This paper seeks to explain the divergent political systems that exist in Botswana and Zimbabwe. While Botswana has sustained a stable democratic political system since it gained independence, Zimbabwe’s political system has become increasingly authoritarian and undemocratic. This study will use a most-similar-systems methodological approach to examine the impact of three hypotheses, colonialism, racial/ethnic conflict and economic status during colonialism, on Botswana and Zimbabwe’s divergent post-colonial political systems. This research will evaluate these three separate hypotheses using qualitative and historical data to analyze each hypothesis’ individual effect on the political systems that exist in Botswana and Zimbabwe. The findings support the hypothesis and argue that colonial history has the most impact on a country’s post-colonial political outcome.

INDEX WORDS: Democratization, Colonialism, Ethnic Conflict, Racial Conflict, Economic Exploitation, Traditional Political Institutions.
DEMOCRATIZATION AND STATE BUILDING IN BOTSWANA AND ZIMBABWE: A
COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

by

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DEMOCRATIZATION AND STATE BUILDING IN BOTSWANA AND ZIMBABWE: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The post-colonial political experiences of sub-Saharan African countries have been extraordinarily diverse ones. Instability and corruption often plague these countries, as well as uncertainty about achieving the most adequate, and adaptable political system. It is rare that an African country achieves and sustains stable, democratic political governance immediately after independence. Scholars have overwhelmingly examined areas such as democratization, state building, colonialism and corruption in Africa, and this study will add to this literature by analyzing the specific reasons for divergent political outcomes in countries that have relatively similar backgrounds. Instead of focusing on only negative outcomes, the purpose of this study will be to consider the different political outcomes of two African countries, in hopes of discovering the impetus behind the positive creation of a democratic political system in region where instability seems to be the norm.

In Southern Africa, the political experiences and accomplishments of Botswana and Zimbabwe, two neighboring countries with similar histories, have been markedly different. Botswana is a regional anomaly in Africa, due to the observation that it has achieved and maintained a stable and peaceful democratic political system since independence. It is puzzling that Botswana’s political system has sustained a democratic path, while Zimbabwe’s political system has been drastically different. Zimbabwe’s political path since independence has become increasingly authoritarian, and headed towards becoming a *de facto*, and possibly *de jure*, one-party state that seeks to stifle political opposition. The goal of this study is to identify and
examine the factors that account for the diverse forms of government that exist in Botswana and Zimbabwe. In other words, considering the relative similarities of these two countries, why has Botswana sustained a stable democratic political system since independence, while Zimbabwe has increasingly become a one-party, authoritarian state under the façade of democracy?

Few scholars have attempted to examine comprehensively the divergent paths that Botswana and Zimbabwe have embarked on in their post-independence political experiences. Why are the post-colonial political systems in these two countries so opposite in nature? This is a puzzling question considering the similarities that Botswana and Zimbabwe share. The similarities between Botswana and Zimbabwe make this research question particularly relevant, because important information can be gathered from the differences that these countries share as motivators for their divergent paths of post-independent governance.

In order for the divergent political systems in Botswana and Zimbabwe to be examined, it follows that the comparative method will be used in this study. In discussing the problems associated with this method, Clipart (1971) states that cases must be “similar in a large number of important characteristics (variables) which one wants to treat as constants, but dissimilar as far as those variables are concerned which one wants to relate to each other” (p.687). As a result, while the similarities of Botswana and Zimbabwe are controlled for, the different forms of governance, which is the phenomenon under examination in this paper, can be logically related to the variables that are not in similarity with each other. Since there are only two cases in this study, it is mandatory that they share enough similarities with each other in order to examine the divergences while holding the other variables constant. Otherwise, this study runs the risk of being indeterminate, which is a common threat to small “N” comparative studies.
Dogan and Pelassy (1990) discuss the merits of comparable case study methods, specifically the merits of using the most-similar-systems design to compare to countries that share relative similarities, yet one important, and major, difference, that is worth examining. Dogan and Pelassy emphasize the importance of “relative” similarities and differences; they argue that “neither similarities nor differences are absolute. They are clearly a matter of viewpoint and perspective…Viewed from afar, South American countries present a series of analogies that become much less evident when one looks at them more closely, allowing the contrasts to appear” (p.132). Their argument is integral to this study. While the similarities outlined below between Botswana and Zimbabwe may appear marginal, it is important to keep in mind that these are relative similarities, which will act as controls, while the three hypotheses in this thesis will attempt to capture Botswana and Zimbabwe’s major differences. As Dogan and Pelassy state, “a comparison between ‘relatively similar’ countries sets out to neutralize certain differences in order to permit a better analysis of others” (p.133). This research methodology is beneficial because it simplifies the research design by reducing the influencing factors and isolating the major differences between two countries, which then become the explanatory hypotheses for the dependent variable.

What constitutes “similar” characteristics in this thesis is relative, not absolute, by any means. Under Dogan and Pelassy’s guidelines, this thesis will use the most-similar-systems design in order to isolate the relative impact of Botswana and Zimbabwe’s major differences, colonialism, ethnic and racial conflict, and economic status during colonialism, on their divergent post-colonial political systems. In order to simplify and specify this design, this thesis will delineate certain relative similarities between Botswana and Zimbabwe that will serve to eliminate uncertainties by “reducing, insofar as possible, the number of interacting variables that
one has the means to observe the influence of factors one wishes to study” (Dogan and Pelassy 1990; p.133). Furthermore, limiting this study to geographical areas, in this case, Southern Africa is beneficial to the most-similar-systems design because presents the opportunity for homogeneity on more dimensions than otherwise (p. 133). In addition, the regional approach, while having the difficulty of generalization, is important because it has the power to invite “reflection on a general problem,” such as the consequences of colonization (p.135). Since this is, in fact, the goal of this study, to reflect on the general problems associated with colonization, and decolonization, the following section will describe specific relative similarities between Botswana and Zimbabwe, which will ultimately serve to tighten and specify this research design, as well as illuminate the major differences that are under examination.

Botswana and Zimbabwe share several similarities, relative to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Du Toit’s work (1995) specifically delineates these relative sociopolitical and economic similarities, in which he compares democratization and state building in Botswana, South African and Zimbabwe. First, Botswana and Zimbabwe are in geographical proximity to each other, as neighbors in Southern Africa. As Dogan and Pelassy (1990) point out, geographical proximity is conducive to the most-similar-systems design because it allows a more in-depth analysis of two countries because analyzing countries that are in the same geographical area allows for more cultural, economic and historical homogeneity (p. 133-135). Botswana and Zimbabwe’s geographical proximity did produce cultural, historical and economic relative similarities.

As Pierre du Toit (1995) points out in his comparative study of Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa, these countries share a strong, pre-colonial Mfecane influence that originates from the beginning of the 19th century. Kuper (1997) describes the Mfecane as “a term that covers
large-scale displacement of populations, many battles, and the formation of major new political entities, notably in Matebele under Mzilikazi and the Basotho under Mosheshwe” (p.472). According to Du Toit, the *Mfecane* constituted a “social, political, and military transformation that affected many societies throughout Southern Africa during the first half of the 19th century” (p.5). This influence led to the adoption of many similar pre-colonial attributes in Botswana and Zimbabwe.

From an economic perspective, a geographical and economical interdependence exists between Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa that grew stronger during colonial rule (Du Toit 1995; Blumenfeld 1992). Du Toit (1995) argues that “the interdependence of Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe follows from their geographical contiguity and shared colonial experience” (p.7). There exists an interlinked, and dependent, economic infrastructure, “especially with regard to rail and road networks as well as shared markets for both commercial products and labor…” (p.7). While Botswana and Zimbabwe’s economies began to experience modernization during colonialism, they were both asymmetrically dependent on South Africa’s economy, with major labor migration from each country to South Africa.

Another important similarity is the mineral and agricultural wealth that both countries claim, although the ways in which these two countries have used their commodities differs greatly, in direct relation to the form of colonialism that these countries have experienced. Botswana’s mineral wealth and diamond trade has greatly contributed to its post-colonial, rapid economic growth. Conversely, Zimbabwe is a major agricultural producer, although it produces gold, as well. Although their primary commodities and exports differ, Botswana and Zimbabwe share the presence of important natural resources.
Du Toit (1995) also points out several minor, yet important, population similarities. Both countries have relatively young populations, and similar life expectancies (p.5). Extremely high rates of HIV/AIDS infection in Botswana and Zimbabwe have a major impact on these population similarities. Economic and cultural factors, such as labor migration, and high birth rates are two factors that can account for high rates of HIV/AIDS contraction in these two countries.

These relative similarities contrast with important differences in Botswana and Zimbabwe. This research will evaluate the role of three of these differences in Botswana and Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political systems. While both countries, and the majority of Southern Africa for that matter, have a British colonial history, the extent and form of British rule differs in each country. During colonialism, Bechuanaland was a British protectorate and Rhodesia was a settler-colony. Indirect British rule governed Bechuanaland, while direct British rule governed Southern Rhodesia. Furthermore, Botswana gained a relatively early independence in 1966, and Zimbabwe did not gain independence until 1980. These colonial differences provide impetus for the main hypothesis in this thesis, in which direct rule in Rhodesia and indirect rule in Bechuanaland is the primary reason for these two countries’ divergent post-colonial political systems.

Another important difference in Botswana and Zimbabwe is the presence of ethnic and racial division, as well as armed conflict. However, this point is disputable. While most authors consider Botswana to be an ethnically homogenous country, relative to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, Pierre du Toit (1995) disputes this point, citing that this claim confounds “cultural homogeneity (or heterogeneity) with ethnic singularity (or plurality)” (p.18). Since Zimbabwe is ethnically heterogeneous, with a Shona majority, and a sizable Ndebele minority, the case can be
made that Botswana is also ethnically heterogeneous, although this is a disputable argument. While the Tswana dominates in Botswana, and the vast majority of the population speaks Setswana, some authors argue that Botswana’s minorities are stifled, under the rhetoric of sustaining a non-ethnic, non-racial state. This phenomenon could possibly be the result of Tswana cultural hegemony (Solway 2002). The extent to which Botswana is ethnically homogeneous is, therefore, questionable. On the other hand, the ethnic division between the Shona majority and Ndebele minority in Zimbabwe is an important factor in this analysis, and will be an underlying factor in one of the hypotheses that this thesis presents.

Another important difference between Botswana and Zimbabwe that this thesis will evaluate is the way in which these colonies experienced different economic intrusion. Rhodesia’s economy was relatively modernized and diverse by independence, while Bechuanaland’s economy remained insulated throughout and into independence. British exploitation was, therefore, much greater in Rhodesia, and this has an impact on Zimbabwe’s post-colonial economy and political system.

Aside from these important differences, Botswana and Zimbabwe share other important differences that will not be used as alternative variables in this thesis, yet are worth mentioning. First, the white minority that exists in Zimbabwe is much larger and more influential than that in Botswana (Du Toit 1995; Salih 2001). While this factor presents a legitimate argument for why Botswana and Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political systems differ, it will not be an alternative hypothesis because the first hypothesis, colonialism and traditional political structures, arguably, captures its effect. In other words, this thesis argues that the differentiation between direct and indirect rule in Rhodesia and Bechuanaland has more explanatory power than the size of the white elite, while this factor does remain important, nonetheless.
Secondly, Botswana and Zimbabwe have notably different population sizes. Du Toit (1995) points out that Zimbabwe’s population is around 10 million, while Botswana’s is about 1.3 million people (p.6). This difference, however, does not have enough explanatory power to act as an alternative hypothesis alone. Too many complications are associated with specifically connecting a country’s population size to its political system. The process tracing is extremely challengeable. This difference is, on the other hand, worth mentioning.

Despite the relative similarities between Botswana and Zimbabwe, these countries have strikingly different post-colonial political systems, which is an important difference, and one that has provided an impetus for this study. Botswana has consistently been hailed as an example of “African Exceptionalism.” It is unique in the fact that its political system has been a stable multi-party democracy since 1966, when the country gained independence peacefully. M.A. Mohamed Salih (2001) claims that Botswana is unique because:

[F]irst, the political parties are of relatively recent origin, dating back to the early and late 1960s…Second, Botswana is one of just a handful of African countries that has not experienced a reversal to military rule. Third, since independence, Botswana has instituted a House of Chiefs, a largely advisory 15-member body Consisting of chiefs of the eight principle tribes, four elected sub-chiefs, and Three members selected by the other twelve (p.149).

In addition to these unique accomplishments, Botswana has had free, fair and consistent elections since independence. Furthermore, its electoral system has allowed tolerance to opposition, even though the BDP (Botswana Democratic Party) has retained power since the first elections. Botswana is a relatively tolerant, open and democratic country in a region of turbulence. Indeed, Polity IV and Freedom House scores can attest to the stable, democratic political system that has been sustained since independence. See Table 1a for Botswana and Zimbabwe’s Freedom House and Polity IV scores over time.
The post-colonial political system in Zimbabwe, in contrast to Botswana, is a completely different picture. After a prolonged and violent struggle for independence, which was finally granted in 1980, the nationalist party ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe African National Union) gained power, and has since embarked on increasingly authoritarian, suppressive measures to ensure its position. This case is representative of numerous other African countries, in which independence led to the one-party rule of a nationalistic party, amidst outside pressures to democratize (Salih 2001). This paper will argue that these pressures remained external and, despite a façade of democracy, and the occurrence of regular “democratic” elections, Zimbabwe’s political system has increasingly become plagued by corruption and intolerance to opposition since establishing independence. According to the Polity IV 2002 country report, President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF have used their powerful position to hurt government opposition, rig elections and intimidate voters (p.1). These tactics are hardly open or democratic. Furthermore, according to Freedom House and Polity IV trends, Zimbabwe’s levels of civil and political freedoms have consistently dropped since independence (see Table 1a).

**Table 1.a Freedom House and Polity IV Scores**

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* A score of -88 denotes a period of "transition
* Polity refers to the combined polity score, which is achieved by subtracting Autocracy from Democracy;
 Polity2 is the revised combined polity score that is adaptable to time-series analysis.

Considering Botswana and Zimbabwe’s dramatically different post-colonial political systems, and keeping in mind the relative similarities of these two countries, this study seeks to determine the explanatory variable(s) behind this political divergence. What factors account for the democratic political system that Botswana has sustained since independence? Why has Zimbabwe developed an increasingly unstable, authoritarian political regime that is devoid of the civil and political freedoms that exist in Botswana?

In order to proceed with this research, it is necessary to define the concept of democracy, in order to provide a theoretical base for this argument. While there are numerous competing definitions of democracy, there is a tendency to define democracy in a strictly electoral manner, emphasizing procedural electoral methods as the most important ingredient in a democracy. However, this research does not stem from the belief that regular elections constitute a
democracy. Instead, democracies must allow opposition and negotiation, and the citizens of a country must have the ability to hold their democratic institutions accountable. In addition to this, a “democratic institution must be both responsive and effective; sensitive to the demands of its constituents and effective in using limited resources to address those demands” (Putnam 1993, p.9). All of these characteristics provide a tangible yardstick by which to measure Botswana and Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political performances.

The next chapter will consist of a literature review of the primary concepts in this study, as well as a more specific review of the literature on the political systems in Botswana and Zimbabwe. This chapter will point out the way in which this research will contribute to the study of political systems in developing countries. In Chapter 3, the main and alternative hypotheses will be introduced and examined in a theoretical context that will seek to explain the divergence of political systems in Botswana and Zimbabwe. Chapter 3 will develop the main hypothesis, form of colonialism, as well as the two alternative hypotheses, the role of ethnic/racial divisions and armed conflict, and economic status during colonialism. Chapter 4 will explain the research design and methodology for this study. It will also discuss the specific indicators that will have to be present in order to support or refuse the three hypotheses. The main and alternative hypotheses will be qualitatively analyzed against the dependent variable in Chapter 5, and the findings will be presented in this chapter. Finally, Chapter 6 will present the concluding remarks for this research, and present ideas for future scholarly research on this topic.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Before evaluating the factors that contribute to the different political systems that exist in Botswana and Zimbabwe, it is necessary to review the scholarly literature on this topic. There has been an abundant amount of scholarly research on political systems and democratization in developing countries. This chapter will focus on a review of this scholarly literature, and it will comment on the contribution that this study hopes to make to the existing research.

There exists an enormous volume of scholarly literature on the subject of democratization and state building in developing countries. Much of this literature focuses on specific prerequisites or structural conditions that are necessary to make democracy thrive. Some authors focus on the role of culture in democratization, while others describe the connection between democratization and economic development. On the other hand, authors such as Putnam (1993) use a historical institutionalist perspective, arguing that democracy thrives when its institutions are legitimate. Structural economic conditions are important, as well. Dependency theory cites the way in which the global economic order undermines democratic effectiveness in developing countries, as does some of the literature on economic globalization.

Specifically, the literature on democratization in Botswana and Zimbabwe often originates from a structuralist perspective, and describes the impact of colonialism, as well as economic dependency. This research will add to this literature by explicitly comparing the divergent forms of colonialism in Botswana and Zimbabwe, in conjunction with ethnic and racial conflict, as well as economic exploitation during colonialism, in accounting for their different
post-colonial political systems. In doing this, this thesis hopes to contribute to the historical institutionalist perspective, by describing the role of traditional political culture in democratization, as the primary indicator for Botswana’s political success.

Samuel Huntington (1991) identifies global trends of democratization, and he contends in his study that the “decolonization of Africa led to the largest multiplication of independent authoritarian governments in history” (p.21). His analysis identifies swings towards and away from democracy throughout recent history. He identifies and discusses the third wave of democracy, which began in 1974, during which democratization and liberalization were widespread throughout the world, as a sign that liberal democracy constitutes the final goal of political regimes. Huntington also examines the connection between economic development and democratization, a topic that has been widely researched by scholars. He contends that economic development and political leadership are the two vital factors that will affect the future of democratic stability (p.315).

Larry Diamond et al. (1997) build on Huntington’s *The Third Wave* by pointing out that the third wave of democratization was a shallow one. While many developing countries democratized at this time, democracy “outside of the wealthy industrialized nations it tends to be shallow, illiberal and poorly institutionalized” (p.XV). These new democracies lack the political and civil liberties that the industrialized democracies cherish, and opt for more purely electoral forms of governance. Diamond *et al.* also discuss the ways in which these new democracies can consolidate themselves, in order to create more viable and legitimate political systems.

In his work on democratization, Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) takes on the debate about the role of economic development as a prerequisite of democracy. In evaluating the conditions that must be present for a country to breed democracy, he argues that specific structural
characteristics of a country, namely economic development and legitimacy, are necessary to sustain a stable democratic system. While this argument is valid for numerous countries, it does not apply to Botswana, which was one of the poorest countries in the world after independence, yet still a peaceful democracy. Dankwart Rustow (1969) also evaluates the conditions that make democracy work, in which he critiques Lipset’s argument, emphasizing a problem with causality, and warning that “we have been in danger of throwing away the political baby with the institutional bathwater” (p.344). Rustow gives an in-depth methodological argument about the transition to democracy, rejecting economic growth, and other common requisites, as a mandatory condition, and embracing the importance of consensus, national unity, conflict, and democratic rules, which occur simultaneously. Rustow’s attempts at delving into the deeper forces of democratization seem to leave out certain instances of democratization, as well as the importance of colonial legacy.

From a different perspective, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) emphasize the importance of political culture in democratization. Here they denote three types of political culture: parochial, subject and participant, and, systematically analyze the way in which the presence of a civic culture is vital to democracy. The “parochial” form of political culture is characteristic of traditional societies, in which citizens have affective ties to the government, rather than cognitive. The participant culture is congruent with democracies, where citizens are active members. Finally, the subject political culture is more representative of authoritarian systems, and the citizen is aware of authority, yet more concerned with government output. The “parochial” form of political culture serves as a useful reference in examining the importance of traditional political culture in Botswana and Zimbabwe.
Robert Dahl specifically addresses the way in which foreign domination affects the chances for democracy, or what he terms “polyarchy,” in a specific country. He specifies three ways in which this can happen. First of all, external influence undoubtedly have an impact on certain conditions that he previously deemed necessary, i.e. the “beliefs of political activists, paths to the present, the level of socioeconomic development, the degree of economic concentration or dispersion, inequalities, even the extent of subcultural cleavages…” (p.190). Secondly, a country’s options are, or can be, altered by foreign influences, as well. Finally, Dahl discusses “outright foreign domination,” which has a drastic impact on the possibility of polyarchy in the dominated country (p.191). He points out, however, that this impact does not necessarily have to be negative, and that polyarchy, under certain conditions, is still favorable. Dahl’s argument is theoretically sound and applicable to African states, where foreign domination was, and still is, commonplace.

Writing from an institutionalist perspective, Robert Putnam’s (1993) work emphasizes the importance of history in shaping institutions, and, consequently, the role of institutions in shaping politics. While his work is centered on Italy, this theory can be applicable to developing countries, specifically in Africa, where traditional institutions have played a major role in shaping the political culture of African citizens. Putnam seeks to explain the differences in institutional performance in Italy, specifically hoping to discover what makes representative institutions more effective and responsive to their citizens. He concludes that more responsive and effective institutions share a connection with stronger civic communities, and, in turn, stronger civic communities can be traced back to the contrasting regimes of medieval Italy. The “remarkable set of communal republics in the center and north” (p.16) of Italy that proved to be more amenable to effective institutions share a striking similarity with many of the communal
territories in pre-colonial Africa, such as the Tswana sociopolitical units of pre-colonial Botswana territory.

When reviewing the literature that is more specific to this research, a few dominant trends appear. Some scholars hold that there are variations of democracy, and that the Western form of liberal democracy is not applicable to developing countries (MacPherson 1965; Mengisteab 2002). In this view, African countries should adopt a form of democracy that is more suitable to their culture and values. For example, MacPherson (1965) argues that developing countries value ideals such as equality and community, rather than strict individualism, which is valued in liberal democracies (p.25). Furthermore, Mengisteab (2002) holds that African have very different expectations of their state than people in liberal democracies, or advanced countries, and that democracy in Africa does not need to be modeled after the Western form of liberal democracy (p.69). This argument is compatible with the idea of democratization, as a relative phenomenon, that this research will present. Democracy in developing countries needs to be adaptable to their unique conditions.

In seeking to understand why democracy has not been successful in much of Africa, Diamond et al. (1988) analyze the impact of colonialism, political culture, ethnicity and other factors on the development of democracy in the region. They attribute Zimbabwe’s political weaknesses to its uncertain and factitious environment, including the ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People’s Union), a political group that poses a political threat to ZANU-PF. This situation has created a cycle of suspicion and political repression, which, in turn, weakens the viability of democracy in Zimbabwe. Alternatively, while Botswana has retained a relatively democratic regime, Diamond et al. (1988) question whether this political system will be able to sustain its democratic ideals if it is confronted with serious threats to the ruling party, which has not yet
happened in Botswana, but is common elsewhere in Africa. Furthermore, they examined the impact of colonial legacy on democracy in Africa, concluding that colonialism and its repressive behavior often deterred the development of democratic characteristics in the African colonies. They also point out the incongruence between traditional African culture and colonial goals and ideals. This thesis builds on Diamond et al.’s work by arguing that certain aspects of traditional political culture are not only congruent, but also beneficial to democratization in Africa. Both the impact of colonialism on democracy and the inability of the white settlers to adapt traditional African culture to their regimes are important themes for this research.

Economic factors certainly have an integral place in scholarly research on democratization and state building in sub-Saharan Africa, as well. Many argue that economic globalization and liberalization, as exemplified through structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in Africa, undermine and inhibit the development of democracy in many countries. Mengisteab (2002) discusses the way in which globalization narrows the “conception of democracy” by hindering decision-making due to the required disengagement of the state (p.72). Behind this argument is the idea that the adoption of neoliberal economic institutions does not relieve social and economic inequities, it is, in fact and uneven process that is not necessarily conducive to state building and democratization in developing countries.

The impact of the structural adjustment programs that many African countries have embarked on since the early 1980’s is another area of research on state building in Africa. These programs, which are characterized by trade liberalization, state disengagement and the adoption of other neoliberal economic policies, have not succeeded in alleviating state and economic crises in Africa. Carmody (2002) argues that “as state resources have been retrenched under SAPs, stateness is further weakened, generating increased incentive for corruption and
undermining of the state’s legitimacy” (p.52). These economic explanations are certainly pertinent in evaluating Botswana and Zimbabwe’s relative attempts at democratization and state building.

This research intends to contribute to many of these arguments in its examination of the divergent political systems in Botswana and Zimbabwe. Despite the relative similarities between these two countries, democratization and the establishment of a legitimate and free political system have been successful only in Botswana, while repression and intolerance have increasingly become the political norm in Zimbabwe.

First, this research will bring to the light the positive impacts of the inclusion of traditional African political culture in a modern political system, as was the case in Botswana. It is important to note, however, that African countries have heterogeneous traditional political cultures, which range from very democratic to very autocratic. This thesis will focus on the positive traditional political aspects that have aided Botswana’s political system. Scholars have discussed this angle, yet it has never been explicitly used as a strong explanatory variable for explaining the divergent political systems in Botswana and Zimbabwe. It is important, however, to note that the degree to which of traditional political aspects have been included in a post-colonial political system cannot by separated from the form of colonialism, direct versus indirect. These two factors are contingent upon each other. While Almont and Verba (1968) discuss the importance of a civic culture for democracy, this research will specify the importance of traditional civic and political culture for African countries. This argument is also in line with that of MacPherson and Mengisteab (1965; 2002) since the inclusion of traditional political culture requires a different type of democracy that departs from liberal democracy, which is not adaptable to many of these developing countries.
While much of the literature on developing countries recognizes the impact of colonialism, in its various forms, on the political systems in post-colonial African countries, none has specifically compared the efforts of colonial governments in Botswana and Zimbabwe to include or avoid aspects of traditional culture, such as the role of chiefs, community meetings, etc in their institutional practices. This argument, therefore, is partly institutionalist, since it considers the impact of colonial institutions, and their subsequent inclusion of traditional aspects, in post-colonial political systems. This is compatible with Putnam’s (1993) view of the role of institutions in shaping politics.

Secondly, this research will inspect the specific role that ethnic/racial divisions and armed conflict have had in the creation of a post-colonial government. By separating the liberation struggle and ethnic conflict that has occurred in Zimbabwe from the role of colonialism, it will be possible to determine if the negative, adversarial environment that resulted from these conflicts have had a direct impact on the independent Zimbabwean government. This is in comparison to Botswana, which experienced a peaceful transition to independence, and the absence of ethnic or racial conflict.

Furthermore, while many scholars on political development tend to prescribe one path to democratization or specific prerequisites for democracy, as demonstrated above, the theory behind this research is that democratization in a country is dependent on that country’s historical experiences, and culture. As a result, developing countries should, in general embark on different paths to democratization, depending on their past experiences. This process should also be accomplished by taking advantage of, and embracing, aspects of the traditional political culture that exists in the country.
This thesis intends to contribute to the literature on political systems and democracy in developing countries by adding new angles, specifically the emphasis on direct versus indirect colonialism, and the effect that these divergent forms of colonialism have on the inclusion of traditional political aspects in Botswana and Zimbabwe’s political systems. In addition to the role of colonialism, this thesis will evaluate the relative impact that ethnic and racial conflict, and economic status during colonialism have on a country’s post-colonial political system.

Consequently, it must be acknowledged that it is impossible to reverse the detrimental impacts of colonialism in African countries. With that in mind, the findings of this research can be used to develop different models of political development, based on these two cases. In addition to this, efforts can be made to incorporate more legitimate and understandable aspects of traditional African political culture into the governments that are suffering. Perhaps this process can buffer the harsh, repressive and undemocratic scars that colonialism has left in developing countries.
CHAPTER 3

MAIN AND ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

This thesis will examine the divergence of political systems in Botswana and Zimbabwe after each country gained independence. It seeks to identify what factor(s) contribute to this divergence, and, since the research design for this thesis is a most-similar-systems design, the explanatory variables must, therefore, be aspects in which Botswana and Zimbabwe are different. The first part of this section will develop the main explanatory variable, colonialism, with reference to existing literature on this topic. Next, the alternative variable, racial/ethnic conflict will be introduced and developed in the same manner. The final alternative explanatory variable, economic status during colonialism will be examined. Furthermore, this section will make explicit the relationship between each of these variables and the dependent variable, existing political system.

Colonialism and Traditional Political Structures

This thesis hypothesizes that the differing forms of British colonialism that Botswana and Zimbabwe experienced is the main explanation for their divergent forms of governance. More specifically, it is the form of colonial power that influenced the degree to which traditional political structures were included in a country’s political institutions. In this hypothesis, the form of colonialism, direct versus indirect, and the degree of inclusion of traditional political aspects during colonialism cannot be separated. The combination of these two factors, as this thesis argues, is the dominant reason for Botswana’s political success and Zimbabwe’s political
failures. This section will give a review of the existing literature on colonialism that led to the development of this hypothesis.

In his study on the post-colonial African state, Ronald Weitzer (1984) discusses an approach that “pays special attention to the settler-colonial state…In this view, the coercive strength of the state is seen as the principle determinant of the nature of the post-colonial system” (p.530). This approach will also be utilized in this thesis, in which the settler-colonial state is argued to have the most influence on post-colonial politics in Zimbabwe. Sharing a similar view of the power of the settler-colonial state is Michael Bratton (1980), who distinguishes the settler-colonial state from other forms of colonialism. Bratton notes that, in general, the settler-colonial state displays a variety of characteristics that denote its power and, in turn, the colonized state’s loss of autonomy, in comparison to other, less imposing, colonial influences.

Pierre du Toit’s (1995) research on the impacts of colonialism on state building in Botswana and Zimbabwe is especially relevant here. His in-depth analysis of the pre-colonial and colonial situations in Botswana and Zimbabwe, as well as his evaluation of the inclusion of traditional political aspects has provided enormous insight into the colonial impact on democracy. Du Toit differentiates between the British colonial policy of indirect rule in Bechuanaland and the much more direct form of British colonialism in Rhodesia. He demonstrates the way in which the British presence in Botswana was much more tolerant to their already established political culture. They allowed dual legal systems, retained the role of Chiefs as tools of social control, and did not disrupt the traditional use of public discussions, which were all integral parts of Botswana political culture. These traditional practices were carried over into independence and they remain part of Botswana’s political system. It is important to note, however, that although chiefs did remain political figureheads, their political powers were
marginalized, and they became subservient to British interests. While these chiefs could not cross racial boundaries, they, nonetheless, retained a more powerful position in society, relative to those in Southern Rhodesia.

Alternatively, Du Toit discusses the much more restrictive, and more influential British presence in Rhodesia. The situation in Southern Rhodesia was characterized by intolerance, repression and racial segregation, similar to that of South Africa. Unlike in Botswana, the white settlers in Zimbabwe viewed Zimbabwe’s traditional political culture with disdain, ironically and ignorantly dismissing it as completely undemocratic. The marginal traditional institutions that were included in the colonial government, such as a minor role for Chiefs as political figureheads, were viewed with distrust by the natives.

From Du Toit’s analysis of the different forms of colonialism in Bechuanaland and Southern Rhodesia, it becomes clear that there was a clear lack of government legitimacy in the latter, whereas it existed in the former. Du Toit’s research on the direct and indirect forms of colonialism in Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland, respectively, has provided an impetus for the primary hypothesis in this thesis.

In M.A. Mohomed Salih’s (2001) evaluation of the state of democracy and state politics in southern Africa, he discusses the way in which one-party authoritarian regimes like Zimbabwe “were forced to democratize by external pressures typical of the Post-Cold War good governance and democratization projects” (p.149). In contrast, Botswana, which was established as a democracy at independence in 1966, did not face the external pressure to democratize to the extent that Zimbabwe did. However, it must be noted that, although this thesis is examining the influence of colonialism on Botswana’s political system, diamond mining and the relationship between Botswana and de Beers has had an important effect on Botswana’s economic and
political stability. Democracy was a more organic evolution in Botswana, while in Zimbabwe, the pressure to adopt democratic institutions was dictated by the West. Seeing that Zimbabwe is viewed to have a mere façade of democracy, and regular elections, the process of external democratization has not been successful. This thesis holds that democracy in Zimbabwe cannot be realized without legitimacy, which the colonial government destroyed. This is not to say that Zimbabwe will be undemocratic forever, or that the inclusion of traditional political structures is the only way to add legitimacy. This research is only arguing that the greater inclusion of traditional political institutions in Bechuanaland had a legitimating effect on Botswana’s political system.

Salih’s observation is important because an important underlying concept of the main hypothesis is that one country cannot always successfully force or impose democracy on another; this process is inherently undemocratic. It follows that the imposed government will lack legitimacy, and there will be no connection between the people of a country and their unfamiliar foreign institutions. This point is not always valid, considering Japan and Germany’s political histories. On the other hand, installing democracy did not motivate the colonists’ in colonial Africa. It is also relevant to point out that the adoption of traditional political structures is not the only way to make political systems legitimate. This argument does not apply to all developing countries, but it is argued in the thesis that Botswana and Zimbabwe’s political systems have been impacted by the degree that their colonial governments included traditional political structures. Botswana’s democracy, therefore, has been successful because the people view their government and its institutions as legitimate. They are legitimate partly because of the traditional political aspects that they encompass. In addition, the primary reason that these traditional political features have a greater role in Botswana’s political system is because
Bechuanaland experienced indirect colonial rule, in comparison to direct rule in Southern Rhodesia, which had inconsistent policies regarding the inclusion of traditional political structures. This is the process tracing that led to the development of the primary hypothesis in this thesis.

**Racial/Ethnic Divisions and Armed Conflict**

One alternative hypothesis of this thesis is that the absence of strong racial and ethnic divisions, as well as armed conflict, is related to the stable, democratic political system that exists in Botswana. Conversely, racial and ethnic conflicts that have occurred in Zimbabwe have greatly debilitated the prospects for a stable, democratic political system. The reasoning behind this argument is that the ethnic and racial conflicts in Zimbabwe have fostered adversarial pattern of relations, especially within the political system. Furthermore, armed conflict has damaged the country’s social and economic infrastructure. Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle increased the racial tensions between the white settlers and the native Zimbabweans, and brought to the surface certain ethnic tensions between the Shonas and the Ndebeles, which also resulted in a prolonged armed conflict. The nationalistic ZANU-PF party has consistently used its power to promote a fractious ethos. Furthermore, since the liberation struggle, ethnic and racial divisions have been politicized in Zimbabwe’s political system. It is imperative to isolate the effects of these racial and ethnic divisions and armed conflicts from the effects of colonialism on the political system in Zimbabwe. The challenge for this research will be to differentiate the specific effects of ethnic and racial divisions on Zimbabwe from the repressive settler-colonial state to which Southern Rhodesia was exposed.

While there are specific theories, such as the mobilization thesis, that hold that armed struggles for independence can have a positive effect on the post-colonial state by creating a...
strong political culture, Ronald Weitzer (1984) argues that this has clearly not been the case in Zimbabwe. His analysis demonstrates that the political situation in post-colonial Zimbabwe is as, or even more, repressive than during colonialism (p.530). Furthermore, the African countries that achieved peaceful decolonization, primarily those French and British colonies that gained independence in the 1950s and 1960s, were not exposed to a complete institutional transformation, as was the case with those countries that fought for their independence. Essentially, the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe resulted in an almost complete dismantling of political institutions, while in Botswana, these institutions were sustained into independence. Rather, as Weitzer points out, the countries that underwent peaceful transitions merely transferred power to new ruling elite, while retaining, for the most part, the same political structures (p.529). Michael Bratton (1980) notes that there are certain characteristics of settler-colonial states, specifically Zimbabwe, in which a repressive colonial presence often results in liberation wars.

Pierre du Toit emphasizes the way in which the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe was illustrated by a contest between two competing hegemonic powers to achieve control over the Southern Rhodesian society (p.109). The liberation struggle in Zimbabwe left enormous damage on the public infrastructure of the country. Pierre du Toit (1995) delineates this damage precisely, stating that it had destroyed “about one third of the cattle..64 causeways and bridges, 1,830 boreholes, 425 dams, and 40 airstrips” (p.116). More devastatingly, the war destroyed or damaged thousands of schools, which were already sparse, and more than half of the rural businesses (p.116). Furthermore, these numbers are even harsher considering the financial hardships and scarcity that Southern Rhodesia’s segregationist regime created. At Zimbabwe’s independence, ZANU-PF, a leading party in Southern Rhodesia’s liberation struggle, was elected
amidst an extremely divisive political climate. As Du Toit points out about the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, each side “tried to displace the other instead of finding accommodation for the other’s aims and objectives” (p.108). This is in contrast to Botswana’s independence, where the BDP came to power in a much more accommodating and tolerant political environment. The president, Seretse Khama was an ally to the British elite, and Botswana’s transition was a smooth one, instead of an adversarial one.

Du Toit (1995) also explains the way in which the Shona-Ndebele divide was brought to fruition during the liberation struggle and armed conflicts between these two groups was sustained into and after independence. Furthermore, these armed conflicts have politicized the ethnic tensions between the Shonas and the Ndebeles and this remains a divisive element in Zimbabwe’s political system.

At Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980, the stated goal was to have a full democracy, yet Zimbabwe’s political system has gradually transformed into a one-party authoritarian regime, under the façade of democracy. This thesis will attempt to show that the ethnic and racial conflicts that occurred prior to and after Zimbabwe’s independence have important impacts on the unstable political system that was instituted after decolonization.

**Economic Status during Colonialism**

The final hypothesis that this thesis will analyze concerns the divergent economic positions during colonial rule that Bechuanaland and Southern Rhodesia had at and before independence. Bechuanaland’s economy was relatively insulated prior to independence, primarily because its vast mineral resources had not yet been exploited and its economy was dependent on cattle. Alternatively, Rhodesia’s economy was much more exposed to the global market, and relatively sophisticated. At independence, the new Zimbabwean government
inherited a diversified economy that had been intensely exploited by the British settlers. This paper hypothesizes that Southern Rhodesia’s economic exploitation had a direct negative impact on its post-colonial political system. Botswana’s economic insulation had a positive impact on its independent democratic government.

This hypothesis stems from the argument that Zimbabwe’s integrated economy fueled the adversarial relations between native peoples and the white settlers. Uneven capitalist economic development bred racial and class inequities. At independence, the ZANU-PF maintained the divisive politics that characterized the colonial regime. In Botswana, the British were only marginally interested in exploiting their economy, and there was little or no capitalist investment. Even though Botswana was considered to have one of the poorest economies in the world at independence, it lacked the extreme economic and racial inequalities that were present in Zimbabwe’s economy that is more modern.

At the center of this argument is the dependency theory literature. According to this view, the capitalist system perpetuates and sustains a core-periphery relationship, in which industrialized countries remain in the core at the expense of the periphery, or “Third World” countries (Sylvester 1985; Bratton 1982; Arrighi 1973). Resource extraction from the periphery sustains this process, and this creates a pattern of underdevelopment in Third World countries.

According to Christine Sylvester (1985), colonial Rhodesia is divided into three eras of development: “the era of racial non-competition which the strategy of parallel development expressed (roughly 1910-1945); the abortive liberal period (1945-1962) of concern for racial partnership; and the years of relative isolation and war which followed, called the time of Rhodesia Alone (1962-1979)” (p.20). While the British espoused the goal of “parallel” development of races, in reality, economic development was enormously unequal. A white
working aristocracy developed and retained its place at the expense of unskilled cheap African labor (p.21). Finally, Sylvester emphasizes the way in which capital interdependence in Zimbabwe had the long-term effect of “producing a chronically restricted domestic market, and fostering antagonistic classes” (p.28). This argument is the impetus behind using the economic-centered hypothesis in this thesis.

Because of this economic disparity in Zimbabwe, this thesis hypothesizes that the independent government, controlled by the ZANU-PF, embarked on equal, but reversed, economic policies, which were aimed at redistribution. These policies, while motivated by colonial revenge, also reflected Soviet thinking and backing. Zimbabwe’s independence came during the height of the Cold War, and their policies reflected Soviet economic thinking. In an adversarial climate such as this, it is less difficult to see why stable, peaceful democracy was not achieved.

In contrast to Southern Rhodesia, at independence, Botswana’s resources remained relatively untapped. Furthermore, Botswana’s independent government’s relationship with the white settlers, which were much fewer in numbers than in Rhodesia, was amicable, and this translated into a peaceful democratic system (Salih 2001). With less economic interference, and a much smaller white minority, there were less racial and class divisions in society. It will be the goal of this research to demonstrate the way in which Botswana and Zimbabwe’s relative economic situation before and at independence had differing results on their diverse political systems.

In sum, this thesis presents three hypotheses to provide explanations for the research question of why Botswana and Zimbabwe, two countries that share relative similarities, have adopted distinctly different political systems since decolonization. The first and primary
hypothesis argues that overwhelming reason for the divergence in these two post-colonial political systems is the form of colonialism that each country experienced. Bechuanaland was a British Protectorate, governed by a policy of indirect rule. Southern Rhodesia was a full settler-colony, governed by a policy of direct British rule. In addition to this, Bechuanaland’s status as a Protectorate allowed for the greater inclusion of tradition political culture into the colony’s political institutions, which, at independence, added legitimacy to the new government. By retaining this hybrid combination of traditional and modern democratic political institutions, Botswana has succeeded as a stable democracy in a region of instability. Zimbabwe’s (Southern Rhodesia) position under British direct rule left little room for the inclusion of tradition political structures, which the British viewed as undemocratic and uncivilized. This led to an adversarial environment, which was sustained in the independent government after decolonization.

Alternatively, this thesis hypothesizes that the ethnic and racial conflicts in Zimbabwe have destabilized the country and its post-colonial political system. This is primarily because these conflicts have intensified the racial and ethnic divisions within the country and damaged the public infrastructure. The peaceful transition to independent that Botswana underwent heightened the new government’s chances for stability and legitimacy.

Finally, the last hypothesis argues that the status of Botswana and Zimbabwe’s economies before and at independence, insulated and exposed, respectively, had an impact on their post-colonial political system. Zimbabwe’s resources had been exploited by the white settlers, at the expense of the natives, which led to racial inequalities. These economic inequalities fueled the platform of ZANU-PF when it came to power at independence. This new political system was adversarial and divisive from the beginning. In contrast, Botswana’s independent political system inherited an extremely poor and economically isolated country that
was without these harsh racial divisions. After the next chapter, which discusses the methodology of this thesis, these three hypotheses will be examined against qualitative and historic data.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this thesis is a comparative case study, using a most-similar-systems design. Botswana and Zimbabwe are the two cases to be examined, and, therefore, the state is the unit of analysis. These cases were chosen based on their relative similarities, which were outlined in the introduction. They will be analyzed based on their divergent post-colonial political systems, using the three hypotheses that the last chapter delineated. Each of the three hypotheses that the previous chapter presented will be systematically, and qualitatively, analyzed in the Chapter 5, the findings portion of this thesis. This section will present an outline of the indicators that this thesis will need in order to support, or reject, the three hypotheses.

The first hypothesis, colonialism and traditional political structures, requires numerous indicators in order to support the idea that different forms of colonial rule account for Botswana and Zimbabwe’s divergent post-colonial political systems. First, the findings must show that the forms of colonial rule in Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland are qualitatively different. Indirect rule in Bechuanaland must take on markedly different characteristics than direct rule in Southern Rhodesia. The descriptive data must indicate that, because of the weaker British presence in Bechuanaland, traditional political aspects were retained to a greater degree during colonialism than in Southern Rhodesia, where British rule was more explicitly segregationist.

In order to assess the role of traditional political institutions and culture in Botswana and Zimbabwe, the findings must compare a number of specific traditional aspects and their relative role in each colony and post-colonial system. This research will examine the role of chiefs, the
traditional legal system, and the inclusion of other, specific traditional institutions, such as the kgolta in Botswana. In doing this, in order to support the hypothesis, the qualitative data will need to show that, because of indirect rule in Bechuanaland, compared to direct rule in Southern Rhodesia, traditional political aspects were able to be sustained to a greater degree in Bechuanaland and Botswana than in Southern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. The indicators that need to be present include a greater status for chiefs, customary law and its courts, and political culture in Botswana than in Zimbabwe. If the findings show that traditional political structures played a larger, and more mediating, role in Bechuanaland and Southern Rhodesia, this will support the hypothesis. Traditional political institutions in Southern Rhodesia must show a diminishing trend. The indicators under examination include a loss of status for chiefs, customary law, and other traditional aspects.

This study will compare the role of traditional political structures in Bechuanaland and Southern Rhodesia by explicitly outlining and comparing the way in which the colonists handled and included traditional political structures in each colony. The findings must show a qualitative difference between the role of tradition in Bechuanaland and Southern Rhodesia. In Bechuanaland, chiefs must have more political power than in Southern Rhodesia, which translates into more legitimacy. Furthermore, customary law needs to be more influential in Bechuanaland than in Southern Rhodesia in order to support this hypothesis.

Finally, there must be specific indicators relating Botswana and Zimbabwe’s different forms of colonial rule to their divergent political systems, democratic and increasingly authoritarian, respectively. This means that the qualitative data must show a relationship between the greater inclusion of traditional political institutions during indirect rule in Bechuanaland and Botswana’s stable, democratic, and legitimate political system. In order for
this to be accomplished, the findings must indicate that chiefs, customary law, and kgoltas have been a positive addition to Botswana’s political system, and they act as a connection between the people, their culture and their political system. Conversely, there must also be a relationship between direct rule in Southern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe’s comparatively undemocratic political regime. In order for this to be accomplished, the inconsistency of traditional political culture in Southern Rhodesia must show to be a de-legitimating factor in Zimbabwe’s political system. In other words, the findings must show that as chiefs lost their political status, and customary law was thrown out in Southern Rhodesia, the people became alienated from their culture, and this had negative effects on Zimbabwe’s political system.

The second hypothesis, which involves racial and ethnic conflict, also requires a specific set of indicators in order to support this hypothesis. The qualitative data must show that racial and ethnic rivalries, as well as armed conflict, are much less prominent, or absent in the case of armed conflict, in Bechuanaland and Botswana. On the other hand, the indicators that are needed for Southern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe include the presence of relatively strong racial and ethnic divisions in society, as well as the presence of armed conflict. The findings must show that there are, in fact, strong ethnic and racial divisions that exist in both Southern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, which have had a divisive effect on Zimbabwe’s political system. Furthermore, the findings must show that armed conflict has had an undermining effect on Zimbabwe’s political system, as well.

In order for the indicators to support the second hypothesis, these racial and ethnic divisions in Southern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, as well as the occurrence of armed conflict, must have a decisive, negative impact on Zimbabwe’s post-colonial government. Conversely, the absence of armed conflict and strong racial/ethnic divisions must be shown to have positively
affected Botswana’s political system. The qualitative data must indicate that divisions within society undermine efforts at creating and sustaining a stable democratic government.

The third, and final, hypothesis concerns Bechuanaland and Southern Rhodesia’s relative economic status during colonialism. Important indicators that will support this hypothesis include the extent to which each colony’s economy was penetrated by the colonists, and the way in which this penetration led to divisiveness within society. The research must indicate that the British colonists’ exploited Southern Rhodesia’s economy and its resources to a much greater degree during colonialism, while Bechuanaland’s economy remained relatively ignored and insulated. Furthermore, the findings must illustrate a systematic negative connection between greater economic infiltration in Southern Rhodesia and the nature of Zimbabwe’s political system. In Botswana, the findings must indicate that the way in which Bechuanaland’s resources remained relatively untapped during colonialism had a positive influence on democratization in Botswana.

All of these indicators must be present in order to support the three hypotheses in this thesis. The descriptive data must show that colonialism, racial and ethnic conflict and economic status during colonialism all have impacts in the hypothesized direction on Botswana and Zimbabwe’s political systems. Chapter 5 will present these findings, and confirm, or disconfirm these hypotheses.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Thus far, this thesis has brought forth the research question, reviewed the existing literature on the topic, and discussed the three hypotheses that will qualitatively analyze the descriptive data in this section. The resources used for this data analysis are both primary sources and secondary scholarly resources. Furthermore, this data will be qualitatively in nature because of the difficulty in encompassing the historical depth of these two cases if a quantitative research project were used instead. Therefore, this thesis is designed to use descriptive data as a qualitative analysis.

Colonialism and Traditional Political Structures

In this section, descriptive data will be presented and analyzed for Botswana and Zimbabwe’s relative colonial experience, and each colony’s effect on the subsequent degree of inclusion of traditional political structures in the colonial government. In order for this hypothesis to be accepted, the data must show that: 1) the indirect British rule in Botswana resulted in the ability for the colonized government to include more traditional Tswana political structures than in Southern Rhodesia. Furthermore, the presence of these traditional political structures allowed for a more legitimate, peaceful and accepted government at, and after, Botswana gained its independence; and 2) The form of British colonialism in Southern Rhodesia, a system of direct rule, is the primary reason for the inclusion of less traditional Zimbabwean political structures in the colonial government. As a result, Zimbabwe’s political system at independence lacked the legitimacy that the inclusion of traditional political structures brings.
Botswana: When Bechuanaland, came under British influence in 1885, it was by invitation. Tswana leaders, seeking Commonwealth protection from aggressors to the east and west, invited the British to make Bechuanaland a Protectorate (Du Toit 1995). It is important to note that, before this point, Bechuanaland had an intricate system of political units, that, as Du Toit points out “were characterized by hierarchy and stratification, public participation and consultation, and limited consent within the given stratified social and political system” (p.21). Although the chiefs had great power, especially over the land distribution and the tribal economy, they were constricted by the powerful Tswana traditional law. Furthermore, Tswana chiefs often consulted with a male assembly, the kgolta to make decisions, although the chief had the ultimate decision-making power (Holm 1988).

From the beginning of its role as a British protectorate, Bechuanaland was ruled by a system of parallel rule, or “dual rule.” According to this method, the area known as Bechuanaland, and the Tswana societies, were being protected by the British, and, as a result, “the establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate should have no impact upon internal relations between chiefs and their subjects” (Picard 1987, p.37). In this sense, there existed two governing administrations, which, as a result, gave the Tswana chiefs a relatively greater amount of power. The constraints that the British did put on the Tswana chiefs included a hut tax that the chiefs had to collect from their villages, the inability to make war and the ending of certain offensive cultural practices, such as polygamy (Holm 1988, p.183). Overall, the protectorate was more interested in collecting taxes than getting involved in Tswana society; essentially the British view of Bechuanaland was strategic in nature (Picard 1987; Du Toit 1995). Over time, as Picard argues, the British became more eager to control Tswana politics, and this led to a bureaucratic transformation of the protectorate by its independence. As a result, at independence,
the British had established an intricate administrative state. In relation to other British colonies, however, the Bechuanaland Protectorate retained its traditional political structures and culture to a much greater degree. Part of this is because the British administration had not tapped into Botswana’s mineral wealth (Picard 1987).

In order to illustrate fully the extent to which traditional Tswana political structures remained a part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, it is necessary to describe systematically the most important traditional structures that were preserved until and after Botswana achieved independence. These structures include the dual legal system, the dual court system, the role of chiefs, the kgolta, and, finally, the preservation of certain behavioral characteristics of traditional Tswana political culture. Each of these structures and their status in both colonial and post-colonial Botswana will be delineated.

In 1909, The General Law Proclamation established a system of legal duality in Bechuanaland, although, over time, the customary law became subordinate to the Roman-Dutch law, and the British administration increasingly intervened in tribal affairs. This form of legal duality still exists in Botswana. Essentially, the legal system was divided into two groups. One part of Bechuanaland’s legal system was ruled by Roman-Dutch law, and only applied to the Europeans. The other part was ruled by Tswana customary law (Du Toit, 1995). Du Toit details in great depth the format of this legal duality:

The legal system comprises 15 “modern” courts, which apply Roman-Dutch common and statutory law in Botswana. The 15 courts consist of a number of magistrate’s courts, the High Court, and the Court of Appeal. An additional 210 “customary” courts deal with the civil and penal laws of the country. The courts are presided over by the chiefs and their representatives and headmen (p.29).
In addition to this, the customary courts were divided into four subgroups of warranted and unwarranted courts, depending on the offense. The persistence of this system of dual legality, as well as the persistence of the lekgotla, courts of law, into Botswana’s post-independence political system is an explanation for Botswana’s democratic stability (Du Toit 1995).

As mentioned above, the powerful role of chiefs in the protectorate was retained, although, over time, their status was weakened by the British administrative presence, although not the extent that Rhodesian chiefs lost their status. Since independence, the role of chiefs in Botswana has been seriously weakened, although they remain a part of the political system, in the House of Chiefs, a legislative branch of the government. In 1956, The Chieftainship Act, which went into effect just before independence, subordinated the status of chiefs to one of advising, by allocating their representation to the House of Chiefs, a part of the legislative body. By this act, the chiefs were co-opted into the newly independent government, lost many of their responsibilities and became accountable to the executive leader, Seretse Khama (Du Toit 1995, p.29). The eight major tribes in Botswana (Bakgalta, Bakwena, Bamalete, Bamangwato, Bangwaketse, Barolong, Batawana, and Batlokwa) are represented in the House of Chiefs, which consists of fifteen members: eight chiefs, four sub-chiefs, and three additional chosen members. While the role of the House of Chiefs is primarily advisory, it is important to note that the House of Chiefs adds a traditional dimension to the modern democratic political system in Botswana, which, in turn, adds legitimacy. Furthermore, the inclusion of traditional aspects has resulted in the absence of social and political cleavages revolving around traditional versus modern political structures (Du Toit 1995, p.38). According to Holm (1987), “The government is very aware of their popular status. It uses the chiefs to legitimize its new structures, to lead community
meetings where government policies are discussed, and to urge the community to go along with local development programs” (p.26).

Another important traditional political institution that was preserved throughout colonialism and into independence is the kgolta, or community meeting that is presided over by a chief or headman. Since independence the BDP has preserved, and even strengthened the use of kgoltas to ensure consensus and discussion about the implementation of governmental policies (Holm 1987, p.24). The political culture that underlies the preservation of kgoltas, and the Tswana culture itself, is one of moderation, consensus and non-violence (Holm 1987). All of these characteristics have been embraced by the BDP, and are completely compatible with democracy. The policy of British indirect rule did little to disrupt these traditional Tswana political culture compared to their policies in other colonies. Furthermore, the existence of these traditional attributes has proven to be accommodative to the modern political institutions in Botswana. As will be discussed below, these cultural and political practices are in stark contrast to the adversarial, combative ethos that guides the post-independent Zimbabwean political system.

**Zimbabwe:** Zimbabwe’s colonial history, in conjunction with the British’s incorporation of traditional political culture, is markedly different from Botswana. This section will systematically demonstrate how the different colonial history of Zimbabwe, in comparison to Botswana, is related to their divergent post-colonial political outcomes. This section will discuss and evaluate the forceful, violent and influential British colonial presence in Southern Rhodesia, as well as the subsequent exclusion of many of Zimbabwe’s traditional political structures, in comparison to Bechuanaland. Finally, this section will demonstrate the way in which direct British rule, and their subsequent lack of acceptance of many traditional political structures in
Southern Rhodesia has resulted in the lack of a stable, democratic, and legitimate political system in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

In comparison to the colonial presence in Botswana, Southern Rhodesia’s British invasion and form of colonial rule were qualitatively different. Before colonialism, the region that later became Southern Rhodesia consisted of numerous “plateau states,” which were defined by separate sociopolitical units (Du Toit 1995, p.78). In 1890, the British forcibly exerted and accomplished rule in the region. In comparison to Botswana, where Tswana leaders actually requested British presence for protection, in Southern Rhodesia, the British were uninvited, and material, not to mention imperial, motives guided them. The Southern Rhodesian State became official in 1898, and the British administered a policy of direct rule, which lies in contrast to the British policy of indirect rule in Bechuanaland. According to Terence Ranger (2001), the British administration would not recognize the democratic potentials of the pre-colonial Ndebele state, and its traditional political structures. Instead, “direct administration was to be imposed and the potential challenge from indigenous authorities was to be defused by playing the indunas off against each other” (p.33). It is obvious that this situation is markedly different from the role of traditional political culture and leaders in Bechuanaland and post-colonial Botswana. This topic will be further evaluated shortly, after discussing the consequence of the Southern Rhodesian state’s segregationist policies.

Another important distinction between the colonial presence in Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland is the racial bias in Southern Rhodesia that, as a result of direct rule, was much more detrimental than in Bechuanaland. The British social and political segregationist policies in the Southern Rhodesian State have a strong and illegitimating influence on Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political system. The Southern Rhodesian State only granted individual rights to
“civilized” men, which did not include Africans (Ranger 2001). Furthermore, numerous constitutional enactments explicitly and implicitly provided racial biases in favor of whites, including those regarding voting requirements and land ownership (Du Toit 1995).¹ These racial segregationist policies are reminiscent of the Apartheid in South Africa. Furthermore, while the Bechuanaland Protectorate was not completely non-segregationist, its colonial policy of indirect rule did not explicitly embrace the segregationist policies that were enacted in Southern Rhodesia.²

Politically, these segregationist policies had important consequences for African involvement in Southern Rhodesian political affairs. This carried over into Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political system. The Southern Rhodesian electoral system, was divided into two roles: the “A roll,” which constituted white voters, elected the vast majority of legislative representatives, and the “B roll,” which consisted of black voters, who elected a far fewer number of representatives (Du Toit 1995, p.83). Essentially, the number of African representatives, although altered over time in colonial Southern Rhodesia, “represented less than 0.3 percent of the African population of voting age and almost half of the non-African population” (Du Toit 1995, p.83).

With this said, the implications of the Southern Rhodesian State’s segregationist policies in voting, land and occupation are far-reaching. Whether explicit constitutional enactments or implicit policies, these forms of racial biases have resulted in a post-colonial government that is divisive, adversarial, and increasingly authoritarian. While Botswana’s post-colonial

¹ Pierre du Toit describes these segregationist enactments in detail. They include enactments from 1923, 1953, 1961, 1965 and 1969. The voting requirements placed literary and property restrictions on voters. Also, there were constitutional restrictions on the distance between white and black settlers, as well as the restriction of Africans in towns and cities (p.81).
² It is also important to note that the Rhodesian State restricted interracial marriage, while in Botswana, the first President, Seretse Khama, a former Batswana Chief, was interracially married to a white British settler. This interracial marriage serves as an important symbol of the more tolerant and equal society that exists in Botswana, in comparison to Zimbabwe.
government was much more tolerant, open and equal, Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political system, ruled by Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF, has consistently espoused the goal of revenge and redistribution for the actions of the white colonists. Although this behavior is almost expected of a country that, as a colony, was so violently repressed and exploited, it has resulted in an increasingly undemocratic and, equally repressive, political system in Zimbabwe. The elections in independent Botswana have been consistently peaceful, open and fair. In contrast, intolerance and intimidation has plagued Zimbabwe's elections. These phenomena cannot be separated from the fact that in colonial Southern Rhodesia, Africans were consistently denied the civil and political rights that the white settlers were afforded. Unfortunately, this intolerant political climate has not changed since Zimbabwe’s first elections.

After identifying the extensive segregationist policies of colonial Southern Rhodesia, it is imperative to discuss the way in which the Southern Rhodesian state’s legal system differs from the Bechuanaland’s system of dual legality. In Bechuanaland, Tswana customary law, as was discussed above, had an important, yet submissive role in the Protectorate’s legal system. The important observation, however, is that Tswana customary law was retained, and remained somewhat influential and legitimate throughout colonialism, and into independence.

The legal scenario in Southern Rhodesia was clearly different. In Southern Rhodesia, the British strictly imposed and enforced Roman-Dutch Law, leaving little or no room for the inclusion of customary law. Du Toit (1995) states that “this legal system had to be imposed onto the Shona and siNdebele-speaking peoples, who before colonization had their own legal systems. The way this was done provides a striking contrast with colonial Bechuanaland” (p.85). In his examination of the legal system in Southern Rhodesia, Ncube (2001) observes that, until 1937, when customary law first became recognized by the British, the legal system “completely
excluded from legal recognition all aspects of African and indigenous judicial forms for dispute resolution” (p.102). When the administration first entered what was then Mashonaland, the Cape Colony declared that government would observe and respect traditional law, yet as soon as British administration was established, the dominance of Roman-Dutch law, and the subsequent exclusion of traditional law, was enacted (Ncube 2001; Du Toit 1995).

Independent Zimbabwe retained the dominance of Roman-Dutch law in its constitution. The government, however, has attempted to revitalize and include customary law in its court system, through acts such as the Customary Law Primary Courts Act (Ncube 2001, p.107). Unfortunately, the way in which the British ignored and excluded customary law for such an extensive period has led to the weakening and alienation of customary law. This inconsistency has resulted in the post-colonial Zimbabwean government’s difficulties in reinstating customary law into the legal system. While post-colonial Botswana has retained and embraced the place of customary law, and the courts that are guided by it, in its legal system, inconsistency and exclusion characterize Rhodesia and Zimbabwe’s legal system. In Zimbabwe, customary law is struggling to regain its status in Zimbabwean society, yet this is a challenge, since it was consistently undermined and ignored during colonialism. Unlike in Botswana, the lack of respect and observance of traditional law in Southern Rhodesia has resulted in a less legitimate post-colonial judiciary. The Roman-Dutch law remains dominant, yet foreign, to the native Zimbabweans, as does the political system in general.

The final important difference between Botswana and Zimbabwe for this explanatory variable is the divergent role of chiefs in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. While the chiefs remained important leaders in colonial Bechuanaland, and retained an important status in post-colonial Botswana’s House of Chiefs, the status of chiefs in Southern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe
has been greatly marginalized. This analysis will attempt to show how the legitimacy of chiefs in Botswana, compared to the illegitimacy of chiefs in Zimbabwe has contributed to their respective post-colonial political systems.

Du Toit (1995) argues that “the imposition of colonial rule through military conquest in 1893 and 1896 completely destroyed the traditional Ndebele political structure” (p.85).

Arguably the most important and permeable aspect of this political culture is the role of chiefs as traditional rulers for the Ndebele and Shona sociopolitical units. The marginalized and submissive role that the chiefs did have in colonial Rhodesia was externally altered and imposed by the British administration, and subsequently much less legitimate. Essentially, the role of chiefs under British colonial rule was completely arbitrary and selective; as a result, they were viewed as “puppets” of the administration, instead of respected as the powerful leaders that they once were (Du Toit 1995). The original system of chieftaincy had been uprooted and restructured to fit the British’s political ideals. This image contrasts sharply with the situation in colonial Bechuanaland, where the system of indirect rule retained the role of chiefs, although they were somewhat weakened in their political powers. While the role of chiefs was merged into the colonial government in Bechuanaland, in Southern Rhodesia, the role of chiefs was abolished and then reinvented.

Furthermore, as Du Toit argues:

The position of the chiefs as figures of authority within the Rhodesian state was precarious. They were the meeting point of two sets of rules of social control, each a potential source of authority. As chiefs, they were part of, in Matabeleland, an entirely new fabricated system of imposed “traditional” authority. The network of norms, codes, rules and mythology compromising the traditional network of social control from which they drew their authority was virtually dismantled in the process of conquest (p.87).
In the late 1990’s, ruling leader Robert Mugabe pledged to give more power an authority to the chiefs (Ranger 2001). Unfortunately, given the inconsistent role of chiefs during colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe, the chance that they will regain their status is minimal, especially considering the imposing and authoritarian role of the ruling ZANU-PF.

The dissimilar role of chiefs in colonial Southern Rhodesia and colonial Bechuanaland has important implications for this study. Since chiefs were a vital part of the traditional authority structure in both countries, their stronger status as political leaders in colonial Bechuanaland is argued to have an enormous legitimating effect for it is the colonial and post-colonial political system. Conversely, the inconsistent role of chiefs in Southern Rhodesia and post-colonial Zimbabwe adds to the instability of its political system. This thesis argues that the traditional political structures of pre-colonial African states are not at all antithetical to democracy. It follows that their preservation should add to the post-colonial political systems and their efforts at democratization. In Botswana, the British colonial policy of indirect rule allowed for the inclusion of customary law in the legal system, the continuation of chiefs as political figures, as well as the preservation of other forms of traditional Tswana political culture, such as kgoltas. The inclusion of all of these traditional political structures throughout and after colonialism has led to a more peaceful democratic transition, as well as the establishment of a “hybrid” form of democracy, which fuses modernity with tradition. This innovative form of political system is more legitimate and understandable to the native Batswana. In comparison to this, the Southern Rhodesian State was marked by racial biases, and the complete restructuring of traditional authority structures. Chiefs were appointed arbitrarily and their role as leaders was greatly weakened. Roman-Dutch law was dominant, and any attempts at including customary law were feeble, at best. The British colonial policies were inconsistent, illegitimate and
divisive, and these political traits carried over into the independent political system of Zimbabwe. Table 5a summarizes the finding of this chapter.

**Table 5.a Summary of Differences in Colonialism.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLONIAL POLICIES</th>
<th>BOTSWANA</th>
<th>ZIMBABWE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form of Colonial Rule</td>
<td>Indirect Rule by British</td>
<td>Direct Rule by British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Legal Duality between Customary Law and Roman-Dutch Law</td>
<td>Dominance of Roman-Dutch Law and exclusion of Customary Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>Dual Court System using both Roman-Dutch Law and Customary Law</td>
<td>Court System dominated by Roman-Dutch Law; Inconsistent policies by the Rhodesian government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Chiefs</td>
<td>Retained role as political leaders, although somewhat diminished; House of Chiefs</td>
<td>Status of chiefs greatly diminished; viewed as illegitimate “puppets” of colonial state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segregationist Policies</td>
<td>Few and implicit; Physical segregation primarily the result of indirect rule.</td>
<td>Explicit and implicit constitutional segregationist policies that resemble South Africa’s Apartheid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Colonial Political System</td>
<td>Democratic, open and fair political climate</td>
<td>Undemocratic, divisive and adversarial political climate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The goal of this section has been to identify the divergent forms of colonialism, and the colonists’ subsequent degree of inclusion of traditional political structures in their administration, as well as the effect of these divergent colonial policies on the post-colonial political systems in Botswana and Zimbabwe. This thesis hypothesizes that divergent forms of colonial governance have a powerful effect on Botswana and Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political outcomes. The descriptive data in this section has supported this hypothesis. In the next section, the first alternative hypothesis, the role of Southern Rhodesia’s liberation struggle, as well as Zimbabwe’s civil war between the two primary ethnicities, will be examined. The underlying argument in this hypothesis is, of course, that ethnic and racial divisions that were present in Southern Rhodesia, as well as independent Zimbabwe, have an important impact on Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political system. Conversely, the lack of strong ethnic and racial tensions in Bechuanaland and Botswana has been an integral ingredient to its tolerant political system.
Racial/Ethnic Divisions and Armed Conflict

This hypothesis concerns the absence or presence of ethnic and racial conflict in Botswana and Zimbabwe. Underlying this argument is the way in which racial and ethnic divisions within Zimbabwe have fueled the armed conflicts that have occurred there, namely the liberation struggle, between the white minority and black majority, and the Second Chimurenga, which was the armed conflict between the Shonas and the Ndebeles, the two largest ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. This section will show that these conflicts, and the underlying divisions behind them, had a negative and divisive effect on Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political system.

First, however, Botswana’s peaceful transition to independence, and its relatively amicable relationship with the British, along with a stated platform of developing a non-racial and non-ethnic state, will be examined. This evaluation will serve to contrast the violent liberation struggle for independence in Zimbabwe, as well as the ethnic divisions and conflicts that ensued.

**Botswana:** Botswana achieved a relatively peaceful transition to independence in 1966, during which there existed an accommodative relationship between the new government and the British administration. The newly elected party, the BDP, headed by Seretse Khama, espoused an ideology that was characterized by tolerance, equality and democracy. Furthermore, the government adhered to a strict moral code of developing a non-racial and non-ethnic society. The first part of this section will describe Botswana’s transition to independence, highlighting the ease with which this was achieved, in comparison to most of colonial Africa. Next, this peaceful transition will be connected to the stable post-colonial political system that Botswana established, and has successfully sustained. This will provide a stark contrast to the situation in Zimbabwe.
The first democratic elections in Botswana took place in 1965, and were willed by the colonial government, who had begun making plans for self-rule in 1963 (Holm 1988, p.184). However, it is important to note that the British had made little or no effort to promote democracy before the first elections took place, and the only native representation during colonialism was from the chiefs from the major Tswana tribes. Elective democratic procedures were, therefore, completely new to the native Batswana. Holm (1988) comments on the “rather extraordinary inertness of political action” before and at independence by citing two reasons for the absence of a mobilized “vanguard group”. He argues that “[f]irst, the chiefs did not hesitate to speak for nationalist objectives. Thus, it was difficult for potential nationalist politicians to find an issue with which to launch a movement. Second, there were few economic opportunities in Botswana for those who sought jobs outside the traditional structure” (p.184). Motivated by economic interests, educated elites often traveled to South Africa, because of the lack of job opportunities. Furthermore, the more rural populations were not persuaded into action by efforts to fight against racist colonial interests largely because they continued to be ruled, for the most part, by chiefs (Holm 1988, p.185).

Another important factor in Botswana’s peaceful transition to independence is the role of Seretse Khama and his party, the BDP, which became, and continues to be, the ruling party in Botswana’s government. Khama, the son of a chief, had been exiled and disallowed to become a chief because he married a white woman. After being education in South Africa, and then Oxford, Khama returned to Botswana, created the BDP, and gained the backing of many important and diverse, groups. He appealed to the cattle farmers, the British administration, and the educated elite (Holm 1988; Henderson 1985). Henderson describes the way in which Khama embraced ideals such as “racial harmony,” as well as “discussion and negotiation as strategies
for the resolution of conflicts of interest” (p.32). This contrasts sharply with the divisive politics that characterized the quest for independence in Zimbabwe.

The BDP, and its moderate nature, became powerful because of its appeal to several groups, races and ethnicities. Furthermore, according to Samatar (1999) “the BDP leaders were conscious of the risks involved in denying the traditional group a meaningful role. The latter commanded a significant following among the population that provided government an electoral base” (p.58). In addition, the backing of the British administration aided the BDP in becoming the ruling party in 1965, whereas the other, more radical parties had less support and were viewed as less legitimate than the BDP (Henderson 1985). The BPP, Bechuanaland’s People Party, was viewed as being to antagonistic, even though, as the first party, it had a lot of bearing on the British decision to grant independence to Botswana (Samatar 1999). A constitution was created after the first elections, and Botswana soon became fully independent in 1966. This process was dramatically different from that of numerous other African colonies.

Botswana, unlike Zimbabwe, has been devoid of ethnic conflict, and did not have an armed struggle for independence. The absence of these ethnic and racial conflicts, and Botswana’s peaceful transition to independence, are important factors in the post-colonial political system that Botswana has established. Most importantly, the newly elected BDP, and Prime Minister Seretse Khama, had a relatively amicable and much more accommodative relationship with the white minority. The BDP’s emphasis on moderation and negotiation also helped in this transitional process. After independence was granted, there was not as much of an adversarial political climate, which was the case with Zimbabwe. It is easy to see how a stable transition to independence could result in a stable political system, especially given the ruling party’s ideological stance. Before fully analyzing this connection, Zimbabwe’s struggle for
independence, as well as the ethnic conflict between the Shonas and the Ndebes will be examined, in the context of its political outcome.

However, it is important to note that, after achieving independence, Botswana was not devoid of external influence. The presence of de Beers, an important economic influence, and the growth of diamond mining has proved to add both economic and political stability to Botswana, which was an incredibly poor nation at independence. The diamond trade is certainly worth mentioning, because it has made Botswana a relatively rich nation, on a continent of poverty. The influence of de Beers in Botswana’s economy is, therefore, important, in discussing its post-independent political system.

**Zimbabwe:** Zimbabwe’s independence is markedly different from Botswana’s calm transition. It was finally achieved in 1980, after a long struggle, pitting the black majority against the white minority. This is, however, not the only division in Zimbabwe’s society. The ethnic division between the Shona majority and Ndebele minority also resulted in an armed struggle after independence was granted. These occurrences, as this section will argue, are related to the adversarial, divisive political outcome that this thesis is studying. This section will first examine the liberation struggle that led to independence, and then it will address the ethnic conflict between the Shonas and the Ndebeles. Finally, the impact of these divisions on Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political system will be examined.

The roots of the liberation struggle for majority rule in Southern Rhodesia begin in the late 1950s. It is also important to note that, while the Shona/Ndebele divide had been stifled by the colonists, the nationalist movement was aware of this potential friction, and “effort was made to achieve regional or ethnic balance between the Ndebele and the Shona” (Sithole 1988, p.223).
In 1963, ZANU was formed, after a group split from the ZAPU nationalist party. According to Sithole (1988), this split has had far-reaching consequences for Zimbabwean politics:

First, the nationalist movement would remain divided throughout the liberation struggle and after on basically ZAPU-ZANU lines. Second, while it did not take one clearly Ndebele-Shona tribal lines, the split latter degenerated to that, particularly since the 1970s, when intra-ZAPU and intra-ZANU subethnicity was politicized… Violent methods and tactics were used by the ZAPU to liquidate ZANU, and the latter used similar tactics to survive. Since then, the use of violence against opposition has become part of the Zimbabwean political culture (p.224).

Rotberg (2002) concurs with Sithole’s assertion, arguing that Mugabe’s decision to break from Nkomo, the ZAPU leader, in 1963 “essentially divided Zimbabwe’s nationalist endeavor” (p.52).

In addition to this, the split resulted in armed conflicts in most of Southern Rhodesia’s major cities. Sithole’s argument has direct implications for this hypothesis, and, this will be considered further after briefly delineating the liberation struggle. It is important to note the extent of divisiveness that existed in Southern Rhodesian politics during the liberation struggle.

Not only is there a racial divide between the black majority and white minority, but there is an ethnic divide that come to fruition during, and after, the liberation struggle. Table 5c show a breakdown of the major ethnicities in Zimbabwe.

**Table 5c Ethnic Makeup of Zimbabwe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHNIC GROUP</th>
<th>% OF POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHONA:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karanga</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zesuru</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manyika</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korekore</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rozwi</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndau</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NDEBELE:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndebele</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalanga</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1966, the “Battle of Sinoia” marked the beginning of armed conflict between the nationalists and the Southern Rhodesian State. By the mid-1970s, the liberation struggle had become much more powerful, and there were specific war zones for each faction. ZANLA, ZANU’s military wing, with Robert Mugabe as their leader, was fighting in the northeast, and ZIPRA, ZAPU’s military wing, was fighting in the northwest party of Southern Rhodesia (Du Toit 1995, p.103). The fighting continued until 1979, when the Lancaster House Agreement granted Zimbabwe full independence in 1980. After the first elections, Robert Mugabe became the national leader, as head of the ZANU-PF party.

Du Toit (1995) refers to the “hegemonic contest” between the nationalist forces and the Southern Rhodesian state as a civil war, because “[e]ach of the rival military forces with its political organization drew support and manpower from specific segments of the population, sought compliance from its own support base, and tried to eliminate compliance with the opponent’s laws, rules, and policies” (p.107-8). It is questionable whether this war can be categorized as a civil war, especially since the conflict between the Shonas and Ndebeles is more characteristic of a civil war. The liberation struggle does have major implications for the political outcome in post-colonial Zimbabwe. With each side trying to gain control, the nationalists created “liberated zones,” resulting in a complete breakdown of state structures, and the Southern Rhodesian state increasingly attempted to displace the insurgents into rural areas (Du Toit 1995, p.109). This social breakdown resulted in major infrastructure complications.

Unlike in Botswana, none of Rhodesia’s civil institutions transcended the racial divide in the country (Du Toit 1995). With Botswana’s peaceful transition to independence, institutions were easily transferred to the new ruling party, while in Zimbabwe, the long struggle for independence weakened state institutions and further divided those that remained intact.
Furthermore, as is argued by Du Toit (1995) and Sithole (1988), the liberation war brought to surface ethnic tensions that had been previously stifled by the Southern Rhodesian state, which led to further weakening civil and political institutions. These ethnic and racial divisions, which have been primarily absent in Botswana politics, can be connected to the divisive political climate that characterizes Zimbabwean politics.

Sithole (1988) points out that, while some authors argue that Shona-Ndebele conflict after independence is the result of the settler regime instigating it, the ethnic division between the Shonas and the Ndebeles predates colonialism, and the ZANU-ZAPU split was not entirely surprising (p.236). Now, ZAPU is a predominately Ndebele party, and, since independence, there has been continued ethnic conflict in Matabeleland, where the Shona-dominated ZANU was never able to foster much support (p.237). This points to the idea that ethnic conflict and division is politicized in Zimbabwe. As a result, democracy and tolerance have become superceded by ethnic rivalry and divisiveness. The elections since independence exemplify these ethnic divisions, with Matabeleland overwhelmingly supporting ZAPU-PF, and the Shona-speaking areas overwhelmingly supporting ZANU-PF (Sithole 1988, p.237). Furthermore, there is interethnic fighting within these two major ethnicities, which only makes this divisive situation more complex and intricate.

How do these divisions specifically relate to Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political system? The situation lies in stark contrast to that of Botswana, which, as was previously discussed, has been committed to a non-racial, non-ethnic political ethos. Zimbabwe’s political system, on the other hand, can be characterized as having a racially and ethnically divided political ethos. Furthermore, continued armed conflict and volatility have strong negative implications for democratic stability in Zimbabwe.
Sithole examines in detail the way in which ethnic rivalries have been a strain on democracy in Zimbabwe since independence. In discussing this, he states that “it is the central thesis of this chapter that, ultimately, democracy in Zimbabwe depends largely on the resolution of the conflict in Matabeleland” (p.238). In this view, the repressive and increasingly authoritarian nature of the Zimbabwean government is aimed at stifling dissidents. This poses a threat to democracy. The protracted struggle in Matabeleland breeds a repressive government that escalates as the conflict continues. Over time, as Freedom House and Polity IV numbers show, this authoritarian trend has grown, further compromising the democratic ideals for which the liberation struggle was fought. In reality, there has been consistency between the repressive nature of the colonial and post-colonial regimes in Zimbabwe (Waiter 1984). The ethnic, and racial, divisions, and subsequent armed conflicts, that exist in Zimbabwe, and are absent in Botswana, is a strong indicator for the difference in their post-colonial political outcomes.

The armed conflicts that have occurred in Zimbabwe have done nothing but harm, destroy and weaken the public infrastructure. As Sithole (1988) points out, the liberation struggle has given “rise to the politics of intimidation and fear” (p.248). Furthermore, continued conflict in Matabeleland has resulted in the politicization of ethnic divisions, on top of the racial divisions that already exist. ZANU-PF, headed by Robert Mugabe, was elected to head the newly independent government at independence, and has retained its power since the first elections. It is important to note, however, that ZANU, after splitting from ZAPU in 1963, and the subsequent creation of FROLIZE, another nationalist party, created an ethnic division between the major parties. This division has been sustained since independence. Apart from the devastating side effects that armed conflict has alone, the racial and ethnic divisions within
Zimbabwe has extremely negative effects on its political system. ZANU-PF’s governance has become increasingly authoritarian and increasingly less tolerant towards political opposition.

This hypothesis argues that the ethnic and racial divides, and the armed conflict that stems from them, has had extremely negative consequences on Zimbabwe’s political system. Conversely, the lack of these harsh divisions and armed conflict has led to a relatively peaceful transition to independence in Botswana. The findings in this section seem to support this hypothesis. Table 5d summarizes these findings. The next section will examine the findings for the final hypothesis, economic status during colonialism, and then give concluding remarks for this section.

**Table 5.c Summary of Differences in Ethnic and Racial Conflict**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHNIC/RACIAL DIVISION AND ARMED CONFLICT</th>
<th>BOTSWANA</th>
<th>ZIMBABWE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic/Racial Division</td>
<td>Little division; BDP platform of non-racial and non-ethnic society</td>
<td>Conflict between Shonas and Ndebeles; History of harsh colonial segregationist policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Peaceful Transition</td>
<td>Liberation Struggle (1972-1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Conflict</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Protracted conflict in Matabeleland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Climate After Independence</td>
<td>Moderate; Accommodative</td>
<td>Adversarial; Divisive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economic Status during Colonialism**

Botswana and Zimbabwe’s relative economic situations during colonialism were markedly different, and this can be a reason behind the extremely different post-colonial political outcomes that each country has experienced. It is important to note, however, that this hypothesis may not have as much explanatory power as the previous two, yet, it serves as a strong addition to the other hypotheses in this thesis. This section will focus on the economic status of Botswana and Zimbabwe primarily during colonialism, although their relative post-colonial economic situations will be discussed, as well. This paper is not concerned with the
relationship between democracy and economic development after decolonization. Rather, it seeks to identify a potential relationship between each country’s colonial economic situation and their post-colonial political systems. This is an important distinction.

Botswana’s economy remained relatively insulated during colonialism. Diamond reserves were not discovered until after independence, in the early 1970s (Holm 1987). Zimbabwe’s economy, on the other hand, was exploited by the British to a much greater degree, and, at independence, its economy was much more mature than Botswana’s was at independence. This section will attempt to show that the different ways in which the British invested in, and exploited Botswana and Zimbabwe’s relative economies has had an impact on their subsequent forms of governance.

**Botswana:** At Botswana’s independence, it had one of the poorest economies in the world. At this time, “[o]ver half of its government budget was financed by grants from Great Britain, about two-thirds of its workers had jobs in South Africa, and drought had killed about a third of its total cattle herd, which was Botswana’s only significant asset other than its extraordinary people” (Lewis 1993, p.13). This was characteristic of Botswana’s economy during colonialism. It was largely underdeveloped, dependent on cattle exports to Britain and South Africa, and the majority of workers migrated to South Africa for jobs, where labor was grossly exploited. Since the British had been invited to make Bechuanaland a protectorate for security purposes, they had less of an economic interest in Botswana’s resources, except in terms of labor for South Africa. At independence, Botswana did not inherit the extremely unequal, and exploitative, relatively developed economy that independent Zimbabwe inherited.

According to Morrison (1993), late colonial economic crisis, between 1956 and 1966, have a major impact on the post-colonial institutions in Botswana. In 1956, there was a “sudden
collapse of regional cattle markets,” and since cattle was Botswana’s primary commodity at the time, this was a time of great uncertainty (p.27). This occurrence left Botswana elites doubtful about the potential of Botswana’s soon-to-be independent economy. As Morrison (1993) points out, this crisis produced two important patterns of relations that have a direct impact on Botswana’s post-colonial politics:

(1) a distinct *ethos of state action*: the primacy of commercial criteria, a high value placed upon compromise, stability, security, and the systematic accommodation of competing interests; and (2) durable *patterns of elite interaction* linking producers, state authorities, and external interests (p.27).

An underlying argument of this is that these state authorities and elite groups were allowed to interact in this nationalist fashion because of the weaker colonial economic penetration in Botswana. Furthermore, as Morrison (1993) points out, Botswana’s advance toward independence coincided with this economic crisis, and, as a result, the colonists’ pursued more nationalistic, and accommodative, interests towards Botswana’s economic independence (p.28). Botswana’s economy was relatively insulated, and less entwined with direct British economic interests, and, as a result, a certain economic dialectic was able to take hold between the colonists and elites that would benefit Botswana’s post-colonial government. In addition, the BDP appealed across racial segments and to cattle owners, which “successfully merged diverse aspirations” (Morrison 1993, p.29).

Unlike in Zimbabwe, the colonial government and, soon-to-be leaders of Botswana had coinciding interests about the preservation of the cattle-dependent economy. The CDC, Commonwealth Development Corporation, also had a positive influence on this development as its status became more dependent on nationalist goals, dictated by Seretse Khama and the BDP (Morrison 1993).
While colonial rule in Botswana was minimal, during the crisis between 1955 and 1966, colonial officials sought “an increasingly higher profile in the management of the political economy” (Morrison 1993, p.35). This was always the case in Zimbabwe, but since this occurred just prior to independence in Botswana, this “developmental activism,” as Morrison puts it, was set against a former policy of harsh neglect. As a result, when the colonists sought to have a stronger role in Bechuanaland’s economy, “since it lacked anything approaching an established form of governance, it was forced by its history to accumulate power by eliciting the cooperation of entrenched interests and by working through established elite forums, however formal or informal” (p.36).

Therefore, the late desire for the British colonists to protect their cattle interests in Bechuanaland coincided with Bechuanaland’s transition to independence, forcing the British to solicit nationalist interests into its agenda. Politically, this has many implications for Botswana’s independent political system, which is characterized by accommodation and negotiation, as well. Unlike in Zimbabwe, Botswana’s economy, with the exception of the cattle industry, was only mildly penetrated by the colonial government, until there was a crisis, and they were forced to intervene.

Another important aspect of Bechuanaland’s economy that can be connected to Botswana’s successful political outcome concerns the role that cattle accumulators played in colonial Bechuanaland. While the colonists largely ignored most sectors of Bechuanaland’s economy, they did promote “a specific form of capitalist development which favoured the growth of a class of cattle accumulators in various parts of Bechuanaland” (Tsie 1995, p.601). As the majority of this group originated from the traditional aristocracy and intellectual groups, they had a more influential role over the economic and political affairs of the protectorate. This
influence and power was sustained until independence, when the cattle owners formed an integral part of the BDP. Tsie (1995) attributes Botswana’s liberal democracy to the powerful position of cattle interests within the political arena (p.602). These class forces shaped the BDP’s economic platform at independence. It is also important to note that the British administration’s relative economic neglect in Bechuanaland had a strong influence on the cattle owner’s powerful and privileged position during and after colonialism.

Essentially, this section argues that Botswana’s economic status during colonialism had an important impact on its post-colonial system of governance because the British’s economic neglect allowed for the independent government to have more control over Botswana’s economic development. At independence, Botswana’s economic mainstay, cattle, was the only one in which the British had stake. Furthermore, the cattle crisis that occurred prior to independence forced the colonists to seek consensus on alleviating this economic problem, since the British had been so neglectful before this point. This policy of consensus and negotiation remained intact into independence. Furthermore, the powerful position of the cattle owners has transcended into an influential political group. Zimbabwe’s economic scenario during independence is drastically different from that of Botswana.

**Zimbabwe:** Southern Rhodesia’s economic status during colonialism differs greatly from the economic neglect that characterizes the British rule in Bechuanaland. There can certainly be a case made that Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political system is related to its economic decline, including the subsequent IMF-dictated Structural Adjustment Programs, which have not been successful in alleviating poverty. It is difficult to establish causality in this case, and, for the purposes of this research, this hypothesis will not specifically examine Zimbabwe’s post-colonial economic situation, because this has been done extensively, and it
doing this would constitute a separate study in itself. Instead, this hypothesis aims at establishing a connection between the ways in which the colonists’ manipulated Southern Rhodesia’s economy, and how this affected Zimbabwe’s post-colonial political system.

While the British entered what became Bechuanaland by request, the BSAC were initially interested in occupying the territory of Southern Rhodesia due to its mining potential. However, Southern Rhodesia’s economic mainstays developed into primarily agriculture and manufacturing, and, it was from these sectors that economic prosperity occurred, while mining constituted the third largest enterprise (Du Toit 1995, p.117). After the beginning of the liberation struggle, there was an economic decline, which, as Du Toit points out “froze or exacerbated the inherited inequalities created through decades of racially biased, unequal development” (p.117).

At independence, Zimbabwe’s economy differed greatly from that of Botswana, which constituted one of the poorest in the world. According to Du Toit (1995) “the Rhodesian legacy to the new state builders was a relatively complex and resilient economy” (p.117). Southern Rhodesia experienced economic prosperity during, and immediately after, colonialism. After Zimbabwe gained independence drought and world recession had a negative impact on its economy. However, as Sithole (1988) points out, the “economic prosperity of the days of federation did not lead to the liberalization/democratization of an essentially racial, authoritarian settler rule; it led, instead to a right-wing trend. Even intrawhite democracy gave in to Southern Rhodesia Front hegemony and authoritarianism within the white community…” (p.246). The segregationist policies of the colonial government resulted in harsh racial inequities, which were carried over into independence.

Another important distinguishing factor between Zimbabwe and Botswana is the way in which, as Sithole (1988) points out, the private sector is isolated from the political arena in
Zimbabwe. It was pointed out above that the role that cattle owners play in merging politics and economic interests is vital to its political system. The opposite is true in Zimbabwe. The wealthy Zimbabweans are not involved in politics, as they view the private sector to have more status (p.247).

The land issue has been one of constant debate in post-colonial Zimbabwean politics. Before and after independence, the state and its people were dependent primarily on a very small number of white commercial farmers who were responsible for producing the majority of food to feed the population (Du Toit 1995, p.118). At independence, “97 per cent of the population owned 45 million acres of land. The rest of the land, some 42 million acres, was owned by just 3 per cent of the population under the watchful eye of the Lancaster House Agreement, which gave total protection to private land ownership” (Salih 2001, p.154). Since independence, ZANU-PF’s government has enacted numerous pieces of legislation designed for land resettlement and redistribution. During colonialism, large-scale commercial white farmers displaced indigenous peoples, and this has remained a point of contention in the post-colonial Zimbabwean political system. The white settlers’ economic motives and their uneven development of large-scale commercial farming interests has left an inequitable, and racially divided mark on Zimbabwe’s economy. Land alienation is the result of racially dictated economic interests, and these have scarred Zimbabwe.

The way in which British colonial rule forced unfamiliar liberal economic institutions on the indigenous population resulted in a political climate of uncertainty, anger and distrust towards the white minority. This is primarily because the resources and labor of Southern Rhodesia had been extensively exploited by the British, in order to sustain uneven economic growth and prosperity. Unfortunately, the hallmark left by these economic endeavors has been a
negative one, only adding to the divisive political climate that characterizes independent Zimbabwe. Vickery (2001) describes the Southern Rhodesian workforce in detail, stating that

Capital had reason to maintain the segmentation and the ideology and gained several things thereby: a divided working class, and army of white workplace disciplinarians and the threat to alter rations and displace one segment or the other. Whites, vulnerable as the segment more likely to be displaced, had reason to defend themselves behind job colour bars and even to justify exploitation colour bars – leading to cheap black labour- which makes industries viable and thus able to provide white jobs at all (p.128).

As Vickery points out, it is hardly surprising that suspicion and adversary was characterized the relationship between which and black workers. Furthermore, it is not possible to separate economic and political struggles during colonialism, as they are interactive (Vickery 2001, p.139). These struggles continued until and after independence in Zimbabwe.

Another important feature of the Southern Rhodesian economy was its dependence of foreign capital investment, especially from South Africa, into industrial development, which was not the case with Bechuanaland’s economy. At independence, “South African capital assumed an increasingly large component of the two-thirds foreign ownership of Zimbabwe’s economy” (Du Toit 1995, p.118). Southern Rhodesia’s modern economy also was exposed to international economic sanctions after 1965, which left detrimental economic impacts that continued after Zimbabwe’s independence. Before independence, the Southern Rhodesian economy began experiencing a technological decline, and investment dramatically declined (Du Toit 1995). The effects of these negative economic occurrences were even harsher after independence.

The way in which the Southern Rhodesian state manipulated the economy to benefit the white minority left a lasting, negative impact on the post-colonial political system in Zimbabwe. ZANU-PF ran under the “banner of socialism,” calling for redistribution, state control and economic restructuring (Du Toit 1995, p.199). While these socialist ideals were never realized,
this platform was dictated by years of economic abuse by the whites to the indigenous population.

Unlike in Botswana, where there was economic neglect, although the British did make an effort to relieve agricultural crisis as independence approached, the Southern Rhodesian state’s economic development was harshly uneven. At independence, the Zimbabwean economy was much less insulated than that of Botswana, and, as the result of technological decline and lowered foreign capital investment, the independent government had its hands full. While the BDP worked with several groups in society, the whites, the cattle owners, the peasants, etc., to build its economy from the bottom up, ZANU-PF decided on a completely new path of land redistribution and retribution for white-led inequalities. These differences characterize the divergent political systems that exist in Botswana and Zimbabwe: one is open, accommodative and comprehensive, and the other is divisive, authoritarian and adversarial.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the divergent post-colonial political systems in Botswana and Zimbabwe. While Botswana has sustained a stable, democratic political system since independence, Zimbabwe’s political regime has become increasingly authoritarian and unstable. In seeking to identify the explanatory variables behind these contrasting political systems, this research has identified three hypotheses, and analyzed their relationship to the dependent variable, post-colonial political system. All three hypotheses, colonialism and traditional political structures, racial/ethnic divisions and armed conflict, and economic status during colonialism have proved to be influential in explaining Botswana and Zimbabwe’s divergent post-colonial political systems.

The qualitative data shows that there is an important difference between indirect rule in Bechuanaland and direct rule in Southern Rhodesia. This difference allowed for greater inclusion of traditional Tswana political institutions in Bechuanaland’s government, such as a dual legal system, the preservation of kgolotas, and a sustained role for chiefs as political figures. All of these aspects have also been shown to legitimize Botswana’s post-colonial political system.

Direct rule in Southern Rhodesia resulted in policies of inconsistency concerning the inclusion of traditional political structures. While chiefs remained in government, their political powers were greatly marginalized by the British, Roman-Dutch law took precedence over customary law, and racial segregation characterized the colonial political system. The inclusion
of traditional political aspects into Southern Rhodesia’s political system was inconsistent. Furthermore, the racial segregationist policies of the British undermined the chances for democracy and stability during and after decolonization.

The second hypothesis that this study presented and analyzed concerns the role of ethnic and racial conflict in post-colonial politics. It was hypothesized that the absence of armed conflict and strong racial and ethnic divisions has benefited Botswana’s transition to independence and its post-colonial political system. The qualitative data has shown that the political climate at Botswana’s independence was accommodative and peaceful. There was no liberation struggle in Bechuanaland. Its transition to independence in 1966 was peaceful. In contrast to this, the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe was violent and prolonged. It brought to fruition racial and ethnic tensions that had been stifled during colonial rule. Furthermore, after achieving independence, prolonged conflict between the Shonas and the Ndebeles has politicized the ethnic divisions that exist in Zimbabwe. These conflicts resulted in a divisive and adversarial post-colonial political environment in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, one factor relating to the increasingly authoritarian nature of Zimbabwe’s leadership pertains to the desire to stifle ethnic rivalries and tensions, instead of including an accommodating them.

Finally, the last hypothesis that this study examined concerns the role of colonial economic exploitation in Botswana and Zimbabwe. It was hypothesized that Bechuanaland’s relatively insulated economy had a positive influence on its post-colonial political system, while in Southern Rhodesia, strong economic exploitation and modernization efforts resulted in a more divisive and unequal economic status at independence. Zimbabwe’s government was forced to inherit a relatively modern, yet disparate economy, which resulted in adversarial patterns of political relations. While alone, this hypothesis has little explanatory power, in conjunction with
the other two hypotheses, these powerful explanations can identify reasons for the divergence in Botswana and Zimbabwe’s political systems.

Overall, the type of colonialism that a country experienced provides a strong indicator for its post-colonial political outcome. This is the basic conclusion of this study. As this thesis demonstrated, the impacts of direct colonial rule and indirect colonial rule are drastically different. While the devastating effects of colonialism cannot be erased or changed, an in-depth study of the political consequences of this imperial process is important, nonetheless. An underlying argument of this thesis has been that certain traditional political structures are conducive, and beneficial, to democratization in Africa. While colonialism completely destroyed or rearranged many of these structures, the fact that they have been retained to a relatively greater degree in Botswana is an explanation for its political stability, while certainly not the only one. In addition to this, democratization in Africa should not be dictated by the Western, liberal model, which is not adaptable to this region, and is, perhaps, why it has failed in many countries. Botswana’s political hybrid of tradition and modernity, in comparison with Zimbabwe’s increasingly undemocratic trends, has provided an opportunity to compare these divergent political systems, especially with respect to their different colonial histories.

This research has brought to light the role of traditional political structures in democratization. As many developing countries struggle to sustain stable political systems by adopting a purely Western model of democracy, the pure successes are rare. Further research needs to be done on fostering organic democracy, instead of externally imposed, top-down democracy. In addition to this, it is impossible to ignore the forces of economic globalization, which consistently act to hinder democratization in developing countries. How can a developing political system achieve stability when the global economic order undermines it? This question
specifically applies to the situation in Zimbabwe, as well as many other developing countries that have, since colonialism, been thrown into the uneven trade regime.

In sum, while colonialism has ended, its negative political and economic effects linger. This analysis has provided an opportunity to examine systematically these different models of colonialism and political development. As stated before, while the effects of colonialism cannot be erased, these models can provide further insight into the successes and failing of a country’s post-colonial political system.
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