

Regime Survival Strategies in Zimbabwe in the 21st Century

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Abstract

Zimbabwe at the turn of the new millennium has received widespread condemnation particularly with the implementation of the controversial land reform and such criticisms and attacks have threatened the existence of the regime, as such the regime had to employ various strategies to ensure its survival in an anarchical environment. The image portrayed abroad has been tattered as some of the survival strategies the regime used were followed by reports of violence, instability and abandonment of the rule of law, which created a serious challenge to modern developments on democracy and human rights. As a result Zimbabwe lost many friends especially from the West and /or West controlled institutions through either suspension from IMF and Commonwealth. The US and the EU has applied targeted sanctions. From such a stand point this paper therefore seeks to analyse the Regime survival strategies in Zimbabwe in the 21st century.

Keywords: ZANU PF, BACOSI, Regime, MDC T, Despotism, Democracy

Introduction

The core business of every state is to survive in a competitive and anarchical political environment and hence in a bid to survive in this environment Zimbabwe has experienced one of its worst crisis since independence in 1980, this crisis threatened the existence of the ruling regime in Zimbabwe as well as Zimbabwe as a state.

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It is also worth noting that the crisis in Zimbabwe led to deterioration of the political, economic, and social fabric in the country. The former then led Zimbabwe into the formation of the Inclusive Government in September 2008 between the two major political parties in Zimbabwe as a means of saving the state from total collapse and this has marked a new political dispensation in Zimbabwean politics.

The threats which endangered the survival of the ruling regime in Zimbabwe in the 21st have been largely been blamed on the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) by the ZANU PF regime ,which has been vehemently accused it for propelling Western interests of the British, minority white commercial farmers .It is however an undeniable fact of truth that the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change in September 1999 ushered in a formidable challenge to the previous unchallenged ZANU-PF political dominance .This created a sense of panic within the ruling party ZANU-PF which resulted in ruthless efforts and strategies to destroy the opposition. Such strategies included widespread use of violence in a bid to survive as a regime. Convinced that the MDC was a front for white, particularly white farmers' interests, ZANU-PF hit back with the fast-track land reform exercise under the banner of the Third Chimurenga economic war. What made the land reform Programme a feasible strategy for hitting back at political opponents and mobilising the populace behind ZANU-PF was the fact that, for a variety of reasons, the land question had never been fully and satisfactorily resolved since independence in 1980.

The Regime Survival Strategies

Despite massive relentless efforts by domestic and foreign regime change forces between 1997 and 2009 the ZANU PF regime has survived. The regime managed to withstand onslaughts from Britain, America and their allies.

During this time the government became ostracized as its image was smudged largely by largely its political rivals within Zimbabwe and abroad because of its own actions. Despite of sanctions which curtailed the government's access to international finance and aid the ZANU PF regime managed to survive. At home the government lost much of its credibility, and legitimacy and ruled over a generally disenchanting and disgruntled population living under the world's highest inflation but still did not eject its leadership from power. This paper therefore seeks to explore and explain the reasons for ZANU PF regime's survival strategies.

It will also seek to uncover how ZANU PF mysteriously survived the regime change in the face of hostile international rivals, a super power included, while simultaneously presiding over a collapsed economy that escaped civil strife. This paper will show that ZANU PF's survival had a lot to do with its leader's political providence and its ability to remain relatively popular in the face of international and domestic adversity.

The pages below will be informed by findings from the interviews and Focus Group Discussions held by the research and the various stakeholders who some of them regarded president Robert Mugabe of ZANU PF is largely as a politically shrewd leader who has been instrumental in thwarting regime change machinations. However though Mugabe was widely regarded as unpopular by respondents his popularity and that of his party ZANU PF did not decline to a level sufficient to bring about regime change.

This paper will reveal that although non-democratic means of staying in power were important in the regime's survival equally important were factors that had nothing to do with ZANU PF'S use of violence intimidation, electoral fraud and other nefarious practices. Its ZANU PF liberation war credentials were cited as an example of an important factor accounting for the survival of the regime. The massive support the ZANU PF regime it enjoys from the SADC community, the third world and the East were alluded to as equally crucial to the regime's survival.

ZANU-PF's Popularity

The ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front ZANU PF and its leader President Robert Mugabe have puzzled many political analysts and people by successively winning elections between 2000 and 2009 in the midst of serious economic and political decline not because of the popular explanation that it rigs them but because it is popular. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007:3) ZANU-PF is led by a veteran of the liberation struggle whose liberation war credentials are not questionable and because of this ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe have been very popular since 1980, and this popularity continued even in the midst of economic and political crisis in the country.

ZANU PF is generally well-liked by a considerable section of the Zimbabwean population because of its liberation war credentials. In areas where ZANU-PF's military wing ZANLA operated the population was mentally captured by guerrilla propaganda during night vigils (pungwes). These pungwes left peasants with a very deep memory of the liberation struggle and they see ZANU PF as their liberators. ZANU PF was revered and extolled at these meetings and the love for the party still lingers, which accounts for the large support it received from rural Zimbabwe during elections which has enabled it to survive regime change.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007:3) proves the above by pointing to Matabeleland where the opposition dominates. There, he says peasants remained relatively 'uncaptured' mentally because ZIPRA with their Soviet-orientation won the support of peasants through impressive military victories against the enemy on the front rather than through night vigils and propaganda hence their flexibility in voting patterns which has seen the opposition winning.

ZANU PF benefits from the myth that, had there been no Robert Mugabe and ZANU PF then there would be no Zimbabwe. This myth is still believed by some of the rural folk and partially explains ZANU PF's good showing in rural areas. As a result of the myth ZANU PF has made considerable political mileage out of its record of having prosecuted the liberation struggle against the British colonial-settler regime which was unwilling to grant independence to the majority black population in Zimbabwe.

Maroleng (2003:29) is of the opinion that Mugabe's popularity is because of his ability to use culture as a political tool of mobilisation. He says that during the liberation war Mugabe identified with leading Shona spirit mediums like MbuyaNehanda, SekuruKaguvi, and Chaminuka to add religious sacredness to his leadership and the liberation mission of ZANU PF. This strategy endeared ZANU PF more to the peasant who still strongly believed in the power of traditional African religion with its oracular shrines. Mugabe's stance on homosexuality has also endeared him to the majority of Zimbabweans who are averse to homosexual practices regarded as ungodly and against traditional religious practices. Thus by identifying with the traditionalist rural folk Mugabe has been able to ward off regime change attempts by getting important votes from a section of the population who constitute the majority in Zimbabwe.

ZANU PF's popularity partly stems from the massive provision of social services and amenities it provided Zimbabweans in the immediate post-colonial period. The government got involved in post war reconstruction building bridges, schools, clinics and hospitals. According to Bond and Manyanya (2003:51) Zimbabwe's health system became the pride of the sub-region while the education system was among the most robust in Africa. Zimbabwe could boast of the second highest adult literacy rate after Tunisia a remarkable feat for Mugabe's regime which still enjoys support today for those achievements.

In sustaining itself in power Chigora et al (2008:1) state that ZANU PF has used various strategies amongst them nationalist rhetoric based on its role in the war of liberation and bringing independence and democracy thereby gaining the support of not only of the majority black Zimbabweans, but also from many leaders in developing countries. Bond and Manyanya (2003:40) concur; they state that Mugabe reacted to the threat of the MDC and the British by reviving its dormant leftist rhetoric which he used to displace the Zimbabwean crisis to an international level which enabled him to project himself as the champion of African and third world rights. Mugabe's rhetoric touched on emotive issues that appealed to the developing world such as projecting land as an historic injustice, neo-colonialism as an ongoing legacy which needs to be dealt with, economic exploitation as a major problem on the African continent and race as a problem which remains unaddressed in Zimbabwe (Bond and Manyanya, 2003:40).

The above shows contributions of Mugabe as a politically astute powerful orator. Mugabe's speech at the 2003 Earth Summit attacking Britain earned him wide acclaim from leaders in the developing world who lacked courage to tell the West of the evils of interference in the affairs of the developing world where he said: "we have not asked for an inch of Europe not any square inch of that territory, so Blair keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe" (Bond and Manyanya, 2003:275).

Mugabe's rhetoric has divided urban people from rural people, blacks from whites, the west from the east and the third world from the developed world. This divided opinion has served well the ZANU PF regime to stay in power, by dividing opinion in a hostile environment in which neo-global forces in tandem with local agents of regime change having been bent on removing the ZANU PF government from power.

Despotism and Dictatorship

The use of despotic and dictatorial strategies by ZANU PF received the most widespread applause for the survival of the ZANU PF regime. Robinson (1994:530) says that repression is an alternative strategy for authoritarian elite wishing to prevent democratic regime change. Repression was used by the political elite to survive regime change in Indonesia in 1965 and El Salvador in 1932. The Zimbabwean government used the repression strategy in the 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008 elections to suppress regime change.

Mugabe's critics say that repression and other nefarious undemocratic means are the main tools that Mugabe uses to stay in power. Elphias Mukonoweshuro formerly a professor of politics at the University of Zimbabwe had the following to say about Zimbabwe's authoritarian regime "this is no ordinary African dictatorship. It is very strange regime, which uses revolutionary rhetoric as well as armed military units against civilians." (Bond and Manyanya, 2003:257). According to Tafadzwa Luke Njenda 2011, (secretary of Engineer Elias Mudzuri and a Former student of Midlands State University) concurred with Mukonoweshuro that Zimbabwe is an authoritarian state in which the ZANU PF government used repression as a vital instrument for it to stay in power as it was confronted by massive economic and political downturns from the late 1990s.

To thwart regime change draconian press laws, massive clampdowns by security forces on opposition movements were used by the state. Mugabe used violence and harassment to force the MDC into quick solutions such as when violence from 2008 partly forced the Morgan Tsvangirai to join the Government of National Unity against advice from some political analysts and members of the MDC-T executive itself.

According to Weitzer (1984:541) in Zimbabwe the central state machinery was taken over intact at independence and used for purposes of securing ZANU PF party hegemony, reducing opposition parties to empty shells, and homogenising the state as a whole. The vast majority of Rhodesia's repressive powers were not abandoned by Mugabe's regime. For instance the repressive Law and Order Maintenance Act was used to suppress opposition political activities. The retention of such powers provided the state with immense repressive capacity, and their easy availability encouraged authoritarian solutions to political and social problems.

The ZANU PF government also crafted a new law, the Public Order Security Act (POSA) to curtail the people's freedoms and to blunt the activities of opposition groups. Under POSA civil society meetings were categorized as political gatherings making it difficult for civil society to make a big impact on the way people voted. It became difficult to campaign for the opposition owing to the subjective interpretation of the law by partisan security forces.

Mugabe's regime has survived for so long because of electoral authoritarianism which to Synder (2006:4) is where the state holds regular elections for the presidency and for the legislative houses yet violates the liberal-democratic principles of freedom and fairness so systematically and profoundly as to render elections instruments of authoritarian rule rather than instruments of democracy. The ZANU PF government it has used the above to stay in power in the new millennium. Masunungure (2009:8) is of the opinion that "ZANU-PF's stay power hinges upon a destructive mixture of ideology, patronage, and violence" it has come to rest upon what he calls "a militarised form of electoral authoritarianism." That is electoral authoritarianism accompanied by the use of violence from the state security forces as was witnessed in the June 2008 presidential run-off election.

Violence has been the hallmark of the ZANU PF's stay in power and survival the President Mugabe has even boasted of his party's "degrees in violence" which they use effectively at election time (Meredith, 2002:75). Through intimidation, the use of violence and coercive tactics originating from its liberation war legacy, Mugabe's regime managed to whip people into line to ensuring that its support base was strong enough at election time.

Meredith and Blair in Bronwell (2004:358) demonstrate clearly that, throughout his career, Mugabe's modus operandi has been one of intimidation and ruthlessness when confronted with political opposition of any sort. During the Liberation War in the 1970s, Mugabe used violence to terrorise rural black African communities into submission, and used similar tactics, it is rumoured, to eliminate rivals within the liberation movement.

During the 1980s, Mugabe used the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade to subdue Matabeleland murderously with estimates putting civilian deaths as high as 18,000, and in the last decade Mugabe has utilised the security service, ZANU-PF militias and War Veterans to carry out an ongoing assault against his political opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and its allies.

Moss and Patrick (2006:22) buttress the point on ZANU PF's use of violence to stay in power by stating that the security forces, intelligence services, and government-backed militias have terrorized civilians, committed gross human rights violations, and have been deployed to infiltrate and disrupt the opposition. In an election largely regarded as free and fair because in March 2008 the opposition fared better than the ruling party but in the run-off election marred by violence ZANU PF emerged victorious after forcing the withdrawal of Morgan Tsvangirai the victor in the first round election.

Raftopoulos (2006:23) states that in the integration of ZIPRA, ZANLA and the Rhodesian army to form the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA), ZANU PF took advantage of flaws in the integration system to put forward its factional forces as the "national force". This has made it difficult to remove ZANU PF from power because the army's loyalties are to ZANU PF and not the nation since it was created by ZANU PF.

Regime change in has been difficult because the political and economic crisis that confronted the country from 2000 created more and more space for the military to expand and consolidate its position in both the political and economic affairs of the country. Muzondidya (2009:3) says that as a result of increased encroachment of military and other state security organs into civilian space, by the time of the formation of the government at the beginning of 2009, the Zimbabwe military had come to direct the affairs of both the state and government without having to announce a coup.

Through the patronage system Mugabe managed to keep the army leadership close to him by making them beneficiaries of the lucrative mining contracts on offer in the DRC from 1998. To further guarantee political loyalty, all command posts from the position of Colonel upwards were to be political appointments directly approved by the President.

(Muzondidya, 2009:3) Against this backdrop it would appear that the party–military nexus helped to stabilise the state and shield the government from any possible military and opposition take over.

ZANU PF has relied heavily on the security structures to mobilise support, campaign and organise elections. Members of the security structures have been deployed to run the Electoral Supervisory Commission, while war veterans have been recruited to work as militias during elections. Mugabe’s government established the National Command Centre (NCC) shortly before the 2002 election, the NCC became the nerve-centre from which the 2002 election was run, and it was manned by personnel from the Zimbabwe National Army, Air Force of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Republic Police and Central Intelligence Organisation (Muzondidya, 2009:4). With the security services in charge of elections it became virtually impossible for the opposition to win the elections because the security chiefs had earlier declared that they would not accept a president without liberation war credentials thus standing between Morgan Tsvangirai and the presidential chair.

To protect itself from regime change Mugabe allowed the security services to increase its influence from 2000 onwards. In an implicit demonstration of the fact that the securocrats had taken over the administration of the country, the government in 2005 established the National Security Council to oversee the economy. Muzondidya(2009:5) says the Council, although chaired by the President himself and included his two vice-presidents and the governor of the Reserve Bank, was dominated by officers from the army, the air force, the police and intelligence. The Council became the de facto cabinet, with nine departments to manage all sectors of the economy. One thus notes a symbiotic relationship between the military and the ZANU PF government.

Trying to remove ZANU PF from power directly threatens the military which is quick to rush to the defence of ZANU PF ensuring its continued stay in power.

This was evidenced by the security sector's intervention in the electoral process after ZANU PF's defeat in the first round of the March 2008 elections by launching Operation "Mavhoterapapi" which involved the deployment of the military, war veterans and youth militias to intimidate people into voting for President Robert Mugabe in the second round of presidential elections which Mugabe won resoundingly after Tsvangirai pulled out citing violence against his supporters (Muzondidya, 2009:5).

This paper is of the opinion that security forces have come to own the country's important means of production like farms and mines and directing production and all key national and governance issues, they have become an interest group in the political and economic governance of the country. ZANU PF's removal from power is likely to bring new political structures which may have a destabilising effect to the security sectors political and economic power as well personal security this compels them to resist regime change.

On the whole PhilexMushorwa (a soldier rank corporal) was of the opinion that the regime change agenda has been stalled by partisan security forces that have been heavily politicised and have virtually become a security arm of ZANU PF. To underline the importance of the military to ZANU PF Mugabe within the power-sharing arrangement has rejected calls to reform the security sector, he said "May I state this clearly and categorically, as ZANU (PF) the defence of our sovereignty rests with us and with no other. Any manoeuvres to tamper with the forces will never be entertained by us"(Chanda, 2009:1).

Political Providence

Mugabe's political providence has been crucial to the survival of the ZANU PF regime. From 1997, the political elite facing increasing opposition and unpopularity awarded hostile and influential war veterans unbudgeted generous gratuities of ZW\$50 000 each to pacify the war veterans and to legitimise the waning regime and also to enlist their support in an assault on the opposition. The state also promoted economic black empowerment and embarked on a controversial land redistribution programme in which war veterans were among the chief beneficiaries. Through asset re-distribution between, 1997-2000 ZANU PF managed to contain potentially regime changing situations, in which the war veterans challenged the authority of the President.

ZANU PF has used elections as a democratic way of maintaining its hold onto power. It has never failed to hold elections since independence. It has been argued by some that elections to ZANU PF are a ruse to hoodwink people into believing that it is a party committed to democratic principles and democratic means of holding onto power. However it should be noted that ZANU PF has perfected the art of manipulating electoral processes to its advantage and has won many elections leaving opposition parties crying foul.

Bratton and Van de Walle (1997:458) describe Zimbabwe as an authoritarian neo-patrimonial state. In neo-patrimonial regimes, the chief executive maintains authority through personal patronage, rather than through ideology or law. The essence of neo-patrimonialism is the awarding of public officials and granting of personal favours by the patrons, that is senior ruling party members. In return for material rewards, clients mobilize political support and refer all decisions upward as a mark of deference to patrons. Mugabe has managed to use the system of patronage to reward persons key to the survival of the regime by rewarding them with senior positions in the army, parastatals, in government and with farms.

This paper holds the opinion that the Mugabe regime has managed to survive because in the rural areas where the majority of Zimbabwe's population lives Mugabe has for a long time been regarded as a father figure (baba Mugabe). In a state like Zimbabwe exhibiting neo-patrimonial tendencies the president's political authority is likened by some of the rural folk to that of a traditional African chief or father who are not simply removed from power. To some it is taboo for anyone to intimate that Mugabe should leave power in the same way it would be taboo for a son to ask his son to relinquish his authority in the home. Moreover it would appear that a significant part of the rural population has come to regard ZANU PF as their only political home and Mugabe as their only leader who they show undying loyalty. Some of the rural populace especially in the eastern half of the country where ZANU PF's liberation war record is remarkable cannot fathom leaving under another leader other than Mugabe

Chigora et al (2008) point to ZANU PF's use of mobilization as a strategy to maintain its hold onto power. Fearing the loss of voters after the 2000 referendum, ZANU PF decided to implement the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in which it was meant to gain the support of rural peasants which were now turning towards the opposition MDC because of increased poverty and hardships in areas that were not suitable for agriculture. Through giving land to rural peasants ZANU PF was able to regain support and avoid defeat in the 2002 presidential election.

In order to satisfy its elite class which had lost popularity with the electorate ZANU PF found a way of gratifying and strengthening the party by pushing through Constitutional Amendment Number 17 which reintroduced the senate to ensure that its senior members would open way for young Turks in the house of assembly. Chigora et al (2008:3) say that through this ZANU PF was able to maintain party unity as there were positions for both the young and the old and the system of patronage was perpetuated.

Crucial to the survival of the ZANU PF regime has been the party's ability to blur the lines between government and party. The late ZANU PF Minister Of Gender, Youth and Employment Creation Border Gezi said "if you want to work for the government you should be prepared to support ZANU PF. (Bond and Manyanya, 2003:82) This quotation serves to indicate that the ZANU PF government does not want a distinction between state and party so that it can prolong its stay in power. The merging of state and party has been paramount in defining and sustaining the authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe. It would appear this did not come about by mere political will, but was the product of complex historical forces. The government's search of regime security when threatened by dissidents and South African saboteurs in the early 1980's necessitated that it recruits trusted and loyal party members to serve as intelligence operatives compromising the giving of loyalty first and foremost to the state before giving loyalty to the party.

After 2000, the credibility of the Reserve Bank Governor Gono, Attorney General Tomana, Police Commissioner Chihuri and Register General Mudede became doubtful as they publicly professed to be staunch ZANU-PF supporters yet they held high level posts crucial for regime survival.

It appears as though the vehemence with which Attorney General (AG) Tomana has handled the MDC-T's Roy Bennett's case has raised suspicions that his involvement is not one of an impartial (AG) but a political rival seeking to weaken the opposition by convicting a senior member of the party, its treasurer. Furthermore statements by the service chiefs on the eve of all elections stating that they would not accept any presidential candidate without liberation war credentials has also cast doubts on the impartiality of service chiefs (Makumbe 2003:39). One wonders whether they were uttering these statements as officers of the state or as ZANU PF members. One thus notes that the lack of clear-cut distinction between institutions and processes of the state from those of the party has made Mugabe's government powerful enough to survive the regime change.

Maroleng (2003:8) says that despite presiding over a repressive regime at logger-heads with the mighty west, Mugabe has managed to remain popular through the use of an anti-imperialist and pan-Africanist appeal with essentialist notions of race as the central markers of the conflict. His ability to mobilise race as a legitimating force has been used to justify the battle against historical inequities, while attempting to conceal the structures that increase such inequality. This has therefore enabled him to ensure the longevity of the ZANU- PF regime by deflecting attention from the real issues behind the suffering of the Zimbabwean people to focus on the race issue. This underlines Mugabe's political shrewdness an important aspect highlighted by the majority of respondents Mugabe's political ingenuity is largely regarded by many to be the key ingredient in the survival of the ZANU PF regime in the last decade.

According to Raftopoulos (2006:12) the state's land occupation programme enabled it to safeguard ZANU PF's stay in power by effectively cordoning the opposition out of the rural areas. The disjuncture between ruling party domination in the rural areas, and opposition urban dominance was further consolidated by the land reform programme. This process created major strategic and political problems for the opposition which has been unable to wrest rural support from ZANU PF. One thus notes that the land reform programme was a political master stroke by ZANU PF to keep the opposition out of its stronghold.

Shaw (2003:78) agrees that ZANU-PF's policy of expropriating white farms was a brilliant political move meant to keep the government in power at a time when the government's popularity was on the decline.

From the redistribution of land the government received support from the peasantry while those starved of resources in the patronage system received fresh booty. He argues that the mechanism of expropriation and resettlement broke a rival source of authority in the countryside, namely, the white farmers and also strengthened the government's paramilitary control of the rural areas via ZANU PF youth militias and war veterans.

According to Booth (2000:65) and Mesfin (2008:2) protracted regime crisis increases the likelihood of a negotiated settlement and major regime transformation with new political rules, redistributed benefits, and the inclusion of both the challengers and key old-regime actors. Power sharing is generally formed when the ruling party's confidence and legitimacy are severely weakened even though it remains strong enough to exercise control over the most important institutions.

ZANU PF's ability to secure the Global Political Agreement which provides for power-sharing was a brilliant political move by Mugabe's regime which having lost the 29 March 2008 first round election and won the bogus 27 June 2008 presidential run-off needed legitimacy when the international community refused to accept Mugabe as head of state in the absence of a government of national unity. Most respondents were of the opinion that the power-sharing arrangement is a strategy by the MDC-T to effect regime change a large number also said that ZANU PF went into it to forestall regime change. This argument has found resonance amongst many political analysts and commentators and academics.

According to Zaffiro (1992:68).The regime control of broadcasting is evidenced by having power over appointments to senior posts in broadcasting, control over finance, and evidence of partisanship of government influence in broadcast content, particularly news and current affairs. ZANU PF has managed to control the media which has enabled it to twist the truth in order to gain political support and win votes. For instance, peasants were told that land for resettlement was unavailable because white racist farmers were reluctant to part with their land, but were not told that they are multiple farm ownerships by ZANU PF heavy weights and government officials.

They were also were told that spiralling inflation, shortages of basic commodities, constant power cuts, high transport costs and intermittent disruptions of water supplies were all part of a well-calculated and orchestrated regime change agenda by Britain and its allies but were not told of the government's economic policies and corruption as reasons behind the failure to provide basic social services.

The ZANU PF government since 2003 used the draconian AIPPA to shut down five newspapers including the Daily News, an important daily paper harshly critical of the government. The remaining newspapers remained essentially urban with major newspapers failing to circulate beyond the urban cities. As a result of this rural voters have been starved of variant views essential for informed voting at election time. Through control of the media the ZANU PF government has thus been able to maintain itself in power. The control of the media is characteristic of authoritarian regimes which echoes what most respondents had to say about the Zimbabwean regime.

Elections in the new millennium were held under a cloud of fear, it was commonly stated by Mugabe's supporters that if the MDC won the election the former freedom fighters would go back to the bush and restart the war. A few weeks before the elections, the chiefs of staff that is army, police, Central Intelligence Organisation(CIO), air force and prison service would warn the nation that they would not co-operate with or salute a presidential candidate whose liberation war credentials were questionable (Makumbe 2003:39). In the run up to the presidential run-off election of June 2008, the president and his justice minister appeared on television boldly declaring that the "bullet was mightier than the pen". This was a warning that electoral results were to be of lesser importance to the power of the gun with regards to who would rule the country. It would appear that these statements served the purpose of discouraging peace loving Zimbabweans from voting for the opposition as well as those Zimbabweans who did not want to be revisited by the horrors of the liberation war and the violence experienced in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces in the 1980s.

From the year 2000 the Mugabe's regime politicised the judiciary. The independence and partiality of the judiciary and court system was affected by constant political interference.

Ruswa (2009:8) says that judges were accused of being unpatriotic, harbouring political agendas, siding with the commercial farmers and generally militating against the land reform process. Independent judges were sidelined and replaced with those more acceptable to the regime. Chidyausiku a former ZANU PF minister was appointed Chief Justice. He had a record of chairing several politically sensitive commissions, and ruling in favour of the ruling party, rulings that were frequently overturned by higher courts. This process constituted what could be regarded as the "Zanunisation" of the judiciary. Therefore with the judiciary firmly in the hands of the ruling party regime change became a massive challenge for the opposition that had looked to judicial impartiality in its quest to oust the ZANU PF government.

The survival of Mugabe's regime in the new millennium can be attributed to the appointment of Professor Jonathan Moyo, a brilliant politician and tactician who turned from government critic to its information minister. Moyo became the architect of a regime of tough media laws, which led to the harassment of journalists, the expulsion of foreign correspondents and finally, the closure of newspapers, including the popular Daily News. During his tenure Parliament enacted the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) (2001), the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) (2002), Public Order and Security Act (2002) and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (Commercialisation) Act (2003). These reforms curtailed the opposition's effectiveness and severely weakened their quest to unseat Mugabe's regime

The appointment of Gideon Gono as the Reserve Bank governor early in the millennium went a long way in saving the Zimbabwean regime from collapse. This study is of the opinion that through Gono, ZANU PF managed to keep the economy going despite presiding over the world's highest inflation rate for most of the first decade of the new millennium. He knocked zeros off the Zimbabwean currency several times to keep it useful and avoid a worse crisis. Gono bankrolled the government by printing money to keep the government on track. This money was used to buy foreign currency on the black market. Gono assisted the ZANU PF regime by oiling its patronage system he provided funds to buy the loyalty of the judges through purchasing of them cars and an array of luxury goods that included plasma television sets. Chiefs were also given cars and had their rural homestead electrified in a bid to encourage their people to vote for the ruling party.

ZANU PF attracted rural support through Gono who gave peasants agricultural implements and very cheap groceries in a programme dubbed BACOSI. Gideon Gono also printed money to fund government repression he paid marauding ZANU PF youths and security services daily allowances for harassing the opposition to submission in the run-up to the June 2008 run-off election.

Having realised that the urban centres were a cauldron of opposition politics and support the Zimbabwean government launched Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order (2005) to clean up the rubbish in the cities and restore the economic order. Murambatsvina was an ingenious plan by the government to hit at the heart of the opposition vote by disrupting its urban supporter base. In less than two months Mugabe's government destroyed illegal housing structures thought to shelter urbanites largely regarded to be against the government. According to Grebe (2009:3) over 700 000 people were displaced from urban centres which affected their abilities to vote in their constituencies thus compromising the opposition vote.

Regime change in Zimbabwe has been challenged by governments' ingenious use of gerrymandering. Smith (2001:404) asks, "...does anyone know where in this world so-called "free and fair "elections are rigged more efficiently than in Zimbabwe?" Through the Political Parties Act (1987) ZANU PF was the only party which qualified for state funding in 2000. To Smith (2001:401) under these circumstances the party in power in Zimbabwe had the ground laid to win every election. In the year 2000 the electoral system was loaded, in favour of ZANU PF, in addition to the 120 elected seats to parliament Mugabe controlled the appointment of an additional thirty seats. Moreover the president appointed the delimitation commission, and the electoral supervisory commission and its chairperson. With the power vested in the president through the constitution Mugabe could overrule the courts and declare any illegal election result legal and any legal result illegal (Smith, 2001:401). The ruling ZANU PF had an unfair advantage over other parties as is reflected by the uneven electoral playing field described above.

The Zimbabwean government also made effective use of the media during elections. In most elections after 2000 the national media denied the opposition much advertising space but everyday the main news bulletin on both television and radio were used exclusively for the governing party to extol the virtues of President Mugabe and his ZANU PF government, and to advertise times and places of their campaign meetings. Smith (2001:402) says that opposition parties if lucky were compelled to pay for the space and time they used and at worst they had their submissions rejected because of criticism directed at government. The above discussion mirrors the observations by most respondents that strongly agreed with the assertion that ZANU PF owes its survival to electoral fraud.

In order to resist regime change the government drafted an NGO Bill which is yet to be passed into law. The law would give government sweeping powers over the activities of the NGOs which the government regards as being in pursuit of regime change through support given to the opposition. For instance foreign funding for human rights NGOs was banned by the government thus curtailing western attempts to interfere in Zimbabwe's governance issues.

The regime change agenda has not succeeded because civil society which could lead it is predominantly urban oriented. Most civil society organizations have failed to extend their activities to rural areas where the greater proportion of Zimbabwe's population resides. The failure of civil society to unite into one movement to push the regime change agenda can also explain the challenges faced in trying to remove the ZANU PF regime.

One notable shortcoming of the regime change agenda has been the lack of cohesion and unity displayed by the church in reacting to state autocracy. Raftopoulos (2005:47) says this has undermined the churches effectiveness as an agent for democratic change within an authoritarian state and also points to the churches failure to condemn the series of blanket amnesties granted by the state perpetrators of human rights violations as another significant limitation to regime change.

The ZANU PF government has managed to resist regime change by effectively making use of the Lancaster House constitution to forestall regime change. It has effected undemocratic clauses within the constitution such as the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) that protects the regime in power.

The amendments of 1987 which created the executive presidency further strengthened the incumbent's government's ability to stay in power. Through amendments the president wields so much power that allows him to appoint the Electoral Supervisory Commission/Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and the Registrar General. These are key elements in the electoral process which the incumbent president has had control over and has managed to use in winning elections.

ZANU PF is aware of the importance of the Lancaster House constitution for its hold on to power. After the populations' rejection of the government sponsored draft constitution in 2000 most people thought that the National Constitutional Assembly's constitution would be adopted as the constitution for the country or a new one would be crafted. This was not to be; the government simply reverted to the use of the Lancaster constitution and closed the door on the discussion of a new constitution much to the chagrin of the opposition who knew that democratic change was to be a tall order under the old constitution. Although most respondents did not regard the constitutional movement as seeking regime they pointed out that the Lancaster House constitution was is a drawback to regime change as it favours the government in power.

Ranger (2004:221) is of the opinion that a new variety of historiography known as patriotic history has been used as an impediment by the ZANU PF government to resist regime change. Patriotic history is different from and narrower than the old nationalist historiography which celebrated aspiration and modernization as well as resistance. Under Mugabe's government patriotic history is a brand of history that seeks to extol the virtues of the ZANU PF government.

Zimbabwean patriotic history is disseminated through training in national youth service militia camps, presidential speeches, the work of ministerial historians, to courses taught by war veterans in camps, in collections of Mugabe's speeches in syllabi and text books and also in the state-controlled press. Through the media the ZANU PF government is glorified, television constantly plays documentaries about the guerrilla war and about colonial brutalities and the heroism of liberation war cadres. The press regularly carries articles on slavery, the partition, and colonial exploitation and the liberation struggle.

All this is meant to turn the African population against the MDC-T which is portrayed as an agent of former colonial power Britain. In the education sector curricula were changed to allow for the teaching of patriotic history in schools and colleges. In teachers colleges and polytechnics patriotic history is taught under the guise of national and strategic studies (Ranger, 2004:229).

Chigora et al (2008:4) say that patriotic history was delivered in a virulent form with race as a key trope. Britain, her allies in the West, the local white population, the opposition MDC and its supporters were subjected to attacks by the ZANU PF government. The MDC was largely portrayed as a "sell-out, puppet party" and its supporters as enemies of the state and traitors who deserved the full wrath of the state's coercive machinery. Through the use of patriotic history ZANU PF has managed to convince some of the electorate especially among the rural folk and illiterate whose level of education and understanding of political misuse is not as sharp as that of the urban dwellers.

International and regional Actors and Regime Survival

In order to minimise the impact of the sanctions imposed on the Zimbabwean government Mugabe created an alliance with white capital demonstrated in his relations with businessmen John Bredenkamp, Rautenbach and British businessman Nicholas van Hoogstraten who helped the government conduct trade in spite of trade restrictions imposed by the European Union and the United States and their allies.

Grebe (2009:12) says sanctions on the Zimbabwean government did not yield regime change, partly because of the way the sanctions were applied. For instance there was a threat of an asset freeze by the US on the Zimbabwean political leadership which was followed by no action. This gave time to for the targeted persons to move all relevant assets out of Washington's reach. The delay in the implementation process left the targeted persons enough time to remove their assets and transfer them in safe havens in the East. Soon after the implementation of the financial sanctions it became clear that the sanctions against Zimbabwe were not on the top of the agenda at the Office of Foreign Assets Control. It was rather the fight against the Al-Qaeda finances that were focused upon. Because Zimbabwe was not of prime importance in the US foreign policy this resulted in a negative influence on the effectiveness and the enforcement process of sanctions on Mugabe's regime.

Munhande and Makaye (2008:60) state that sanctions have not been effective as an instrument of applying pressure on the country to force regime change. ZANU PF's use of anti-imperialist rhetoric allowed it to foster linkages with the third world with which it conducts its trade. Economic and technical relations with a number of countries in the Far East such as China, Singapore, India and Pakistan have enabled the Zimbabwean government to get agricultural machinery and inputs, electrical appliances and spare parts and foreign currency among other things.

The Zimbabwean government's rejuvenated relations with the orient were formalised through the Look East Policy. The policy saw the development of cordial relations between Zimbabwe, South-East Asia, and Far East countries, such as the People's Republic of China, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, India, and Pakistan. This also gave birth to several successful joint agreements between Mugabe's government and these countries. Chigora (2008:150) says that trade volumes between China and Zimbabwe in 2002 were 191 million US dollars while China's exports to Zimbabwe totalled US\$32 million and imports totalled US\$ 159. Revenue generated from the Look East Policy has gone a long way in maintaining the regime in power

Chigora (2008:152) is of the view that despite the U.S. and EU arms embargo against the ZANU PF government has managed to buy arms and to secure the regime bought from China fighter aircraft and military vehicles for \$200 million. In addition, China provided a military-strength radio-jamming device, which the Harare government used to block broadcasts of anti- government reports from independent media outlets during the 2005 parliamentary election campaign. To boost internal-security apparatus, water cannons were procured to subdue protesters and bugging equipment was bought to monitor cell phone networks. Diplomatically, China has given Zimbabwe support in the UN, where she is a member of the Security Council. Although few respondents mentioned the East as having been important to challenges of regime change, the fact that some brought it up is reflective of the fact that it has contributed something to the persistence of the ZANU PF regime.

On the whole despite disrupting the government's activities sanctions did not manage to drive out the Zimbabwean government. Limited success was achieved through targeted sanctions which must target specific individuals that are supportive of the regime.

Sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe belatedly included Rautenbach and Brendankamp who had by that time already done a lot in ensuring that the ZANU PF regime survived. Sanctions have also been limited in their effectiveness as the regime was given opportunities to evade the sanctions by conducting trade with China, South Africa and Arabic countries.

SADC and AU's Role in Survival of the ZANU PF Regime

SADC support for the Zimbabwean government has acted as a bulwark to regime change by continuously giving public support to Mugabe's repressive regime. Mugabe is regarded as a liberation war hero. He played a crucial role in bringing peace to Mozambique in the 1990s and also stood firm in denouncing apartheid in South Africa. Badza (2009:7) says that in the event that Zimbabwe's liberation movement-led government falls other similar governments in SADC would be in danger of the same fate and thus out of fear support Mugabe's government. Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos said with reference to the above "Tsvangirai's crime was to form a party to oppose a sitting liberation movement" (Muchemwa, 2009:2). Bond and Manyanya (2003:294) are of the opinion that the ANC would like to see ZANU PF remain in power because it suspects that the white element backing the MDC could also help ANC's political rivals in South Africa such as the Democratic Alliance which is predominantly white.

Most SADC states viewed the MDC as a serious enemy and threat to not only the Zimbabwean state, but the entire SADC region and continent because of its alliance with the West. To them Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF are being punished by the West simply for daring to unilaterally implement the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. Most of SADC view all arguments about governance, human rights and rule of law as mere pretexts and functions of Western propaganda, hypocrisy and double standards. Respondents to the question on SADC's role in the Zimbabwe crisis were of the opinion that it is an obstacle to regime change their observations can thus be said to be in congruence with views of the scholars cited above.

Regime change in Zimbabwe was made difficult especially because South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) gave its support to ZANU PF. It welcomed Mugabe's victory in the violence ridden 2000 parliamentary elections.

In a statement, the ANC said: 'We congratulate ZANU-PF on their victory as we realize that the election process has underscored the fact that democracy is taking root not only in Zimbabwe but in the sub-region and, indeed, in the whole of Africa.' one of the South African observers had previously told the *Washington Post*, "I don't want to see Mugabe lose this election. He is still a hero to many of us." (Badza, 2009:9)

The ZANU-PF regime has survived mainly because many African elites consistently sought to legitimize Zimbabwe's elections although none held between 2000 and 2006 could be regarded as free and fair. Observers from the African Union, (AU), for instance, declared the elections 'transparent, credible, free and fair" some endorsed Mugabe's victory, saying they had 'recorded no incidence of electoral irregularities. (Badza, 2009:9)

Badza (2009:7) refers to quiet diplomacy in the Zimbabwean crisis as the negotiation strategy applied by the mediator who avoids applying pressure directly and openly, on one or more of the critical parties to a conflict even when and if it is ethically necessary. The mediator is not a disinterested actor. He may have some interest in the outcome. Thus, it may either be a result of the mediator's careful calculations of his strategic self-interests or those of his group. Therefore, it may be a result of a thorough cost-benefit analysis by the mediator. Equally, it may also be based on the objective assessment of the real or perceived catastrophic consequences of what has been referred to as 'Megaphone Diplomacy' which is, essentially, the opposite of Quiet diplomacy.

Quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe has stood in the way of regime change. Its results have been the Global Political Agreement and the power-sharing government which came about after the inconclusive 2008 elections in which the ruling party had stared defeat in the face and had had to resort to violence to block regime change. Critics of quiet diplomacy argue that direct criticism of Mugabe could have put pressure on the ZANU PF regime and led to the democratisation of Zimbabwe's state institutions which perhaps might have paved the way for democratic change. Mbeki's quiet diplomacy in the Zimbabwe situation could be said to have been tantamount to silent approval of Mugabe.

Badza, (2009:9) is of the opinion that the regime in Zimbabwe has survived because the regime change agenda change agenda has been impeded by South Africa's foreign policy position. South Africa seeks to champion the cause of the Third World, particularly Africa. It has not been keen on being perceived as a relic of the apartheid regime. Thus, since joining the United Nations, It has sought to contribute towards reforming the United Nations Security Council on the basis of proposals put forward by such organisations as the AU and the Non Aligned Movement. Therefore, its approach towards the crisis in Zimbabwe should be understood within this broad context of post-apartheid foreign policy orientation.

South Africa has defended Zimbabwe's position at the UN where there were plans to impose sanctions on the Zimbabwean government in 2008. South Africa successfully shielded Robert Mugabe from the potentially devastating US and UK-sponsored international action. It defended its position by arguing that not all human rights abuses are a threat to international peace and security and therefore need not be discussed in the Security Council. Sanctions would have greatly compromised the Zimbabwean government's legitimacy and capacity to survive in the face of international and domestic onslaughts.

According to Nhambura (2009:1) when the US President George W Bush visited Southern Africa in 2003, the USA was fresh from a triumphant invasion of Iraq. The invasion had been a relatively simple exercise and the USA was touting more regime change missions in Iran, Libya, North Korea and even Zimbabwe. But after meeting the South African leader, Thabo Mbeki, Bush left Southern Africa more tempered in his rhetoric towards Zimbabwe. Mbeki's international policy that Africans could and should help themselves find their own solutions to their problems dissuaded Bush from his prior conviction of effecting regime change in Zimbabwe. The actions of Mbeki can be said to have aided Zimbabwean regime's survival.

Sanctions against Zimbabwe did not succeed in bringing about regime change because of the support against them given by South Africa, together with other SADC countries; also spoke out strongly against sanctions on Zimbabwe. Sanctions were taken to be inconsistent with a non-confrontational diplomatic style necessary to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis as a show of support for the Zimbabwean government on 14 February 2000; South Africa announced a US \$133 million "rescue package" for Zimbabwe was announced, which allowed Zimbabwe to keep up its electricity and oil supply (Adelmann, 2004:262).

The ANC government is also regarded as a survival cornerstone for the regime in Zimbabwe because of the support the ANC received from ZANU PF during the South African liberation struggle. At the ZANU-PF Fifth National People's Congress in Harare the ANC National Executive Committee member Tokyo Sexwale promised unwavering support for ZANU-PF, saying it has always been indebted to the party for assisting the South African liberation struggle and that of the whole region. Sexwale was delivering a solidarity message on behalf of the ANC, its leadership and South African President Jacob Zuma. Sexwale commented "We as ANC and ZANU-PF remain as one. We know where we came from and we know our history. What goes on in South Africa will eventually affect Zimbabwe and what happens in Zimbabwe must affect South Africa"(Nhambura, 2009:1). This is proof that the ANC does not wish to see the ZANU PF government fall from grace and thus covertly supports ZANU PF and keeps it in power, such as it has done by promoting the power-sharing arrangement which in some circles is a strategy to resist regime change.

Raftopoulos (2005:26) says that the decision by the South African presidency to push for a government of national unity in Zimbabwe was because it had serious doubts about the capacity of the MDC to form a national government and to gain the confidence of the armed forces. The resultant government of national unity is considered to be an obstacle to regime change in some circles.

Moss and Patrick (2006:111) are of the opinion that African support for Mugabe is "not that they love Mugabe, but they love the West less". Bond and Manyanya (2003:277) hold the view that Mugabe's case against the West is election theft and repression which African leaders acknowledge but none want to see the West determine Zimbabwe's future lest the West also decides the future of other African countries in the future Zimbabwe. This study is of the opinion that South Africa, SADC and the African Union prefer to have ZANU PF at the helm of Zimbabwean politics. It seems these parties sympathise with ZANU -PF as nationalist pan -Africanist party but will not overtly support ZANU PF but rather acquiesce Mugabe's hold on to power and if in a tight spot acquiesce his exit from power.

Apparently African leaders are aware of Mugabe's human rights violations and the practice of low standards of democracy.

While Mugabe and Mbeki may be wrong on Zimbabwe it is one thing for the nationals of Zimbabwe and South Africa to say so, and quite another thing for foreigners to say so. It is the West's imperil action that behoves African leaders to defend the Zimbabwean regime despite its imperfections.

Most African leaders have been unable to publicly criticise the ZANU PF government because they are as guilty as it is of poor human rights records, bad governance and undemocratic electoral processes. The violence preceding the June 27 2008 presidential run-off elections led to the withdrawal of Morgan Tsvangirai enabling Mugabe to win an election described as a sham by the international community. Within a week of the election Mugabe attended an African Union summit where expectations were high that Mugabe would be taken to task by fellow African leaders. Just before leaving for the summit in Egypt Mugabe dared Africa leaders without "sin" to point a finger at him (<http://www.zimnewss.com>). The failure by the summit delegates to reprimand Mugabe was evidence that most of the leaders in Africa are indeed equally guilty of dictatorial rule if not worse than Mugabe. The above in part explains why the regime change agenda in Zimbabwe has not got support amongst African states.

The Zimbabwean regime has survived partly because of the foreign policy ineptness of Britain with regards to the issue of Zimbabwe. TendaiMudzimu (welfare officer in the president's office), identified Britain as the main foreign proponent of regime change agenda. Britain has been unable to deal with Mugabe's anti-imperialist rhetoric and has also been unable to surmount four major obstacles to Britain's Zimbabwe policy. Taylor and Williams(2002:512) have identified Britain's continued pursuit of a market-based approach to the land question; the division within the Commonwealth over the issue; evident support for Mugabe's regime from a wide variety of African elites; and arguably above all South Africa's unwillingness publicly to criticize Mugabe's policies.

This paper has demonstrated that South African support for Mugabe has undoubtedly frustrated any speedy resolution of Zimbabwe's crisis. It would not be an exaggeration to say that there would be no Zimbabwean crisis without South African support. British foreign secretaries and premiers have blundered in their handling of the Zimbabwean crisis. British foreign secretaries have commented to the effect that they work with the local opposition and Zimbabwe's neighbours to bring about regime change in Zimbabwe.

This has isolated the local opposition from the support of regional neighbours that would not want to be regarded as being involved in machinations against a neighbour. Besides most leaders in the Southern African region have shied away from criticising Mugabe lest they fulfil comments by British politicians.

The US underestimated the government's capacity to resist economic pressures and survived beyond that time by ordering that retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers to slash prices of basic commodities thus buying more time for the regime to deal with the economic crisis. U.S. Administrations have ruled out major U.S. military action to change Zimbabwe's regime.

Conclusion

Zimbabwe has demonstrated that surviving in the international system path without the West can be realized and that Regime change can be resisted successfully. It is also to realise that Zimbabwe has set a precedence that confrontation, sanctions, threats demonization and the propagation of Regime change in Zimbabwe will not work in favour of Western interests and have a potential of generating much more division as some more like minded states may soon follow the Zimbabwean path leading to a shift in terms of global power. It has also been reflected clearly in this project that the ability of Zimbabwe's political leadership to shift the country's foreign policy in the wake of an antagonised relationship between the West and Zimbabwe has also been very important in ensuring the survival of the regime in this hostile environment. At this point it is also important to realise and highlight that foreign policies are designed to protect a state's national interest, national security, ideological goals and economic property and this can take place through cooperation with other nations, through aggression, war and exploitation. And in the event of the absence of a peaceful cooperation there will be a degree of enmity and therefore this therefore describes the type of relations which ensued between Zimbabwe and the West after Zimbabwe had pursued an unfriendly land reform policy which in several parameters threatened the interests of the West.

On the other hand it is quite important to make mention that the domestic policies which were adopted by Zimbabwe during this period which have been described by both the domestic and international media houses as draconian basically because of the nature of such policies .

Some scholars have argued that the Regime in Zimbabwe has acted in the best interest of the state in serving it from the forces of regime change in a bid to protect the state's national interest, national security, ideological goals and economic property and it manage to achieve this through the cooperation with other nations which either sympathised with Zimbabwe or supported her policies, and through aggressive action towards states which opposed her actions in the international system.

But however by and large the hostile relations between Zimbabwe and the west are likely to continue until the land issue has been settled conclusively. And in this case Asian countries are proving themselves capable of serving as alternatives to the rich Western nations. This follows that Zimbabwe's foreign policy shift from a pro-western to become pro eastern foreign policy with inception of the 21st century

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