its real world context. This provides rich, detailed insights into the complexities of the subject matter (Stake, 2019). Qualitative methods are well-suited for capturing the nuanced perspectives of participants, enabling a thorough understanding of their experiences (Stake, 2019). The primary advantage of qualitative research lies in its flexibility and adaptability. This allowed researchers to respond to emerging themes and insights during the data collection process, which can lead to more meaningful findings. Qualitative research emphasizes the perspectives of participants, giving them a voice in the research process (Yin, 2018). This participatory approach can empower individuals and highlight marginalized viewpoints. Qualitative research also encourages reflexivity, where researchers reflect on their own biases and influence on the research process (Yin, 2018). This can enhance the credibility and authenticity of the findings.

3.4 Research Design

A research design is a systematic plan that outlines how a researcher intends to conduct a study. It includes details about the methods, data collection techniques, sample size, and procedures that will be used to investigate a specific research question (Liamputton, 2019). The research design is essential for ensuring that the study is well-organized and can provide reliable and valid results. The research was structured as a case study. A case study research design is defined as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context (Mason, 2018). This approach facilitates a comprehensive examination of a specific instance or context, allowing for a thorough investigation of the intricate dynamics involved (Mason, 2018). In the context of the study, the focus was on the emergence of civil unrests in Zimbabwe. The data will be collected in Harare as the study area. The case study design is particularly effective for exploring phenomena in depth, providing a holistic view of the factors influencing the subject under study (Liamputton, 2019). One notable advantage of this design is its capacity to generate detailed, context-specific data that can illuminate the complexities of real world situations, making the findings highly relevant and applicable (Mason, 2018). As another advantage, the case study research allows for the use of multiple data sources, such as interviews, observations, documents, and artefacts (Mason, 2018). This triangulation enhances the validity and reliability of the findings (Mason, 2018). Furthermore, the qualitative nature of case studies enabled the collection of rich, narrative data that captures the nuances of participants' experiences and perspectives.

3.5 Population and Sample

3.5.1 Population

As stated by Sampath and Puthussery (2020) the target population for this study comprises individuals involved in or affected by the phenomenon being researched. In the

study, the population comprised of political leaders, activists, NGO workers, academics and party members from various political parties.

3.5.2 Sample

According to Yin (2018) a sample refers to a subset of a larger population that is selected to represent the whole group for research purposes. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who possess specific characteristics relevant to the research questions. This sampling strategy ensured that the sample includes a diverse range of perspectives and experiences. A total of 25 participants were targeted for the case study. The participants included 5 political leaders, 5 activists, 5 NGO workers, 5 academics and 5 members from the security sector.

3.6 Sampling Methods

As stated earlier, purposive sampling technique was utilized to select participants in order to ensure representation from various stakeholder groups. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique in which researchers intentionally select participants based on specific characteristics, qualities, or criteria relevant to the research study (Etikan et al., 2016). Through purposive sampling, researchers can intentionally select individuals with diverse perspectives and experiences relevant to the research objectives, enriching the depth and breadth of data collected (Etikan et al., 2016). The advantage of purposive sampling lies in its ability to focus on individuals who are most likely to provide valuable insights, enhancing the richness and depth of the data collected (Etikan et al., 2016). By focusing on specific individuals or groups, researchers can obtain in-depth insights that may not be available through random sampling (Robinson, 2014). This approach is particularly valuable in qualitative research where understanding context and nuance is crucial (Robinson, 2014). Purposive sampling can be more time-efficient than random

sampling. Researchers can quickly identify and reach out to participants who meet specific criteria, facilitating faster data collection. In that regard, political leaders were selected in order to solicit their unique insights on civil unrests. Activists were selected in order to probe about their opinions regarding civil unrests. NGO workers were selected because of their first-hand knowledge regarding the humanitarian concerns associated with civil unrests. Academics were selected because of their expert knowledge on civil unrests. Lastly, party members from various political parties were selected in order to get diverse perspectives regarding civil unrests.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

3.7.1 In-depth Interviews

Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are a qualitative research method that involves conducting detailed, open-ended conversations with participants to gather in-depth insights and understanding on a specific topic (Boddy, 2016). These interviews allow researchers to explore individual perspectives, experiences, and opinions in a comprehensive manner (Boddy, 2016). In-depth interviews usually involve a one on one interactions between the interviewer and the participant. This allows for a deeper exploration of themes and meanings that may not be captured in other research methods (Boddy, 2016). The information gathered through in-depth interviews can provide rich and nuanced data for analysis in qualitative research studies. This method also allows for open-ended responses and facilitate a deeper exploration of participants' thoughts and experiences (Flick, 2018). Interviews were conducted in a conversational manner to encourage participants to share their perspectives freely. Conducting interviews in a conversational manner encourages participants to share their perspectives freely. The advantage of using in-depth interviews lies in their ability to elicit detailed and nuanced data, providing insights that structured methods may miss (Flick, 2018).

3.7.2 Documentary Data

Secondary data was be utilized in this study to complement the primary data collected through interviews. Secondary data is defined as information that has been previously collected and analyzed by other researchers for purposes other than the current study (Bickman & Rog, 2017). This type of data provided valuable context and background, enriching the analysis of civil unrest and its political implications in Zimbabwe. The secondary data was obtained from a variety of sources, including research documents, academic materials, and literature surrounding the research topic. Such sources included previous studies, government reports, and publications from NGOs, which can offer insights into historical patterns and trends related to civil unrest. By integrating secondary data, the research aims to create a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the research problem (Bickman & Rog, 2017).

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity in research refers to the extent to which a study accurately measures or reflects the concept or phenomenon it claims to assess (Creswell, 2014). It is essential to ensure that a research study is valid to draw meaningful and reliable conclusions (Creswell, 2014). On the other hand, reliability in research refers to the consistency and stability of measurement over time. It is the extent to which a research study or instrument produces consistent results when repeated measurements are taken (Yardley, 2018). A reliable research study is one that can be replicated with similar results, indicating that the findings are dependable and trustworthy (Creswell, 2014). To enhance the validity and reliability of the study, several strategies were employed. Triangulation was be used to compare findings from different data sources. Verification was used to check the accuracy of the data that is provided. Additionally, clear documentation of the research process was done to help ensure consistency and replicability.

3.9 Data Presentation and Analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves systematically examining and interpreting non-numeric data, such as text, images, or videos, to uncover patterns, themes and insights (Terry et al., 2017). It focuses on understanding the meaning and context of the data rather than quantifying it. Qualitative data analysis often involves techniques such as coding, categorizing, and interpreting the data to identify key themes, trends, and relationships (Terry et al., 2017). Researchers use this method to explore complex phenomena, capture rich insights, and generate in-depth understanding of human experiences, behaviors, and perspectives. Qualitative data in the study in the study was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns across participant responses. The results were presented in a clear and coherent manner, utilizing narratives to illustrate key findings and provide context to the data.

3.10 Pilot Testing

Pilot testing refers to a small-scale preliminary test conducted before the main research study to assess the feasibility of the data collection instruments (Fraser et al., 2018). During pilot testing, researchers typically select a small sample of participants to administer the research instruments and procedures to identify any potential issues or challenges that may arise (Fraser et al., 2018). The primary goal of pilot testing is to refine the research methods, identify and resolve any logistical or methodological problems, and ensure that the study can be carried out smoothly and effectively. Therefore, prior to the main data collection, a pilot test of the interview guide was conducted with a small sample of participants. This pretesting phase helped identify any issues with question clarity or interview structure. This allowed for necessary adjustments to enhance the effectiveness of the data collection process.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted following university ethical guidelines. Firstly, a research permission letter was obtained from the university before venturing out into the field. This letter was presented to all participants during introductions. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The participants were informed about the purposes of the study. The data was collected for academic purposes only. Confidentiality was maintained and the identities of the participants were not disclosed.

3.12 Summary

In conclusion, the research design and methodology outlined in this chapter focus on understanding the impact of civil unrests on political outcomes in Zimbabwe from 2018 to 2023. Adopting an interpretive research philosophy and qualitative methodology emphasized the significance of subjective experiences among those affected by civil unrest. Utilizing a case study approach, along with purposive sampling and in-depth interviews, enabled a comprehensive exploration of diverse perspectives. Validity and reliability were addressed to ensure a robust analytical framework, while ethical considerations are prioritized to respect participants and their experiences. Overall, this methodological framework lays the groundwork for meaningful insights into the complexities of civil unrest and its implications for political dynamics in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the emergence and dynamics of civil unrest in Zimbabwe from 2018 to 2023, a period marked by escalating tensions between the government and its citizens. Amidst a backdrop of political discontent, economic instability, and social grievances, various forms of civil unrest, including protests, strikes, and social media activism, have gained prominence. This analysis draws on diverse perspectives from respondents, including activists, government officials, and civil society leaders, to understand the complexities of civil unrest and the government's responses. By examining these themes, the chapter aims to provide insights into the critical issues shaping Zimbabwe's socio-political landscape and the potential pathways toward resolution and reform.

4.2 Respondent Information

4.2.1 Response Rate

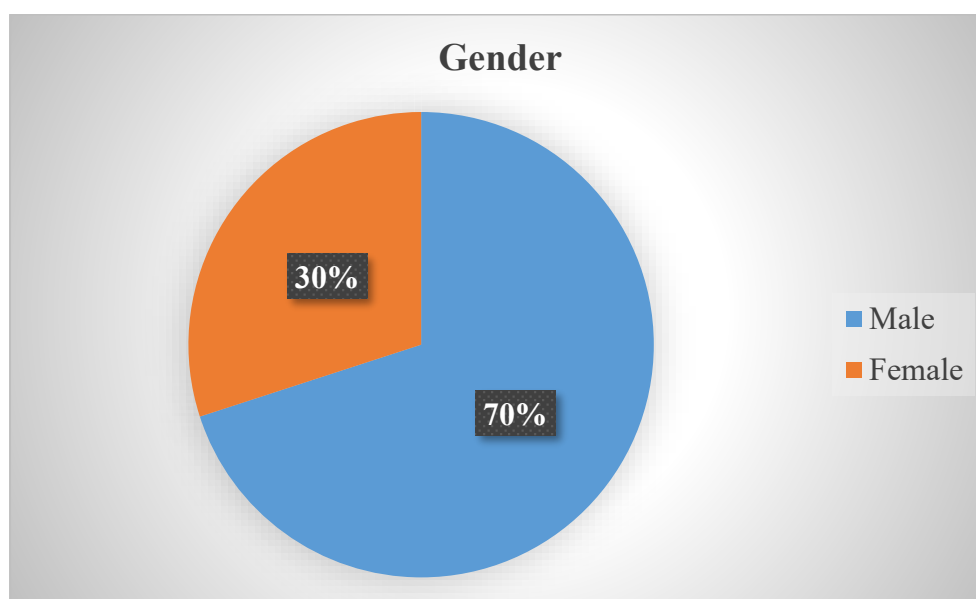
Table 4.1: Response Rate

	Expected	Responded	Response Rate
Political Leaders	5	5	100%
NGO Representatives	5	5	100%
Academics	5	5	100%
Security Sector Workers	5	5	100%

Activists	5	5	100%
Total	25	25	100%

4.2.2 Gender of Participants

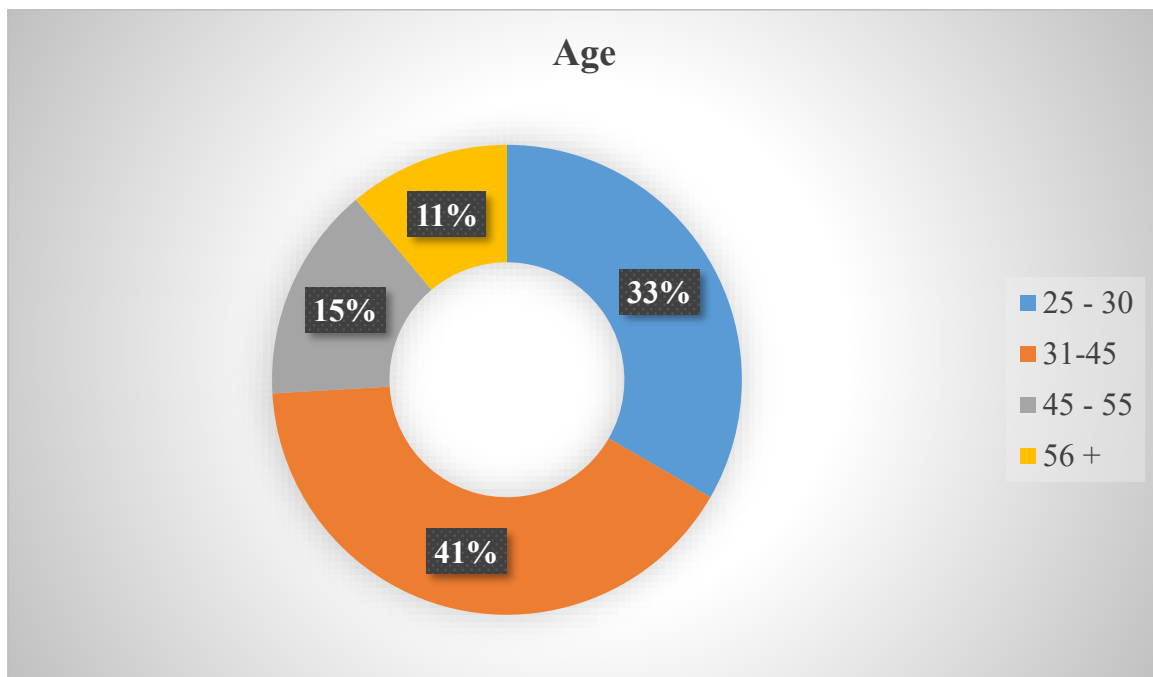
Figure 4.1: Gender of Participants



Approximately 70% of respondents were male while about 30% were female.

4.2 Age Range of Participants

Figure 4.2: Age Range of Respondents



About 33% of respondents were aged between 25 to 30 years of age. About 41% of respondents were aged between 31 to 45 years of age. Approximately 15% of respondents were aged between 45 to 55 years of age. Lastly, 11% of respondents were aged 56 years and older.

4.3 Conceptualizing Civil Unrests

Respondents were asked about their understanding of civil unrests. Various themes emerged from the findings.

4.3.1 Peaceful Protests

A section of respondents defined civil unrests as peaceful protests. The findings indicate that participants have a nuanced understanding of civil unrest, particularly regarding protests.

One NGO worker said,

‘Protests are vital for voicing our concerns; they allow us to gather peacefully and express our demands.’

A government employee remarked,

‘While protests can be peaceful, they also serve as a reminder of the underlying tensions in society.’

An army official added,

‘It's important to recognize that not all gatherings are violent, many are simply citizens wanting to be heard.’

Additionally, a government employee noted,

‘Peaceful protests can foster dialogue and bring about change if handled correctly.’

Scholarly insights support this view. Grill (2021) asserts that peaceful protests often serve as a crucial avenue for social change. This is because they enable citizens to articulate grievances and advocate for political reform. This emphasizes the importance of distinguishing peaceful gatherings from more chaotic forms of civil unrest in the study of political outcomes.

4.3.2 Violent Outbursts

Some also acknowledged that civil unrests can be chaotic in nature. The findings indicate that participants have a clear understanding of riots as a form of civil unrest characterized by violence and chaos. One civil society worker stated,

‘Riots often erupt when frustrations boil over; they can lead to significant property damage and fear in communities.’

An army general expressed concern, saying,

‘When riots happen, it’s not just about the protests anymore. it affects the livelihoods of many.’

An academic researcher made the following remarks,

‘Riots are often a response to perceived injustices, but they can overshadow the original grievances of the protesters.’

Additionally, an army officer remarked,

‘While we understand the frustrations, riots create a different narrative that can lead to harsher crackdowns.’

These responses highlight that riots have been widely regarded as a form of civil unrest. Johnson (2021) indicates that riots can complicate political discourse and often result in significant implications for governmental responses and policies. This highlights the need to analyze the dynamics of riots within the broader context of civil unrest and their impact on political outcomes.

4.3.3 Worker Demonstrations

The findings indicate that participants recognize strikes as a vital form of civil unrest aimed at improving labour conditions. One NGO representative said,

‘Strikes are essential tools for workers to advocate for their rights and demand fair wages. One recent example can be the nurses’ strikes that we saw in Zimbabwe.’

Another NGO worker commented,

‘When people strike, it's about more than just pay. It's about ensuring optimal working conditions for everyone. While strikes can disrupt business operations, they highlight the urgent needs of employees that often go unaddressed.’

Additionally, a community organizer remarked,

‘Strikes can mobilize public support, showing that workers are united in their demands.’

These remarks highlight how strikes have been integral forms of civil unrests. Miller (2022) suggests that strikes often signal deep-rooted issues within labor relations and can lead to significant changes in workplace policies. This underscores the importance of understanding strikes as a critical element of civil unrest with the potential to reshape labor dynamics.

4.3.4 Social Media Commentary

It also emerged that participants view social media as a powerful tool for shaping discourse around civil unrest. In the contemporary world, technologies are becoming more widely used. Therefore, one opposition party member stated,

‘Social media amplifies voices that might otherwise go unheard. It allows for real-time updates during protests.’

Another political activist stated,

‘Platforms like Twitter and Instagram have become essential for documenting events and mobilizing support for various causes in Zimbabwe.’

An academic added,

‘Through social media, we can connect with movements worldwide and share our experiences instantly.’

However, one member of the ruling party stated,

‘While social media can spread awareness, it can also lead to misinformation that complicates the narrative.’

Anderson (2023) indicates that social media plays a dual role in civil unrest, it can facilitate organization and awareness but it can also contribute to the spread of false information. This highlights the complex relationship between social media and civil unrest, emphasizing its impact on public perception and engagement.

4.3.5 Demonstrations

A section of respondents perceive demonstrations as organized events that play a crucial role in rallying support for various causes. They highlighted that demonstrations have been used historically in Zimbabwe. One community organizer said,

‘Demonstrations are essential for bringing people together to advocate for change; they create a sense of unity and purpose.’

A political activist remarked,

‘When we gather for a demonstration, it's not just about showing up; it's about making our voices heard and demonstrating our commitment to a cause.’

Additionally, another NGO worker noted,

‘While demonstrations can be disruptive, they also represent the democratic right to express dissent and demand action.’

Garcia (2022) suggests that demonstrations can mobilize public support and influence policy decisions, particularly when they are well-organized and resonate with a broad audience. This underscores the significance of demonstrations in the landscape of civil unrest, highlighting their potential to drive social and political change.

4.3.6 Civil War

Another section of respondents highlighted civil war as a severe form of civil unrest that may emerge within a country. The respondents highlighted that civil wars are civil unrests expresses in extremity. One army officer noted,

‘Civil unrests can manifest themselves in the form of civil wars. These wars often arise from deep-seated issues, such as ethnic tensions or political oppression. They often lead to devastating consequences for the populace.’

A former soldier reflected,

‘Experiencing a civil war is traumatic; it fractures communities and leaves lasting scars on individuals and society.’

A political analyst made almost similar remarks,

‘Civil wars can destabilize entire regions, creating humanitarian crises that require international intervention.’

Johnson (2023) indicates that civil wars often stem from unresolved grievances and can lead to prolonged violence and instability. This highlights the importance of addressing underlying issues to prevent the escalation of conflicts into full-scale civil wars, emphasizing the need for effective dialogue and reconciliation efforts.

4.3.7 Political Factional Fights

The findings indicate that participants recognize political factional fights, such as those between ZANU-PF and CCC in Zimbabwe, as significant contributors to civil unrest. One political analyst stated,

‘Factional fights often stem from ideological divides and power struggles, leading to heightened tensions and instability. In ZANU PF, there are many episodes of factionalism that have occurred.’

A member of the opposition commented,

‘These factional conflicts can overshadow the real issues affecting the people, as parties focus more on undermining each other than on governance.’

A civil society leader noted,

‘Political factionalism can lead to violence and repression, as parties seek to maintain control over their power bases.’

Additionally, an NGO worker remarked,

‘The media plays a crucial role in either escalating tensions or fostering dialogue, depending on how they cover these conflicts.’

Mlambo (2023) suggests that political factionalism can destabilize governance and hinder democratic processes, often resulting in violence and societal division. Mlambo (2023) highlights that factional fights have been well documented in Zimbabwean politics. This underscores the need for strategies that promote dialogue and reconciliation to mitigate the impacts of factional conflicts on civil society.

4.4 Civil Unrests that Have Emerged in Zimbabwe from 2018 to 2023

The participants were asked about civil unrests that have emerged in Zimbabwe in the study period. The study sought to find out their perceptions regarding civil unrests that have emerged during the study period. Various themes emerged in the findings.

4.4.1 Election Related Protests

The findings indicate that election related protests in Zimbabwe, particularly following the 2018 general elections, emerged as a major form of civil unrest. They were fuelled by allegations of electoral fraud and the protesters were demanding changes of the election results.

A political activist remarked,

‘The protests were a response to widespread perceptions of rigging and manipulation. People were frustrated with the electoral system. Supporters of Nelson Chamisa took to the street after the election.’

A civil rights advocate noted,

‘These demonstrations were pivotal in mobilizing citizens to demand transparency and accountability from the government. The government then responded with a strong military response.’

An academic added,

‘For many young people, participating in these protests was a way to express their discontent and push for change in a system that feels unresponsive. They saw an opportunity to air their grievances against the ruling party.’

This is in line with the political opportunity theory which posits that the political environment plays a significant role in the emergence and escalation of civil unrest (Porta, 2020). Additionally, an NGO worker stated,

‘The media played a crucial role in covering these events, which helped to draw international attention to the situation.’

Nyama and Ruhanya (2024) highlights that the 2018 protests were a monumental time in Zimbabwe’s history. They were a violent episode whereby there were clashes between the army and civilians. Nyama and Ruhanya (2024) concur that this violent episode showed how the government of Zimbabwe is capable of a heavy handed response when protests occur.

4.4.2 Fuel Price Protests

The respondents indicate that the 150% spike in fuel prices in January 2019 triggered widespread nationwide protests in Zimbabwe. As indicated by the participants, youths took to the streets in suburbs to protest the worsening socioeconomic situation. This resulted in a violent crackdown by security forces. A political activist stated,

‘The sudden increase in fuel prices was the last straw for many. It highlighted the economic hardships that citizens were already facing.’

A human rights advocate noted,

‘The government's response was alarming, as security forces used excessive force to quell the protests, leading to injuries and arrests.’

An opposition party member remarked,

‘These protests were not just about fuel prices. They represented a broader discontent with the economic situation and governance.’

Additionally, a community leader emphasized,

‘The crackdown on peaceful protests only fueled further anger and resentment among the populace.’

Mukurunge and Dalvit (2024) assert that economic grievances related to the rising fuel prices served as catalysts for civil unrest. Mukurunge and Dalvit (2024) concur that people were also frustrated by high inflation and unemployment. This highlights the critical link between economic policy and social stability, underscoring the need for responsive governance in times of crisis.

4.4.3 Social Media Protests

The respondents made note of the 2020 social media protests. The findings indicate that the 2020 social media protests in Zimbabwe were significantly fueled by public outrage over COVID-19 corruption scandals. Some government officials are said to have misappropriated public funds that were meant for emergency response. One activist remarked,

‘Social media became a powerful tool for mobilization during the 2020 #Zimbabwean Live Matter Protests. Social media allowed citizens to voice their frustrations and organize protests against corruption.’

Another human rights advocate noted,

‘The government's heavy-handed response to dissent, including the arrest of prominent figures such as Hopewell Chin'ono intensified public anger.’

A university lecturer added,

‘These protests highlighted the intersection of health crises and governance, exposing how corruption undermines public trust.’

Additionally, another NGO worker stated,

‘The role of social media was pivotal, as it allowed for rapid dissemination of information and helped galvanize support across the country.’

Makombe (2022) highlights that social media played a critical role in the civil unrest by amplifying grievances and facilitating collective action. This signifies the importance of transparency and accountability in governance, particularly during times of crisis.

4.4.4 Crackdown on Opposition

The findings indicate that the Zimbabwean government consistently targeted opposition members, activists, and journalists, leading to numerous arrests and detentions, especially during election cycles or significant protests are expected. A member of the CCC stated,

‘The relentless targeting of opposition figures has created a climate of fear, stifling dissent and discouraging political participation.’

A human rights monitor noted,

‘These arrests are often politically motivated, aiming to silence voices that challenge the status quo. The crackdown on dissent undermines the democratic process and erodes public trust in institutions.’

Additionally, a human rights advocate emphasized,

‘The intimidation of the media further complicates the landscape for free expression, as many journalists self-censor out of fear of repercussions.’

Ndlovu (2023) highlights that state repression can exacerbate political tensions and contribute to cycles of unrest. This highlights the critical need for protecting civil liberties and fostering an environment where diverse political voices can be heard.

4.4.5 Factional Fights

The respondents indicate that factional fights within ZANU-PF have historically emerged as a significant source of civil unrest in Zimbabwe. A political analyst stated,

‘These internal divisions within the ruling party create instability, as rival factions vie for power and influence.’

A ZANU-PF member commented,

‘Factionalism distracts from governance and undermines the party's ability to address pressing national issues.’

A civil society leader noted,

‘The fallout from these power struggles can lead to violence and repression, as factions attempt to assert dominance.’

Maringira (2024) indicates that political factionalism can destabilize governance and hinder democratic processes, often leading to societal division and unrest. These remarks show the role that is played by factional fights in civil unrests.

4.4.6 Worker Strikes

It has also been highlighted that throughout 2020 and 2021, healthcare workers in Zimbabwe went on strike multiple times to demand better wages and working conditions, particularly in response to the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic. An NGO worker stated,

‘The strikes were a direct response to the inadequate compensation and poor working conditions that we faced, especially during a public health crisis.’

Another activist highlighted,

‘Healthcare officials were exhausted and overwhelmed, yet their salaries did not reflect the risks we were taking every day.’

A military officer noted,

‘The strikes underscored the fragility of the healthcare system, which was already strained by years of underfunding.’

Additionally, a community leader remarked,

‘The public largely supported the healthcare workers, recognizing the vital role they play in society.’

Mwonzora (2024) asserts that labour actions in the healthcare sector in Zimbabwe often arise from systemic issues to do with underpayment and hostile working conditions. There have been grievances about payments and working conditions.

4.5 How the Zimbabwean Government Has responded to Protests

Participants were asked about how the Zimbabwean government has responded to protests. Below are some of the responses that have been provided regarding the matter.

4.5.1 Use of Force

The respondents indicated that the Zimbabwean government has consistently responded to protests with significant use of force. Security forces frequently employed violence, utilizing tear gas, water cannons and even live ammunition to disperse crowds. A human rights worker reported,

‘The excessive use of force during protests has led to numerous injuries and fatalities. This has created a climate of fear among citizens. I think it is meant as a deterrence against protesting.’

For instance, the respondents mentioned the events that transpired after the 2018 elections, a violent crackdown resulted in the deaths of seventeen protesters. This highlights the government's aggressive approach to dissent. One opposition member recalled,

‘The scenes after the 2018 elections were chaotic. People were simply demanding their rights when the police and the army unleashed brutal force.’

A local activist stated,

‘These violent responses only deepen the divide between the government and the people. They also erode trust in state institutions.’

Additionally, a civil society leader noted,

‘The arrests of peaceful protesters are often politically motivated, aimed at silencing dissent and discouraging future demonstrations.’

These findings show that force has been used by the Zimbabwean government to deal with the emergence of protests. Mutanda and Chisambiro (2023) asserts that state repression often

exacerbates tensions and can lead to further unrest. This highlights the need for a more measured approach to managing public demonstrations.

4.5.2 Detentions

The findings also reveal that the Zimbabwean government has engaged in widespread arbitrary arrests and detentions of activists, journalists, and opposition members. The respondents indicated that high-profile figures like Hopewell Chin'ono and Jacob Ngarivhume were notably detained for their roles in organizing protests and exposing governmental corruption. A legal expert who works at an NGO stated,

'These arrests are often politically motivated. They target those who challenge the narrative or hold the government accountable.'

The respondents also indicated how Job Sikhala, a prominent opposition member, also faced similar treatment, with reports indicating that he was detained multiple times under dubious charges. A human rights advocate remarked,

'The pattern of targeting opposition figures sends a chilling message to anyone who dares to speak out against the government.'

An academic added,

'The arbitrary nature of these arrests stifles free expression and creates an atmosphere of fear among those who report on issues of public interest.'

Scholarly research supports these findings. Chimhanda (2023) indicates that such repression undermine democratic principles and also contributes to a culture of impunity. This highlights the critical importance of safeguarding civil liberties and ensuring that those who advocate for transparency and accountability are protected from political persecution.

4.5.3 Restrictive Laws

The respondents also highlighted how the ruling party uses lawfare to target its political opponents. The findings indicate that the Zimbabwean government has implemented restrictive laws to regulate protests and assemblies in order to significantly hindering citizens' ability to organize demonstrations. The Maintenance of Peace and Order Act (MPOA) has been frequently cited as a legal basis for banning protests. An academic noted,

‘The MPOA is often used selectively to suppress dissent under the guise of maintaining public order.’

Activists have criticized the law for its vague provisions, which allow authorities to arbitrarily determine what constitutes a threat to peace. A human rights advocate stated,

‘These laws create a legal framework for repression. They make it nearly impossible for citizens to exercise their right to peaceful assembly.’

Moreover, a civil society leader emphasized,

‘The government's constant invocation of the MPOA to ban protests undermines democratic processes and restricts civic space.’

Reports have indicated that many planned demonstrations are cancelled or violently disrupted due to these legal barriers. There is therefore a consensus that repressive laws can lead to increased public discontent and further unrest (Nyakudya, 2023). This situation shows the urgent need for reforms that respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression and assembly in Zimbabwe.

4.5.4 Public Statements

The findings indicate that while Zimbabwean officials occasionally acknowledged public grievances, particularly concerning economic issues, their responses were often perceived as insufficient or insincere. A member of the ruling party stated,

'We are aware of the challenges facing our citizens and are committed to addressing them," yet many citizens felt these statements lacked genuine action.'

A political analyst noted,

'Such acknowledgments often come in the wake of protests but rarely translate into meaningful policy changes or reforms.'

Citizens expressed frustration, with one resident commenting,

'We hear promises, but nothing improves; it feels like they are just trying to quiet us down.'

Additionally, opposition leaders criticized the government's responses as mere lip service. An opposition member remarked,

'The government has been more focused on maintaining power than genuinely addressing the concerns of the people.'

Chirisa (2023) asserts that when public officials fail to act on grievances, it can lead to increased disillusionment and further unrest. This highlights the need for the government to engage in authentic dialogue and implement tangible solutions to the issues faced by its citizens.

4.5.5 Attempts at Reform

The findings indicate that in response to economic unrest, the Zimbabwean government has occasionally announced measures aimed at addressing inflation and improving living conditions. However, these attempts at reform have often been met with mixed results and widespread skepticism from the public. For instance, a government official announced a series of economic measures, stating,

‘We are committed to stabilizing the economy and ensuring better living standards for our citizens. The government has released statutory instruments to try and address the current socioeconomic crisis.’

Yet, many citizens felt that these announcements were not backed by effective implementation. An opposition leader remarked,

‘We hear about reforms, but our daily struggles continue. Prices keep rising and wages remain stagnant.’

Public skepticism is further fueled by past experiences, where similar promises failed to materialize into real change. A community leader pointed out,

‘Every time there’s unrest, the government promises to do better, but we often see little progress.’

These remarks show that a greater portion of the respondents feel that no genuine reforms will be implemented. Mlambo (2023) therefore contends that without genuine commitment and transparency, reform initiatives are likely to be viewed as superficial attempts to placate public discontent. This situation underscores the critical need for the government to not only announce

reforms but also to ensure their effective execution and to engage meaningfully with community concerns.

4.5.6 Appeals for Support

The findings reveal that the Zimbabwean government has actively sought international support and investment, often attempting to downplay reports of human rights abuses in the process. Respondents mentioned how the Presidents has spearheaded re-engagement efforts as a means to court international investors. Some government officials have emphasized the country's potential for economic growth, stating,

'We welcome foreign investment and are committed to creating a conducive environment for business.'

However, this appeal for support is frequently overshadowed by ongoing international criticism regarding the government's handling of civil unrest and governance issues. Rights organizations have consistently highlighted the government's repressive measures against dissent, with one NGO worker stating,

'The government's efforts to attract foreign investment are undermined by its failure to address serious human rights concerns.'

This contradiction has led to skepticism among potential investors and international partners. Furthermore, an academic noted,

'While the government attempts to present a positive image, the reality on the ground reflects persistent governance challenges, including corruption and human rights violations.'

A political analyst further added,

‘International support cannot be secured without genuine reforms and respect for human rights.’

Sibanda (2023) concurs that without addressing these critical issues, the government's efforts to attract international support are likely to be met with resistance and ongoing scrutiny. This situation highlights the importance of aligning economic ambitions with a commitment to human rights and democratic principles.

4.6 Outcomes of Civil Unrests

The respondents were then asked about the outcomes that have emerged as a result of civil unrests. Various themes emerged in the findings as noted below.

4.6.1 Increased Political Tension

The findings indicate that the civil unrest in Zimbabwe has significantly deepened divisions between the government and opposition parties, resulting in a more polarized political environment. This increased tension has created a challenging atmosphere for dialogue and cooperation. Political analysts observe that the government's heavy-handed response to protests has alienated many opposition supporters, fostering a sense of distrust. An opposition leader noted,

‘The government's actions have not only suppressed dissent but have also pushed many citizens further away from engaging in constructive dialogue.’

Moreover, the climate of fear and repression has made it difficult for both sides to find common ground. A civil society representative stated,

‘In such a polarized environment, any attempt at cooperation is often met with skepticism and hostility.’

This division has also hindered the ability to address pressing national issues effectively. Mlambo (2023) posits that political polarization can lead to increased instability and make it challenging to achieve consensus on critical reforms. This situation highlights the urgent need for initiatives that foster dialogue and reconciliation to bridge the growing divide between the government and opposition parties.

4.6.2 Weakening of Opposition

The findings suggest that the ongoing civil unrest and government repression have contributed to the weakening of political opposition in Zimbabwe. This erosion of opposition strength is characterized by several factors. Some have noted how prominent opposition leaders like Nelson Chamisa opted to leave politics as a result of the persistent persecution. Intimidation and harassment have become prevalent, with many opposition leaders and activists facing threats, arrests, and violence. This atmosphere of fear discourages potential candidates from running for office and stifles political activism. An opposition member remarked,

‘The fear of reprisals keeps many people silent and disengaged.’

Additionally, fragmentation within the opposition has hindered its effectiveness. Internal divisions and disagreements have made it difficult to present a united front against the ruling party. A political analyst noted,

‘Fragmentation within opposition parties has weakened their ability to challenge the ruling party effectively. It also seems like they are puppets of the governments.’

Public trust in the opposition has also diminished. Continuous government crackdowns on dissent have led many citizens to feel disillusioned with political alternatives. One resident commented,

‘We want change, but the opposition seems just as ineffective as the government.’

Moreover, limited resources pose a significant challenge. The government's control over resources and media restricts the opposition's ability to mobilize support and communicate effectively with the public. A civil society leader stated,

‘Without access to platforms and funding, the opposition struggles to reach citizens and share their vision.’

Kabonga et al. (2022) indicates that the weakening of political opposition can lead to increased authoritarianism and reduced democratic engagement. This highlights the urgent need for both domestic and international support to strengthen democratic institutions and promote a more vibrant political landscape in Zimbabwe.

4.6.3 Public Disillusionment

A significant portion of respondents indicated that continuous economic hardships, alongside government repression, have resulted in widespread public disillusionment with the ruling party in Zimbabwe. Many citizens feel that their voices are not being heard, which has significantly contributed to ongoing unrest. As the economic situation deteriorates, frustrations have mounted. Citizens express their dissatisfaction with rising prices, unemployment, and a lack of basic services. An academic made these remarks,

‘We are struggling to make ends meet, and it feels like the government is indifferent to our plight.’

Government repression has further exacerbated this disillusionment. The heavy-handed approach to dissent has created an environment of fear, leading many to believe that their grievances will not be addressed. An activist stated,

‘Every time we try to speak out, we are met with violence. It's as if our concerns don't matter.’

This sense of alienation has driven many to participate in protests, seeking to reclaim their agency. A university student remarked,

‘We want change, and we are tired of feeling ignored. The unrest is our way of demanding that we be heard.’

Ndlovu (2023) posits that such disillusionment can lead to increased instability and a cycle of unrest if not addressed. This situation underscores the urgent need for the government to engage with citizens and address their concerns to restore trust and stability.

4.6.4 Increased Social Media Activism

Increased engagement in social media activism has significantly influenced the landscape of dissent in Zimbabwe. Social media has played a crucial role in organizing protests and raising awareness. The use of digital platforms has empowered citizens to express their grievances and mobilize support, despite government efforts to censor these communications. As stated by some respondents, this rise in social media activism can be attributed to the fact that it represents one of the few safe avenues for dissent. With traditional forms of protest often met with harsh government repression, many citizens have turned to online platforms to voice their concerns. An activist noted,

‘Social media gives us a space to express ourselves without the immediate threat of violence.’

The ability to share information quickly has enabled grassroots movements to gain traction. Citizens can document injustices and rally others, creating a sense of community and solidarity

among those who seek change. However, the government has attempted to counter this by imposing restrictions on internet access and monitoring online activities. This is in reference to the internet blackouts of 2019 (Mhandu & Ojong, 2022). Despite these challenges, social media users have demonstrated the power of digital activism. Scholars point out that social media can serve as a catalyst for political change, providing a platform for marginalized voices to be heard (Moyo, 2023).

4.6.5 Potential for Continued Unrest

The findings indicate that the potential for continued unrest in Zimbabwe remains high, as unresolved grievances and ongoing challenges persist. Civil unrest is likely to continue if the government fails to address the underlying issues of corruption, economic instability, and human rights abuses. Citizens are increasingly frustrated by the lack of meaningful reforms and the perception that their voices are ignored. Concerns about another coup or prolonged internal conflicts within the ruling ZANU-PF party further contribute to this unrest. Many citizens fear that political infighting could lead to a power vacuum, exacerbating the already volatile situation. An opposition leader expressed,

‘If the ruling party continues to fight among themselves, it will only deepen the crisis.’

The economic instability, marked by skyrocketing inflation and unemployment, has left many feeling desperate. A civil society leader noted,

‘We can't survive like this. People are losing hope, and that can lead to drastic actions.’

This desperation fuels protests, as citizens seek to reclaim their agency and demand accountability. Moreover, the ongoing human rights abuses have created a climate of fear and mistrust. Citizens are wary of government actions and are increasingly willing to take to the streets to voice their discontent. A community organizer stated,

'We are tired of being silenced. Our rights are being violated, and we cannot remain passive.'

Chawira (2023) concurs that failure to address these critical issues can lead to prolonged instability and unrest. This situation underscores the urgent need for the government to engage with citizens and implement reforms that address the root causes of discontent to prevent further escalation of civil unrest.

4.6.6 International Scrutiny

International scrutiny of the Zimbabwean government has intensified in response to its actions during times of unrest. The government's heavy-handed approach to dissent has attracted significant international attention, leading to widespread calls for accountability and reform from various human rights organizations and foreign governments. It is noted that numerous human rights groups have documented instances of violence, arbitrary arrests, and suppression of free speech, urging the international community to take a stand. Reports from organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have highlighted the urgent need for the Zimbabwean government to respect human rights and uphold democratic principles (Pigou, 2019). A representative from a human rights organization stated,

'The world is watching, and the plight of the Zimbabwean people cannot be ignored.'

Foreign governments have also expressed concern, with some imposing sanctions on key officials linked to human rights abuses. These actions reflect a growing recognition that the ongoing situation in Zimbabwe requires a concerted international response. An opposition leader noted,

'We must hold those in power accountable for their actions, as it is the only way to encourage real change.'

This international pressure has the potential to influence domestic politics, as the ruling party may feel compelled to address grievances to improve its standing on the global stage (Pigou, 2019). However, the effectiveness of such scrutiny remains a topic of debate, with some arguing that it may not lead to meaningful change without sustained engagement and support for civil society (Nyama & Ruhanya, 2024).

4.7 How to Deal with the Emergence of Civil Unrests

Lastly, the respondents were asked about the potential solutions that could be implemented to address the current situation regarding civil unrests in Zimbabwe. The following themes emerged from the findings.

4.7.1 Promotion of Meaningful Dialogue and Engagement

The findings indicate that promoting dialogue and engagement between the government and citizens is essential for addressing the underlying issues in Zimbabwe. Open communication can foster understanding, build trust, and create a platform for discussing grievances. A community leader remarked,

‘We need to have a space where we can express our concerns without fear. Dialogue is the first step toward real change.’

Similarly, a youth activist stated,

‘Engaging with the government can help us find common ground and work together for a better future.’

Scholarly research supports the idea that inclusive dialogue can lead to more effective governance. Chikanda (2023) when governments engage with their citizens, it helps to address grievances and also promotes stability. This underscores the importance of creating

mechanisms for ongoing engagement to foster a more democratic and responsive political climate in Zimbabwe

4.7.2 Political Reforms

The findings highlight that introducing electoral reforms is vital for enhancing transparency and fairness in Zimbabwe's electoral process, thereby fostering public trust in democratic institutions. A political analyst emphasized,

‘Electoral reforms are crucial for ensuring that every vote counts and that the electoral process is free from manipulation.’

A member of an opposition party added,

‘Without transparency, the public will always be sceptical of the outcomes, which undermines democracy.’

A civil society representative noted,

‘We need to establish independent electoral bodies that can oversee elections impartially.’

Additionally, an opposition member expressed,

‘I want to be confident that my participation in the electoral process will lead to real change.’

Biti (2023) asserts that transparent and fair elections are the bedrock of democracy. When citizens believe in the electoral process, they are more likely to engage in governance and hold their leaders accountable. This highlights the urgent need for reforms that can restore faith in

Zimbabwe's democratic institutions. This has been cited as a potential solution to address civil unrests.

4.7.3 Economic Reforms

The findings also state that developing and implementing effective economic policies is crucial for stabilizing Zimbabwe's economy, addressing inflation, and improving living conditions for citizens. Socioeconomic challenges have been cited as the major source of contention. Therefore, addressing them could help quell the discontent as suggested by some respondents. An academic pointed out,

‘Without stable economic policies, we cannot hope to tackle the rampant inflation that is bedevilling ordinary Zimbabweans.’

An opposition member remarked,

‘We need policies that support local businesses and create jobs. Only then can we see real improvements in living standards. This is the desire that is expressed by the Zimbabwean people when they protest.’

A community organizer highlighted,

‘Many families are struggling to meet basic needs; effective economic policies must prioritize social welfare. Lasting change starts with sound economic policies.’

Furthermore, an academic noted,

‘Our future depends on having a stable economy that allows us to pursue education and career opportunities without fear of financial instability.’

These remarks underscores the necessity of comprehensive economic reforms. Moyo (2023) states that sustainable economic growth can only be achieved through policies that address both macroeconomic stability and social equity. This has been cited as the solution that is needed to address prevalent concerns in Zimbabwe.

4.7.4 Strengthening Human Rights Protections

The findings indicate that halting the crackdown on dissent is essential for ensuring that citizens in Zimbabwe can peacefully assemble and express their views without fear of violence or arrest. A human rights advocate stated,

‘Ending repression is fundamental to fostering a democratic society where individuals can voice their concerns and participate in civic life.’

Another activist emphasized,

‘When we fear speaking out, we lose our ability to influence change. We need to reclaim our right to protest peacefully.’

A community leader added,

‘The government must recognize that dissent is a vital part of democracy, not a threat to it.’

Additionally, a former political detainee remarked,

‘My experience taught me that silencing voices only leads to greater unrest; it’s time for open dialogue.’

These remarks highlight the importance of protecting civil liberties. government that suppresses dissent undermines its legitimacy and alienates its citizens. True democracy thrives

on the free exchange of ideas and open debate (Mutanda & Chisambiro, 2023). This underscores the urgent need for policies that safeguard the rights of citizens to express themselves freely and assemble peacefully.

4.7.5 Addressing International Concerns

The findings indicate that addressing global concerns and taking international criticisms seriously is essential for demonstrating a commitment to improving human rights and governance in Zimbabwe. A political analyst remarked,

‘Ignoring international concerns only isolates Zimbabwe further. Constructive engagement is key to restoring our image.’

A human rights activist stated,

‘The government must acknowledge its shortcomings and actively work to rectify them; this is crucial for gaining international trust.’

A civil society representative added,

‘By responding positively to global criticisms, Zimbabwe can attract foreign investment and support for human rights initiatives.’

These trends indicate how respondents support international engagement as a means to deal with civil unrests. The Zimbabwean government needs to take international human rights standards seriously (Zuze, 2023). They could help foster internal stability and help it gain legitimacy on the world stage. This emphasizes the importance of addressing global concerns to create a more accountable and transparent governance framework in Zimbabwe.

4.8 Chapter Summary

In summary, the period from 2018 to 2023 has been marked by significant civil unrest in Zimbabwe, driven by a complex interplay of political, economic, and social factors. The responses from the government, characterized by repression and violence, have only deepened public disillusionment and heightened political tensions. As citizens continue to seek avenues for expressing their grievances, it becomes imperative for the government to adopt a more conciliatory approach that prioritizes meaningful dialogue, political and economic reforms, and the protection of human rights. Addressing the underlying issues that fuel civil unrest is crucial not only for restoring public trust but also for fostering a stable and democratic society. The potential for continued unrest looms, underscoring the urgent need for genuine engagement and reform to pave the way for lasting peace and progress in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

This chapter consolidates the key insights derived from the study on the impact of civil unrests in shaping political outcomes in Zimbabwe from 2018 to 2023. The summary of the research process will be provided. The chapter then presents conclusions that address the research objectives, highlighting the types of civil unrest, government responses, and resulting political consequences during this period. Recommendations are outlined to address the challenges identified, aiming to foster stability and democratic progress in Zimbabwe. The chapter also identifies areas for further study.

5.2 Summary

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study on the impact of civil unrests in shaping political outcomes in Zimbabwe from 2018-2023. The chapter established the background context, highlighting that civil unrests often emerge in response to political, economic and social grievances. Internationally, factors like lack of political freedom, human rights violations, corruption and poor governance can trigger civil unrest. However, civil unrests do not always lead to political changes, as governments can sometimes successfully quell unrest through harsh response measures. The chapter noted that civil unrests have been a significant phenomenon in Africa, with root causes stemming from historical inequalities, ethnic tensions, resource competition, and governance challenges. These conflicts can escalate into full-fledged civil wars, leading to immense suffering and displacement. The chapter then zoomed in on the Zimbabwean context, explaining how the country has faced civil unrest in recent years amidst a volatile political environment and economic crisis. Key events like disputed elections, fuel

price hikes, and allegations of state capture have triggered unrest, with the government often responding with repression. The purpose of the study is to explore the role of civil unrests in shaping political outcomes in Zimbabwe. The research objectives include examining the types of civil unrests, how the government responded, and the outcomes of these unrests. The chapter also outlined the assumptions, significance, delimitations, and limitations of the study. Finally, it provided definitions of key terms to establish a common understanding for the research.

Chapter 2 reviewed the relevant literature and theoretical frameworks surrounding the study of civil unrest and its political implications. The chapter began by delving into the Political Opportunity Theory, which posits that the political environment plays a significant role in shaping the emergence and escalation of civil unrest. This theory highlights how the openness of the political system, availability of channels for expressing grievances, and receptivity of decision-makers to demands for change can either facilitate or inhibit the mobilization of collective action. The chapter then explored various forms of civil unrest, including protests, riots, strikes, and insurrections. It provided examples of these phenomena from different contexts, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, the Sri Lankan riots of 2022, and the Arab Spring protests. The analysis underscored how these diverse forms of collective action serve as platforms for citizens to voice their grievances, advocate for change, and challenge established power structures. The chapter also examined the African context, delving into case studies of civil unrest in South Africa and Nigeria. It discussed how factors like economic inequality, ethnic tensions, and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism have contributed to civil unrest in these countries, often leading to violent crackdowns by the respective governments. Turning to the Zimbabwean context, the chapter outlined several instances of civil unrest that have occurred since 2018, including the August 1 protests, the 2019 fuel price protests, and the 2020 economic protests. It analysed how the Zimbabwean government has responded to these events, often through the use of force, arbitrary arrests, and

the implementation of restrictive laws. The chapter concluded by highlighting the research gap in the existing literature, noting the need for a more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between socioeconomic factors, government responses, and the varied political outcomes of civil unrest in the Zimbabwean context.

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the research design and methodology employed in this study to explore the impact of civil unrests on political outcomes in Zimbabwe from 2018 to 2023. The chapter outlined the interpretive research philosophy that guided the study, emphasizing the importance of understanding the subjective experiences and meanings that individuals attach to the phenomenon of civil unrest. This qualitative approach was deemed most suitable for capturing the rich, lived experiences of those directly affected by these events. The research methodology was structured as a case study design, which facilitated a comprehensive examination of the intricate dynamics involved within the specific context of Zimbabwe. The chapter detailed the population and sampling techniques, highlighting the use of purposive sampling to ensure representation from diverse stakeholder groups, including political leaders, activists, NGO workers, academics, and security sector personnel. In terms of data collection, the study utilized in-depth interviews as the primary method, complemented by the analysis of relevant documentary data. The chapter explained how the interviews would be conducted in a conversational manner to encourage participants to share their perspectives freely. The use of secondary sources, such as research documents and government reports, was intended to provide valuable contextual information and enrich the analysis. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the chapter outlined strategies like triangulation, verification, and clear documentation of the research process. It also discussed the plan for pilot testing the interview guide prior to the main data collection to identify and resolve any potential issues. Importantly, the chapter addressed the ethical considerations that would guide the study,

including obtaining research permission, securing informed consent from participants, and maintaining confidentiality to protect their identities.

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the study, highlighting the diverse forms of civil unrest that have emerged in Zimbabwe from 2018-2023. Respondents described peaceful protests, violent riots, worker strikes, and social media activism as prevalent modes of collective action. The chapter delved into major civil unrest events, including election-related demonstrations, fuel price protests, and crackdowns on the opposition. It revealed the Zimbabwean government's heavy-handed response, characterized by excessive use of force, arbitrary detentions, and restrictive laws that curtailed citizens' rights. The outcomes of this civil unrest included increased political polarization, weakening of the opposition, public disillusionment, and the potential for continued instability. To address these challenges, respondents emphasized the need for meaningful dialogue, political and economic reforms, strengthened human rights protections, and engagement with the international community.

5.3 Conclusions

The researcher concluded that riots and demonstrations are key forms of unrest, with events like the 2018 election-related demonstrations showing how citizens expressed discontent over alleged electoral fraud. These gatherings, often met with harsh state responses, emphasized their role as a non-violent way to demand accountability. It has also been revealed that violent outbursts, such as riots during the 2019 fuel price protests occurred. This is where public frustration over economic policies boiled over into chaos and destruction. Worker strikes have also occurred, particularly by healthcare workers in 2020 and 2021. The health workers were calling for better wages and conditions during the COVID-19 crisis. Additionally, there have been social media movements. The 2020 #ZimbabweanLivesMatter campaign is an example. People amplified grievances and rallied support online.

Demonstrations and factional fights within ZANU-PF have also occurred. There have been concerns that these factional disagreements could escalate to more severe forms of unrest such as civil war.

Moreover, the researcher reached the conclusion that the government frequently resorted to the use of force when there were incidents of civil unrests. As exemplified by the violent crackdowns following the 2018 election protests and the 2019 fuel price demonstrations, the security forces deployed tear gas, water cannons and live ammunition. These incidents resulted in injuries and deaths. This heavy-handed approach was meant to suppress dissent swiftly and deter further mobilization. Furthermore, some opposition leaders were detained. There were also arbitrary arrests of activists and journalists. This happened even during the 2020 social media protests. Again, the aim was to silence critical voices and disrupt organized resistance. There are also restrictive laws, notably the Maintenance of Peace and Order Act (MOPA), which provide a legal framework to ban protests and limit assemblies. These curtail citizens' rights to express grievances. Public statements from officials often acknowledged economic hardships but lacked follow-through actions. These have been interpreted as superficial attempts to placate unrest without meaningful action. Occasionally, there were attempts at reforms, such as economic stabilization measures, though these were undermined by poor execution and public scepticism. Lastly, the government has also appealed international support. This was seen as a self-contradiction because they failed to address the human rights concerns which caused them to lose international support initially.

Additionally, the researcher concluded that increased political tensions have been the primary outcome of civil unrests. The government's repressive responses have deepened divisions between itself and opposition groups. There is a polarized environment and this hinders dialogue and cooperation. Notably, the opposition parties have been weakened in their

political operations. The machinations have allowed the government to consolidate power and gravitate more towards authoritarian rule. As a result of these various trends, there is widespread public disillusionment. This is driven by persistent economic struggles and government crackdowns. These have eroded trust in state institutions and fuelled further unrest. There is also a surge in social media activism as another outcome. This has been chosen as a safer option for some as compared other outdoor forms of expression. There is the potential for continued unrest. This is because unresolved issues like corruption, economic instability and human rights abuses keep tensions high. This raises fears of prolonged instability or even internal conflict. Lastly, the negative trends have caused heightened international scrutiny against Zimbabwe. The global attention focuses on the country's human rights record. Economic sanctions have been imposed against Zimbabwe. There are also calls for reform which have pressured the government externally. These outcomes collectively illustrated how civil unrests reshaped Zimbabwe's socio-political dynamics.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study the following recommendations have been proposed to address the underlying issues and mitigate future unrest:

The government should undertake comprehensive electoral reforms to ensure transparency and fairness in the electoral process. Establishing an independent electoral commission will help restore public confidence and reduce electoral-related unrest. Engaging in regular consultations with stakeholders can further enhance democratic governance.

The government must prioritize the repeal or amendment of restrictive laws that hinder peaceful assembly and expression. Ensuring that law enforcement adheres to human rights

standards is crucial for fostering a democratic environment. Additionally, creating mechanisms for accountability will reinforce public trust in state institutions.

The government should develop and implement effective economic policies to address inflation, unemployment, and poverty. Supporting local businesses and enhancing social welfare programs are vital steps toward alleviating public discontent. A stable economy will contribute to social cohesion and long-term political stability.

The government must actively engage with the international community to address human rights issues and governance challenges. Constructive dialogue and cooperation with global partners can enhance Zimbabwe's international standing and attract foreign investment. A commitment to aligning with international standards will foster greater trust and support.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

Future research should investigate how social media platforms have influenced the persistence and evolution of civil unrest in Zimbabwe beyond initial mobilization. This could explore the long-term effects of digital activism on political engagement, public opinion, and government responses, particularly in the face of internet restrictions and censorship attempts.

A comparative study should be conducted to assess how civil unrest in Zimbabwe from 2018 to 2023 aligns with or diverges from similar phenomena in other African countries, such as South Africa or Nigeria. This could focus on factors like economic triggers, government repression strategies, and international responses to identify broader patterns and context-specific differences, enhancing regional insights into unrest and political change.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research Permission Letter



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Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Participants

Preamble

My name is Elaine T. Tseriwa, I am a student of Peace and Governance Studies at Bindura University of Education (BUSE). I am participating in a bachelors degree program. To fulfil my studies, I'm writing a research paper. The tile of my research is "The Impact of Civil Unrests in Shaping Political Outcomes. A Case Study of Zimbabwe. (2018 – 2023)".

In order to achieve my studies, I will interview participants.

The information obtained during this interview will be obtained for academic purposes. The researcher will guarantee the anonymity of respondents. The research follows acceptable research ethics. As such, the identity of the interviewee and the information provided will not be shared with anyone.

Appendix 3 : Interview Guide

Section A

Biographical Data (Tick where applicable).

	18 - 25	26 - 36	36 - 55	56 – 64
Age				
	No School	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Level of Education				
Occupation				

1. What is your understanding of civil unrests?
2. What types of civil unrests have emerged in Zimbabwe from 2018 – 2023?
3. How has the Zimbabwean government responded to civil unrests during the period in time?
4. What have been the outcomes of civil unrests that have emerged from 2018 – 2023?
5. How do you think the Zimbabwean government can best deal with the emergence of civil unrests?

Appendix 5: Research Approval Letters

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Participants

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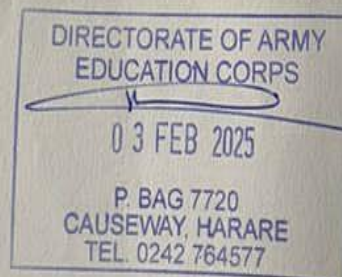
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