

**THE ZIMBABWE AFRICAN NATIONAL UNION -PATRIOTIC
FRONT (ZANU PF) REGIME IN POWER IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A
QUESTION OF POPULAR SUPPORT OR PRESERVING POWER
BY UNDEMOCRATIC MEANS**

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ABSTRACT

Since the attainment of independence ZANU PF, a liberation party, has been at the helm of government and decision-making in Zimbabwe. Despite the emergence of opposition political parties, the party has maintained its grip on power. The turn of the new millennium saw the emergence of a strong opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and independent candidates that gave a strong challenge to ZANU PF dominance. In essence, despite this challenge ZANU PF has maintained a tight grip on power, claiming to use democratic means to retain its power. It is the purpose of this paper to provide an analysis of survival strategies adopted by ZANU PF in entrenching and sustaining itself in power in the face of opposition forces, not only those outside the ZANU PF environment but also in intra-party opposition. As the paper argues, there are a number of factors that have led to the dominance of ZANU PF ranging from issues of political culture not only in ZANU PF but also within the Zimbabwe populace to issues of using a stick and carrot approach. In the final analysis, the paper will posit on the future of not only ZANU PF but Zimbabwean politics in general particularly in the face of the continuing deepening crisis.

Introduction

ZANU PF entered the 21st century with a formidable challenge given the formation in 1999 of a new political party (the Movement for Democratic Change) with a wide support base. Following the formation of this worker driven party, ZANU PF's certainty of grabbing power with ease as it had done since independence was no longer guaranteed. In the face such growing uncertainty ZANU PF had to find means and ways of ensuring that it would not lose power. Critics have unraveled unethical means of sustaining itself in power while apologists have come to its support and defense arguing that all it does is for the upholding of democracy. It is therefore the purpose of the paper to analyse the means and methods used by ZANU PF to maintain its grip on power against the backdrop of a much stronger opposition with a wider support base. Given the current political stalemate in forming the government of national unity the paper will also try to locate the future of ZANU PF and Zimbabwean politics.

Theoretical Framework

To help understand the issues under discussion, the paper is predicated on the theory of competitive authoritarianism which will be buttressed by electoral authoritarianism. According to Levitsky and Way (2010:4) 'competitive authoritarian regimes are civilian regimes in which formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power but in which fraud, civil liberties violations, and abuse of state and media resources so skew the playing field that the regime cannot be labelled democratic.' This gives a semblance and camouflage of democracy as on the surface there appears to be political freedom as opposition political parties are permitted but the state already has an upper hand due to its control of key institutions. Schedler (2006:1) describes electoral authoritarianism as a situation where political regimes '...have established the institutional facades of democracy, including regular multiparty elections for the chief executive in order to conceal (and reproduce) harsh realities of authoritarian governance.' What emerges from this observation is that the holding of elections alone is not sufficient to make a country democratic as elections and electoral management bodies are

susceptible to undue influence by the ruling party thus manipulating the electoral process. Schedler (2006:3) asserts that ‘electoral authoritarian regimes play the game of multiparty elections by holding regular elections for the chief executive and national legislative assembly.’ Furthermore, Ghandi and Lust-Okar (2009:412) observe that ‘the logic of authoritarian elections creates a system that generally (barring exogenous shocks) helps keep incumbents in power.’ This then suggests that incumbents manipulate the system through various methods to stay in power; this can be done by manipulating the rules that shape and govern elections (Ghandi and Lust-Okar, 2009).

Electoral authoritarianism has a number of inherent characteristics which help provide a framework for understanding the system. Schedler (2006:3) writes that ‘...elections are broadly inclusive (they are held under universal suffrage) as well as minimally pluralistic (opposition parties are allowed to run), minimally competitive (opposition parties, while denied victory, are allowed to win votes and seats, and minimally open (opposition parties are not subject to massive repression, although they may experience repressive treatment in selective and intermittent way).’ It is observable that regimes use a mix of subtle force, coercion and allows a modicum of democracy which is just enough not to be termed autocracy. Schedler (2006:3) terms this a ‘contradictory mix of democratic procedures and authoritarian practices’ indicating the subtle nature of manipulation.

In addition the regimes employ a plethora of methods to maintain their grip on power. Incumbents use an array of tactics such as; unfair electoral rules, restricting access of opposition parties to the electoral arena, restricting opposition to equal access to media coverage, redistribution of votes through electoral engineering and fraud, clientelism, use of force patronage are some of the tactics employed by incumbents to stay in power (Schedler, 2006; Diamond, Plattner, Chu et al, 1997; Dahl, 2006; Ghandi and Lust-Okar, 2009). Such practices render elections a sham, a farce and nothing more than window-dressing cosmetic exercises which do not enhance the quality of democracy or advance democratic norms, practices and institutions. In the words of Schedler (2006:3) despite a semblance of democracy such electoral contests ‘...are subject to state manipulation to

severe, widespread, and systematic abuse that they do not qualify as democratic.’ therefore despite holding regular elections almost religiously, this does not translate to democracy instead it leads to one party dominance as the incumbents often control the institutions which wield power and run the elections.

Historical Background to ZANU PF and Zimbabwean Politics

The history of ZANU PF can be traced back to the struggle for the liberation of the majority of Zimbabweans against the backdrop of colonisation and domination by white colonialists of British origins. It was formed following a split in the Zimbabwe African People’s Union in 1963 both of which were successor organisations to the National Democratic Party banned in 1961 which owed its origins to the 1950s Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (Sithole 1977). All of these had the intention of freeing the country from minority white rule.

Of importance, it has to be noted that it has an elitist background having been founded in Salisbury, now Harare the capital of Zimbabwe. The leading members in it were Ndabaningi Sithole, Henry Hamadziripi, Mukudzei Midzi, Herbert Chitepo, Edgar Tekere and Leopold Takawira at the house of the once Defence minister Enos Nkala in Highfield in August 1963. All of the above were members of the emerging educated African elite in the then Southern Rhodesia. (ibid). It found its way to the general mass through appealing to the problems that were faced by the black majority such as general segregation, discriminative policies, disenfranchisement which appealed to the urbanites. It also raised the emotive land issue which directly appealed to the rural peasantry. This saw the majority of the rural peasantry flocking en masse to support the newly emerged party and subsequently participating in the liberation struggle through the ZANU armed wing the Zimbabwe Armed National Liberation Army (ZANLA). They remained embroiled with it until the achievement of majority rule through an election in 1980. In 1976, ZANU and ZAPU formed the Patriotic Front (PF) as a political and military alliance during the war against white minority rule in Zimbabwe (then called Rhodesia).

The Patriotic Front included ZAPU led by Joshua Nkomo operating mainly from Zambia, and ZANU (Zimbabwe National People's Union) led by Robert Mugabe and operated mainly from neighboring Mozambique. During the 1980 election campaign the Patriotic Front alliance partners split into their respective factions and competed separately as ZANU-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and Patriotic Front-ZAPU (ZAPU-PF). The election was won by Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF, with Joshua Nkomo and his PF-ZAPU retaining a stronghold in the province of Matabeleland, after which the two rejoined hands in a Government of National Unity (Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000).

However, this first GNU fell apart in 1982 after government security officials allegedly discovered arms of war on PF ZAPU properties. Arising from the alleged discoveries, on 17 February 1982 the government accused Joshua Nkomo, leader and founder of the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union, of plotting a coup d'état, and dismissed him from the cabinet. (Nkomo 1987). This break up led to a protracted civil conflict which only ended in 1987 after a period of intense fighting in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. After the forces of ZAPU were crushed militarily and ZAPU was humiliated, Nkomo joined a government of National Unity in 1987 and Joshua Nkomo became one of two vice-presidents of Zimbabwe. (CCJPLRF 1997: 41)

In sustaining itself in power since 1980, (ZANU-PF) government has used a plethora of strategies firstly, it has relied on nationalist rhetoric based on its role in the war of liberation and bringing independence and democracy thereby gaining support not only from the majority black Zimbabweans, but also from many leaders in developing countries. Secondly, through intimidation, the use of violence and coercive tactics originating from its liberation war legacy, it has managed to whip people into line ensuring that its support base is strong come election time. (<http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr109.pdf>) Thirdly, through electoral fraud, it has managed to maintain a strong grip on power. (Ibid)

Lastly, the party has resorted to restrictive measures to curb the operations of opposition forces as well as their entrenchment close to state apparatus through blurring lines between party and state and limiting political activism outside the party. (Ibid)

However, despite the exclusionary tendencies, a number of parties emerged and some continued to exist in one form or another. Parties such as Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), Forum, Zanu Ndonga, Liberty Party, Zimbabwe Union of Democrats (ZUD), and ZAPU 2000 all made a fleeting appearance on the political scene but with very little impact. In overall terms, these parties never became a threat to ZANU PF hegemony until 1999, when the labor movement supported by a broad coalition of civic groups launched the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). This had a broader support base particularly among the workers, given the declining benefits, unemployment and overall economic malaise. It also had support from the rural populace who had been frustrated by ZANU PF's lack of progress towards their development and the resolution of the land question.

ZANU PF in the 21st Century

ZANU PF entered the 21st Century with a big obstacle especially on how it was going to handle its main challenger with a good political base in a growing environment where democracy, human security and economic development were globally recognised as the major tenets of societal development and advancement. The economy was failing and there was general discontent towards the government's handling on economic issues, the arbitrary decision to give lump sum compensation packages to war veterans as well as military engagement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) contributed towards a weakening economy (Bond and Manyanya, 2002:iii). Therefore, faced with socio-economic and political discontent ZANU PF had to design means and ways of ensuring that it remained at the apex of power and in control of Zimbabwean politics.

It is widely recognised that elections are one of the tenets of a democratic society. Elections are important in any political institution and their effectiveness is premised on

their competitiveness. ZANU PF has used elections as a democratic way of maintaining its hold onto power. Zimbabwe has never failed to hold elections as and when they are due, 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008 and 2013. This would at face value give the semblance of a party committed to democratic principles and means of getting and holding onto power. However, as Diamond and Morlino (2007:24) note ‘...democracies vary in their degree of competitiveness-in the openness of access to the electoral arena by new political forces, in the ease with which incumbents can be defeated, and in the equality of access for competing political parties to the mass media and campaign funding.’ Therefore, although elections have always been held in the country without fail, a question has to be raised over their competitiveness as there have been occasions when they have been questionable and dubious. Though elections have always been held in the country, what makes credible is the competitiveness as well as how much the ruling party is willing to open up space to allow alternative voices from the opposition to operate unmolested and without any hindrance. It can be presented that the party has over the years held elections in order to maintain its hold on power in the knowledge that it controlled the playing field, made the rules and decide how much space to allow opposition parties to function in.

It should be noted that ZANU PF has perfected the art of manipulating electoral processes to its advantage as evidenced by the various elections held when it was threatened by a strong opponent. For example in the 2002 Presidential elections, as a way of reducing opposition chances of victory the long delayed Harare Mayoral and local council elections were suddenly harmonised with Presidential election. This had the net result of slowing the voting process in Harare, thus reducing the number of people voting. Thus in the June 2000 Parliamentary elections Zimbabwe experienced political violence the levels of which had never been seen before. A number of opposition supporters were abducted, killed, intimidated or simply disappeared. The pattern was to be repeated in the 2002 Presidential elections and 2005 Parliamentary elections. A free and fair environment would have allowed the opposition to win as demonstrated by the March 2008 Harmonised elections which were largely free of restrictive policies. As a result, March 2008 brought despair and disbelief to ZANU PF as it for the first time lost

elections even in its formerly perceived rural stronghold. In the 2008 parliamentary election, the ZANU-PF lost its majority in parliament for the first time, holding 99 seats out of the expanded 210 seats. In the 2008 presidential election held concurrently with the Parliamentary elections, Morgan Tsvangirai the MDC candidate received the most votes but did not receive an absolute majority.

Furthermore, elections in the country have often been accompanied by election-related violence. Levitsky and Way (2010:7) note that in competitive authoritarian regimes, elections can be ‘...marred by large-scale voter intimidation of opposition activists, voters, and poll watchers, including the establishment of “no go” areas in some territories...’ This tactic has been employed by the party since the days of the liberation struggle where all night rallies and indoctrination would take place and villagers were indoctrinated in the ideology of the party, those who showed little enthusiasm or were labelled sell-outs were brutally dealt with in front of everyone. This continued in the era after independence where the ruling party, now in power continued its methods of intimidation which had been employed during the war. There were areas which were declared Zanu PF strongholds where opposition parties were not allowed to operate in or even campaign in, opposition supporters had their homes razed to the ground, were beaten, tortured, maimed or even killed. State sanctioned violence and intimidation have enabled the ruling party to perpetuate its rule. For instance, the presidential run-off of 2008 was marred by violence against and intimidation of voters and party workers. Morgan Tsvangirai initially stated he intended to contest the second round but pulled out of the run off saying a free and fair election was impossible in a hostile climate where ZANU PF sanctioned violence and intimidation where visible.

ZANU PF has also found ways of maintaining its elite class as a way of maintaining its power base. In this regard, it has designed ways of saving their interests such as the creation of Executive Mayoral posts in 2001 as a way of ensuring that its members defeated in Parliamentary elections would remain in power in the wake of the opposition’s dominance of the urban areas. It has always maintained a policy of rewarding members by creating positions for them as Ministers without Portfolio. When

the opposition took control of urban councils especially in Harare and Bulawayo, the party suddenly introduced Governors for the so called Metropolitan Provinces in order to dilute the opposition mayors' influence. This had two advantages; one ensuring continued votes of these elites and the whole link of their patronage and two ensuring that there would not be any dissenting voices within the party. This has ensured the continued availability of supporters for the party in the face of a strong opposition in an environment with economic and political challenges. In 2005, the party pushed through Constitutional Amendment 17 reintroducing a Senate to further ensure that its senior members would open way for the Young Turks in the House of Assembly. This had two results; one party unity was maintained as there were positions for both young and old and the system of patronage was perpetuated.

Moreover, ZANU PF has also used mass mobilisation of people as a strategy to maintain its hold on power. Despite the shortcomings of other strategies, used by ZANU PF, it has an experience in mobilisation of political resources. For the masses, the party has designed policies that were meant to woo people and to garner support to its cause. For example, fearing loss of voters as evidenced by the loss experienced in the February 2000 Referendum, ZANU PF decided to implement the so called Fast Track Land Reform Programme in 2000 which was meant to gain the rural peasant's support which were now turning towards the opposition MDC because of increased poverty and hardships in areas that were not fit for agriculture. Subsequently, policies were designed around the land reform programme to further maintain the peasants' support for ZANU PF and these included the Agricultural Mechanisation and Input supply, under which resettled farmers were given farm implements and inputs gratis. Besides these policies, the party has also designed schemes to reach out to the urban poor in addition to the rural peasantry. For example in 2008, the ZANU PF government introduced the Basic Commodities Supply Side Intervention (BACOSSI), a scheme meant to avail basic commodities that were in short supply on the formal market and resultantly unaffordable to the majority on the parallel market.

Another feature of Zanu PF's electoral dominance has been its ability to capture state resources. These have been crucial to enabling it to stay in power as they give the ruling party a head start and an advantage over opposition parties. The effect of this is that opposition parties fail to compete or to be competitive hence hampering and reducing its ability and possibility of defeating incumbents. Levitsky and Way (2010:9) assert 'access to resources is uneven where incumbents use the state to create or maintain resource disparities that hinder the opposition's ability to compete.' The ruling party has over the years used both tangible and intangible resources. The importance of resources to the success of the ruling party was crucial in the face of growing discontent and disillusionment with its rule. Green (2013:24) writes 'when incumbents can access and use these public resources for partisan purposes, they can outspend competitors at every turn and make otherwise open competition so unfair that they virtually win elections before election day.' For instance, land occupations were sanctioned by the party and by extension the state, landless were parceled out pieces of land and it was abundantly clear to them that the party had given them this land hence there was an economic incentive for them to vote for the party and retain it to power. In a sense, the party through populist policies and actions won the election before elections were held.

Appealing to the heart through rhetoric and populist mantra has enabled the party to sustain itself in power. Following a close shave resulting from the 2008 elections, the party set about planning for life after a government of national unity which had emerged as a threat and obstacle to its (ZANU PF) hegemony. Towards election time as the party was campaigning, it appealed to the emotions of civil servants by promising salary increments, salary increments had not been experienced under the government of national unity where the finance portfolio had been entrusted to the MDC-T and the finance minister well aware of treasury's bankruptcy prudently gleaned that salary increments were economically suicidal and impractical given the fact that the country was still in economic dire straits. The call for salary increments led to civil servants besieging the finance minister's offices as they believed that he and his party were playing politics on the issue of increments. ZANU PF seized upon this to promising to effect salary

adjustments and increments to civil servants who make up a sizeable part of the employed and tend to be decently educated, this helped tilt elections in the party's favour.

The economics surrounding the party's electoral victories deserves to be explored further. There is an intersection between the political domain and economic realm, more so where ZANU PF is concerned. When the economic crisis was biting and threatening the regime's survival, the party's access to the treasury enabled it to fund its operations, run its campaigns and distributes various goods to constituencies all in an attempt to ensure electoral victory. ZANU PF accessed state reserves, used them to finance their election campaigns, and used reserves to woo voters by donating computers to schools, ploughs, tractors, fertiliser, seed to resettled farmers, embarked on rural electrification programmes through control of the electricity utility company (Masunungure, 2009). Furthermore, international finance aided the party's dominance and survival as funding came in from the Chinese which was used by the party to exercise its patronage towards the electorate. Therefore, faced with a trade off as well as opportunity cost, recipients of party's resources weighed the cost and possibility of losing them decides to vote for the ruling party.

Parastatals and state-owned enterprises are manned by party loyalists who are not necessarily concerned with how the business performs instead they care more about what the business can do for the party. Business enterprises and business persons have over the years bankrolled the party's electoral campaigns. Companies such as Zupco (a bus company owned by government) provide free transportation for the party and their busses have been used to bus in supporters and voters coming from other constituencies to cast their votes. The state broadcaster as well as government controlled press flight adverts and in all probability for free, without the party having to pay a cent. Private business have also been part of the economic web which has helped the party maintain its supremacy, cash donations, donations in kind such as food, vehicles, clothing have been some of the items which have been donated for the cause. In return, these enterprises would get contracts and other favours from the party and government.

The discovery of diamonds in Chiadzwa strengthened the party's dominance and no doubt contributed to its electoral victory in 2013. Secrecy shrouded diamond revenues and operations in the mines, bearing in mind how the Chinese rescued the party when it faced the possibility of being in the political doldrums; in return they were given some of the diamond mines.

The youth have been a vital cog to the party's survival and longevity in power. These have been seduced by promises of empowerment, indigenisation and the creation of employment all of which can be realised if they vote for ZANU PF. They have also been employed when occasion demands, as foot soldiers, shock troops to bring about 'order' and 'good behaviour' to those whose ideological persuasion and political orientation differs from the party's. This was demonstrated with the creation of a youth militia which was commonly referred to as 'Green Bombers' who were sent on a reign of terror against opposition activists, supporters of the opposition and instilled fear through the brute penchant for violence. Controlled violence was employed in urban areas such as Mbare where youths from 'chipangano' an organisation aligned to ZANU PF waged a campaign of intimidation which resulted in the party winning the seat during elections. Therefore, in the eyes of the party, the youths have an instrumental use which can be manipulated because of unemployment to recruit them into engaging in violence in order to attain the party's objectives. Furthermore, because of desperation and naivety, the youths have often been easy prey to ZANU PF which busses them to go and vote in constituencies where they are not registered in.

However, violent means have also been fused with subtle messages to entice the youth. For example the 2013 elections appealed to the youth based upon the mantra of indigenisation, empowerment as well as loans ostensibly for the youth. However, clientelism and patronage politics were visible in the administration and distribution of these loans as they went to ZANU PF youth, the same can be said of mining claims which youths were eager for, these were parceled to party loyalists who were in the

service of the party. In a country where unemployment is rife and the future of youths bleak, the party's promises were music to the ears thus capturing a population which had been generally thought to be sympathetic to the opposition.

ZANU PF has been traditionally stronger and popular in the villages. This is due to a combination of its liberation war credentials, patronage system (such as selective distribution of food aid, farm implements) and use of coercive power and violence to keep the villages in line. The state's ability to project itself as the benevolent benefactor of the rural folk is captured in an observation by Masunungure (2009:66) 'traditional and community leaders were also mobilised to deliver the rural vote in exchange for perks such as vehicles, electrification of their homes, and most critically, the privilege to allocate scarce and highly valued food aid, farm inputs and equipment.' This is unlike the opposition which did not have access to state resources hence no leverage so as to use in wooing the rural voters.

In addition, the nature of the party's historical background has also served the party well. ZANU (PF) comes from a radical nationalist background with socialist leanings and this with its liberation war history has also presented an uphill task to any opponents. De Jager and du Toit (2013:16) adduce that 'dominant parties tend to come into power on the wave of a significant historic event, whether it be a revolution, state-creation or liberation, and initially maintain this dominance by the continued referral to the event.' ZANU PF's significant event is as 'national-liberation; (Levitsky and Way, 2013:6), this was the war of liberation commonly referred to as 'chimurenga' which seemingly earned the party a divine mandate and divine right to rule and govern the country till eternity as it were. Its liberation war history has enabled it to maintain a close grip and control over the security forces. In this regard, 'a few weeks before the 2002 presidential elections, the chiefs of staff warned the nation that they would not cooperate with or salute a presidential candidate whose liberation war credentials were questionable'. (Makumbe, 2003:22) In this case, it is clear that the military's top brass comprising the then Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces General Vitalis Zvinavashe, the then

Police Commissioner Commissioner-General Augustine Chihuri, Zimbabwe Prison Services Commissioner Major-General (Retired) Zimondi, Zimbabwe National Army Commander the then Lieutenant-General General Constantine Chiwenga and Airforce of Zimbabwe Commander Air Marshal Perrence Shiri's appearance on national Television stating that they would not at any moment salute a President without liberation war credentials was an apparent reference to Tsvangirai. This ultimately was a subtle threat to the Zimbabwean populace to vote MDC at their own peril. In the face of such threats, a ZANU (PF) victory was more or less assured as the majority of Zimbabweans especially the rural majority are 'fed up' of war, thus would not vote in a manner likely to result in the outbreak of a war. Thus, by keeping close control of the security forces, the party has ensured that it can easily cow the populace into submission if ever they entertain thoughts of an uprising as evidenced by the force used whenever there are anti-government demonstrations by civic society organisations.

Another dimension of the party is that it embarked on the construction of the hegemonic project that saw the emergence of revived nationalism delivered in a particularly virulent form with race as a key trope within the discourse, and a selective rendition of the liberation history deployed as an ideological policing agent in the public debate in the post February 2000 Referendum period ZANU-PF decided to rethink land, state and nation in the face of stiff competition and the prospect of losing power to the newly formed MDC. The result of the revived nationalist assault by the ruling party has been a repudiation of the national policy of reconciliation that was enunciated by the newly independent state in 1980. ZANU-PF radically restructured the terrain of the constituency politics towards a politics of frontal assault that had as its major targets the former colonial power, Britain, her allies in the West, the local white population, the opposition MDC and its supporters. 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 coercive machinery. The party's leaders were labeled stooges of the West and agents of neo-colonialism.

In addition, the nature of the international community has also enabled the party to maintain its control on power. A global kaleidoscope has also had an inherent influence on ZANU PF's power base. According to Kenneth Kaunda, leaders in the West say President Mugabe is a demon, that he has destroyed Zimbabwe and he must be gotten rid of — but this demonising is made by people who may not understand what Robert Gabriel Mugabe and his fellow freedom fighters have gone through. (The Herald, June 14, 2007). At the Lancaster House Talks, the people of Zimbabwe were assured that they were going to be independent the following year, 1980. But that wonderful news was conditional. The new government of Zimbabwe was not to deal with land issues but was to "leave that in the hands of the British government". Nationalists from Zimbabwe accepted this rather harsh and complicated condition. The Thatcher government had begun to deal with the land issue, as did her successor, John Major. But when Tony Blair took over in 1997, I understand that some young lady in charge of colonial issues within that government simply dropped doing anything about it (Ibid). Global factors have also played an important role in the opposition's failure. The failure of IMF/WORLD bank structural adjustment policies has been used by ZANU-PF as a clear sign that globalisation is not good for the developing world. This is at a time the MDC is trying to make a presentation of neo-liberal ideology as a panacea for the ills of developing countries.

Furthermore, the party managed to play upon the ideology of pan-Africanism as well as lobby successfully amongst African governments which gave it leverage over its political rival the MDC which was untrustworthy among African governments because of its neo-liberal policies and its preference for dealing with western capitals whilst ignoring African capitals. ZANU PF painted a picture of a western plot which sought to re-colonise the continent and this led to it calling for liberation movements in southern Africa to unite and rally behind it. The effect of this was to sideline MDC and leave it with few allies and sympathisers amongst regional liberation parties because of its close association with the western powers. The party projected itself as the vanguard of African values, independence and sovereignty standing up to the westerners who had initiated the

project of colonisation and perpetuated neo-colonisation and the exploitation of Africa. Such a framing or casting of the party served it well and earned it support within the electorate and African governments who distrusted the MDC for its strategy of constantly seeking solutions from the west and running to the west as it were.

Stalling has also been a tool at the disposal of the party as seen in the late release through state institutions of the voters roll. This was the case in the 2013 elections when the opposition parties had a few days to pour over the voters roll thereby making it impossible to cross check and verify it. Resultantly, cases of voters being bused in occurred thus giving the party an advantage over the opposition. A classic case of stalling and delaying was witnessed in the march 2008 elections when results of presidential elections were 'delayed' without explanation and when they were released, there was suspicion that they had been doctored and manipulated, thus leading to a run-off which enabled the party to implement its strategy of violence which secured a blood-stained victory for it.

Equally important has been the party's thorough control of state institutions such as the media, the Electoral Supervisory Commission/Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, and Registrar General's Department has enabled the party to control the electoral process. The opposition has found it difficult to put its message across to the electorate especially in the face of a situation where the print media is either not accessible to the rural populace where the majority lives or is heavily censored. At most, the rural electorate continues to be bombarded with endless ZANU-PF propaganda to an extent that they are brainwashed. Consumption of media products, despite this, is limited because only a few, afford to buy a newspaper on a daily basis and those who buy the newspaper can only buy those pro- government papers which serve the interests of the ruling party. Further to this has been the use of the Access to information and Protection of Privacy Act by the ruling party to muzzle any potential outlets of expression by the opposition in the form of the independent press. Institutions that deal with elections, registration of voters and actual conduct and running of elections are heavily controlled by the party. Party

functionaries are appointed to influential positions in such institutions. Resultantly the whole electoral process will be heavily skewed in favour of the ruling party to the detriment of opposition interests

ZANU PF has over the years managed to infiltrate and destroy opposition parties thereby rendering them weak and ineffective. Further to ZANU PF's advantage, opposition political parties have unwittingly aided ZANU PF's continued rule in Zimbabwe through a lack of decisiveness. Carkoglu (2012:2) states '...a weak opposition is conducive to facilitating a dominant party' and this has been visible in the country as the opposition has due to a number of factors been rendered weak. The party has managed to play off parties against each other by taking sides in order to create confusion thereby leading to them spending time fighting each other and losing track of the bigger picture. The government of national unity was beset by problems not just between ZANU PF and the two MDC formations but disconcertingly between the MDC formations themselves as well as internal strife within both parties. ZANU PF took sides for instance with Arthur Mutambara when it came to his spat with Welshman Ncube and by so doing soothed Morgan Tsvangirai who did not see eye to eye with Ncube. Internal strife and splits within the opposition have contributed to their weakness thus impacting negatively on their ability to dislodge the ruling party.

Strong leadership crystallised around one figure has been pivotal to the party's political dominance. Despite internal strife, factionalism and political ambition amongst its cadres, the party has been able to remain united therefore consolidating its power in the process. The importance of cohesion is stated by Levitsky and Way (2010:18) who note that a key determinant in ensuring the longevity and survival of a dominant party is its cohesion even in the face of economic meltdown or the rise of a popular political opposition. Despite political ambition and aspirations amongst different members of the party, ZANU PF has been able to manage these such that they do not threaten the party or its hold on power. Discipline perhaps forged by the war experience as well as its socialist roots has been crucial in maintaining unity of purpose amongst its cadres. Personal

ambition has not been allowed to go ahead of the party's objective of remaining in power, this is in sharp contrast to the opposition which has been unable to manage tension as witnessed by splits within it and maintain political discipline which is needed to launch a meaningful assault on ZANU PF's power.

The Global Political Agreement which ushered in a government of national unity enabled the party to survive and re-strategise whilst in government with the MDC. It had been thought that the GNU would be more beneficial to the MDC but this was not to be the case as it bought time for the regime to regroup, re-think and re-craft its strategy thereby enabling it to remain a relevant political player in the country. This is visible in how government posts were allocated as key posts which were pivotal to the party's access to power such as the electoral commission, army and police remained in the hands of the party. Their role were to be crucial as ever more so with the surfacing of Nikuv which liaised with all these agencies, it is believed that this shadowy company helped the party rig the 2013 elections although no evidence has ever been presented. Therefore, faced with illegitimacy and possible isolation, the regime tactfully went into a GNU to safeguard its survival and from it, emerged the winner and stronger as the opposition seemingly went on to press the self-destruct button.

Lastly, the judiciary remains weak, lacks capacity, and is highly patronised. There is no clear separation of powers between the judiciary, the executive and the legislature. This has seen many Justices of the Supreme Court fired because they did not give rulings that favour the ruling party. There is a tendency to appoint pro-ruling party staff in the judiciary system to the extent that those who commit orgies of violence go scot-free if they happen to be pro-ruling party. To ensure that the ruling party retains political power, such pillars of the state as the judiciary are reformed and refashioned to make them comply with the dictates of the executive (Makumbe 2003:22). This seems to indicate that the executive is some kind of an animal which by all means tries to manipulate the environment at the expense of the entire nation. In this regard, the executive has gone to all extents possible to refashion and populate the judiciary to its desire. This has entailed

the enforced retirement of judges seen as not being sympathetic to the status quo. Thus the likes of Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay, Justice McNally, Justice Smith and Justice Ebrahim among others have been removed from the bench. In their place were brought in known ZANU PF sympathisers and members including the new Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku a former post colonial minister, Ben Hlatshwayo a former member of the Information and Publicity arm of the government driven Constitutional Commission and George Chiweshe a former guerrilla during the country's liberation war. Ultimately the executive has seen to it that even when the opposition has any queries legally, they will never succeed as they will be attended to by its lackeys on the bench. With this ZANU PF has ensured that the judiciary is sympathetic to its cause and this enables it to entrench its hold onto power.

The Future of ZANU PF

Since its formation, as ZANU PF has been striving for survival and hegemonic control it has been confronted by and used a number of historical strategies for change which have included armed struggle, negotiated settlement, mass action and other forms of public protest, and legal challenges. Resulting from all this is a party that has seen it all save for one thing; the party had till 2008 never tasted defeat of any form in its whole life span.

March 2008 brought despair and disbelief to ZANU PF as it for the first time lost elections even in its formerly perceived rural stronghold. The harmonised elections held in March led to ZANU PF tasting electoral defeat for the first time since its formation. It only got 99 seats against a combined opposition total of 111 in a Parliament with 210 seats. It however managed to scrap a slight majority in the Senate with 30 seats against a combined opposition total of 30. This situation clearly did not augur well for ZANU PF as the House of Assembly resultantly elected an opposition Speaker thus leasing to a slight shift in the balance of power thereof. June 2008 bore witness to what the future might hold for ZANU PF in Zimbabwean politics that through using elections it can win using dirty tactics. This clearly demonstrated that the party would always resort to its age old tactics of violence and intimidation in the face of any threats to its power.

However, the 2013 election triumph was a crushing blow to the opposition thus eroding whatever gains it had made in the last decade or so. With uncertainty surrounding the future of the main opposition, it would appear Zimbabwe should brace itself for more ZANU PF dominance. The bickering within the opposition puts ZANU PF in the box seat where it can continue to consolidate and woo the electorate with more promises and even stability as opposed to the opposition which has been bickering and has not shown any coherent strategy in terms of providing a way out of its internal squabbles.

Another possibility is of ZANU PF changing from within and sustaining itself. The argument being that the vanguard of the party has grown old and has a tendency of refusing new ideas thereby crippling the renewal of the party. Given the way the decisions are undertaken in ZANU PF the likelihood of the old vanguard leaving the apex of power is not likely. Attempts that were done in the past to revitalise the party were met with heavy penalties for the plotters, in fact it is largely political suicide.

ZANU PF has to clean its recent bad history that has contributed to economic decay and political decadence. Secondly, it has to infuse the emerging problems with its ability to historicise people grievances. Thirdly, its liberation credentials maybe of importance especially when it comes to support from other developing countries where parties that fought for independence are in control.

Furthermore, if the international community comes in, it can encourage through diplomatic strategies to solve broad national concerns in such a way ZANU PF will be guaranteed in some way as some problems being faced by the people will be removed hence increasing its power base. If the western governments can provide the necessary financial assistance for implementing transition agreements and facilitating post-transition economic recovery through debt relief it will serve well for the ZANU PF as no development can be sustained without development assistance especially Balance Of Payment as well as other aid.

Conclusion

The paper has concluded that faced with much strong challenges, ZANU PF designed ways of sustaining its self in power through both democratic and undemocratic means. Democratically, it has sought to use the ballot as a way of allowing people to choose their leaders, managed to maintain institutions of democratic governance, and over all opening up of political space., Undemocratically, despite the existence of institutions of democracy, ZANU PF set restrictive measures that were meant to stifle the efforts of its main rivals from gaining power. If ZANU PF has to sustain itself in power, will be dependent on whether it still continues to control the centers of power.

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