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How authoritarian leaders remain in power and circumvent the democratic process: A case study of Robert Mugabe since 2000.



Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

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Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Kevin Colbourne

_____day of _____, 2009. Johannesburg, South Africa

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Abstract

Given the failing Zimbabwean state, it is imperative to understand the role of the government of Robert Mugabe in its failure to provide democratic freedom and a functional economy. According to Mugabe, the economy is failing due to the enforcement of trade sanctions and the reduction in development aid. However, given that the international community is only willing to remove these impediments to economic development once Robert Mugabe leaves power, the President still maintains his grip on power. Even though the vast majority of Zimbabwe's population is suffering under an economic meltdown, a rapidly declining life expectancy, and oppressive government actions limiting free speech and political participation, Robert Mugabe has managed to not only retain his grip on power but justify his continued leadership to members of the African community. How a leader like this manages to avoid pressures to resolve such a dehumanizing crisis for so many years is perplexing. This report looks at the key tactics used by President Mugabe to remain in power by circumventing the democratic electoral process in Zimbabwe when the stakes became higher in 2000. The report looks at the Zimbabwe situation until the second round of elections in 2008 and does not cover the events of 2009. Through the close examination of *The Logic of Political Survival* (Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson and Morrow, 2003) and its selectorate theory, the paper concludes that the basis for longevity in power is not only based on oppression and loyalty but on the mentality of entitlement. After dealing with the question of how an authoritarian leader remains in power despite the social and economic devastation he or she may have caused, one is left with the question of how a society can reverse this notion of entitlement in order to free itself from oppression and economic devastation often brought on by such leaders.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

On becoming Prime Minister in 1980, Robert Mugabe settled nicely into the position and strove to build a conciliatory working relationship with members of the former government at home and with the international community abroad. By and large, his initial efforts were successful**.** Aid began to pour in. "On the international stage Zimbabwe was accorded star status. One country after another lined up to help the new government make a success of its multiracial venture."(Meredith, 2002, p.46) The leader of the revolution had finally taken his place as the country's leader and the country was a shining example of post-colonial Africa.

However, an insight into the future brutality and autocratic style came to light very soon after Mugabe's coming to power.

> *During the Rhodesian war, violence had become his stock-in-trade….But once in power Mugabe continued to use violence to achieve his objectives. In the case of Matabeleland, the purpose was to crush opposition from Zapu. But subsequently when other opponents challenged his rule, he resorted to the use of violence time and time again. Indeed, he was later to boast that he had 'a degree in violence.' (Meredith, 2002, p.76)*

In fact, according to Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure, the history of the liberation movement had predetermined the violent and autocratic style of leadership.

> *From the outset, Mugabe appears to have harbored a militaristic conception of political authority, proclaiming in 1976 that*

> *'our votes must go together with our guns; after all any vote . . . shall have been the product of the gun. The gun, which provides the votes, should remain its security officer, its guarantor.' Even in the 1980 independence elections, ZANU-PF campaigned on the slogan that it had started the war of liberation, and was the only force that could end it. (2008, p.50)*

Over 28 years in power, Robert Mugabe has overseen the collapse of what used to be one of the most prosperous countries in southern Africa. In 1980, the average annual income in Zimbabwe was $950 and the Zimbabwe dollar was worth more than the American one. (Guest, 2004, p.30) According to the International Crisis Group, Zimbabweans today are facing an economic meltdown, corruption, food shortages and the collapse of vital services. HIV/AIDS among adults stands at over 20 percent. In November 2008 the annual inflation rate stood at officially 231 million percent, the highest in the world, making daily life for Zimbabweans unquestionably desperate. (McGreal, 2008) Reports vary on the actual percentage of the population that is thought to have fled over recent years. Some estimates have the number of Zimbabweans living in South Africa between 1.4 and 3 million people. This has resulted in remittances becoming a lifeline for many of those remaining. (International Crisis Group, 2008) The agricultural sector which was once a thriving and fundamental sector of the economy has been largely destroyed, leaving as many as five million Zimbabweans dependent on food relief. (Bratton and Masunungure, 2008)

In addition to the economic collapse, the country has continued to witness and suffer the tactics of a brutal regime doing everything within its power to remain in power. From all accounts, beginning with the massacres in Matabeleland with the Fifth Brigade, throughout the 80s, Mugabe used presidential powers to suppress opposition which continued into the 90s and allowed him to, in effect, rule by decree, shutting down free media and fixing the democratic process in order to have an advantage over any opposition party brave enough to go up against him. The combination of this style of governing,

growing intolerance of any form of pluralism, and, occasionally, threats of dissidence from both outside and inside ZANU-PF contributed to more blatant manipulation of the electoral process. From 2000 and on, spurred by the growth of an electoral and NGO based opposition, there appears to be an all out war of intimidation and violence towards anyone not supporting the ruling party and its leader.

In an attempt to maintain power, Mugabe has purged rivals and co-opted loyalists from within ZANU-PF and the Joint Operations Command (JOC) which is composed of the heads of the army, air force, police, prisons, and intelligence agency by enriching them at the cost of the larger public**.** Through these strategic relationships, violence, oppression and manipulated elections, Robert Mugabe has been able to circumvent the democratic process and retain power despite a collapsed social and economic state of the country.

Zimbabwe held combined presidential and parliamentary elections on March 29, 2008. In the lead up, a wide variety of organizations and news media had expressed concerns about the inadequate preparation, evidence of irregularities associated with registration and inspection of the voters rolls, and concerns that the violence of the past would affect this campaign and election. Many observers suggested that the overall election environment was tarnished by the government's brutal history of stamping out democratic freedoms of speech and association. Opposition groups feared the worst. According to a 2007 Amnesty International report, fear of beatings and detention was common among the opposition groups and civil society organizations. Campaigning in the election, however, was relatively open and the opposition parties, including the government's biggest threat, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by Morgan Tsvangirai, were able to campaign relatively freely and peacefully. The government did allow some international observers to observe the election process but only from countries that they deemed "friendly" but most foreign media were barred from the country. (International Crisis Group, 2008) Despite the uneven playing field, Zimbabweans clearly signaled their rejection of the status quo. For the first time in the country's history, ZANU-PF lost control of

parliament to the MDC. The outcome of the presidential election was controversial with unprecedented delays in the announcement of official results. The Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC) withheld the results for over a month while reports from various news media and civil society organizations reported a countrywide campaign of violence and intimidation against supporters of the MDC. (UN News Centre, 2008) Results released by the ZEC gave Tsvangirai 47% against 42.3% for Mugabe, warranting a run-off election.

On June 27th, 2008, a runoff of the top two candidates in the first round was held. Mugabe easily won against Tsvangirai, who had dropped out of the race several days before citing violence, intimidation and vote rigging.

While the political situation following the June election was uncertain, Mugabe and his allies showed few signs of accepting defeat resulting in further violence as the president and ZANU-PF hardliners sought to retain their grip on power.[1] A vivid reminder of their determination is obvious in their party propaganda. Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure note that "regime power in Zimbabwe has always been buttressed by coercion, chillingly symbolized in ZANU-PF's trademark emblem, the fist." (2008 p.50)

Two decades of mismanagement has lead to the increase in state sponsored violence and electoral manipulation especially since 2000. Thus, Mugabe's choice of systematic violence in and around the 2008 elections was nothing new.

> *Like a Cape buffalo, Mugabe has proven himself most dangerous when wounded and cornered. On the eve of the presidential election in March, he set the tone by threatening to wage war against the MDC in the event that he lost. As the election results trickled out and it became apparent that ZANU-PF had indeed lost control of the parliament and stood on the brink of losing the presidency too, the party-state launched a terror campaign of a scope and intensity never before seen in Zimbabwe. In stepping up the repression before the runoff election, ZANU-PF's*

> *apparent objective was to incapacitate, if not eliminate, the MDC as an electoral threat. (Bratton and Masunungure, 2008, p.50)*

Is this determination to remain in power a reaction to possible retaliation by the people of Zimbabwe and the international courts or is this the determination of a man who believes that the presidency is “naturally” his to hold? According to some Mugabe analysts, this just may be the reason why he will never relinquish power peacefully. Author Heidi Holland believes that people should not expect a departure any time soon. “I think he plans to stay there until he dies, and I think he considers that his right. It's partly because he is such an old man and he comes from a tradition of African leadership which is based on the kingship model.”(Canadian Broadcasting Company, 2008) This sense of entitlement combined with the fact that he has “created a situation within ZANU-PF in which he is practically irreplaceable” would lead some to believe that retirement may be some time away. (Moore, 2005, p. 132) It does appear however that the once undefeatable revolutionary leader has lost his claim to uncontested leadership in the eyes of the majority of people in Zimbabwe and an increasingly number of leaders in the neighborhood. (Heinlein, 2008) This has led to a round of power sharing negotiations which resulted in a deal which put Morgan Tsvangirai as Prime Minister and the sharing of government departments between ZANU (PF) and the MDC.

In order to understand what continues to transpire in Zimbabwe with President Mugabe’s motivation and actions to maintain power, I have chosen to focus my document analysis on two key areas. A preliminary literature review revealed theoretical works which discusses dictatorial and authoritarian regimes. This provides a general framework with which Mugabe’s rule can be considered. The second area of literature concerns Robert Mugabe and the state of Zimbabwe during his years in power. This will allow us to understand how Mugabe established his power base and his iron grip on power after 1980, and provide context for his current attempt to remain in power at all costs.

In this paper I will discuss the theories of dictators and authoritarian governments and examine how they maintain power through strategic relationships, oppressive and violent measures and perverted democratic processes. I will then place and connect Robert Mugabe's actions with these theories. By looking at the key tactics used by President Mugabe to remain in power by circumventing the democratic electoral process in Zimbabwe since 2000, it is necessary to begin with a historical background from 1980 to 2000. The paper will then continue by investigating how and why the stakes for electoral and political survival became higher in 2000, which resulted in the ruling party's strategy to maintain power through the electoral system while co-opting individuals and groups and purging, intimidating and assaulting others. The paper will then place the Mugabe regime within a theoretical framework of authoritarian governments and, by using the work of Prezeworski, Beuno de Mesquita et al. and Huntington, explain how and why such tactics were successful, despite the severe consequences to Zimbabwean society as a whole. The final two chapters provide an analysis of threats and challenges to his leadership and conclude with key reasons why he has been able to maintain power.

The main focus of the theoretical works will be from *The Logic of Political Survival* by Beuno de Mesquita, Alistair Smith, Randolph Siverson and James D. Morrow (2003). The authors discuss the concept that democratic governments appear to offer their citizens more peace and prosperity than autocracies do, but autocratic leaders stay in office roughly twice as long as leaders in democratic nations. One of the conclusions is that, in many cases, good policies are detrimental to political survival, whereas bad policies or those often taken by authoritarian governments, often enhance political survival. They argue that governments with medium-sized selectorates[2] (a political subset of society) are able to survive by enriching their selectorates and the smaller and essential, 'winning coalition', at the cost of the larger public. In the case of Zimbabwe, Mugabe appears to allow his political circle to loot the country's riches by taking advantage of things only available to those in the selectorate and winning

coalition such as favorable exchange rates on foreign currency and taking over of white owned farmland. Some observers, however, say that the drastic economic decline has undercut Mugabe's ability to distribute patronage and thereby maintain political control. It is assumed that the "beneficiaries of the regime have shrunk to a small group of civilian and military cronies associated with the top organs of the party." (Bratton and Masunungure, 2008 p.47)

This report will examine Mugabe and his regime through the elements of the selectorate theory including the rigged electoral system currently being employed by the Mugabe regime, oppression and violence of those willing or perceived to be a threat to their leadership and loyalty of core constituents needed for leaders to survive.

Interestingly, the authors of *The Logic of Political Survival* note that revolutionary leaders often promise democracy during the struggle to unseat the government but that things change once they come to power. In a passage eerily similar to that of the liberation movement of Zimbabwe, the authors reflect on other such revolutionaries.

> *Mao, Kenyatta and innumerable other revolutionary leaders promise democracy, freedom, and equality. They offer peace and prosperity, but they all too often deliver corruption, poverty and despair...Before victory, revolutionaries and their followers are far removed from opportunities for personal gain enjoyed by members of the winning coalition. Being so removed, their preferred form of government is one that delivers public goods, and so they declare themselves in favor of just such a political systems…Having shifted from being outsiders to being those privileged with access to private benefits, they respond to their new incentives. The institutional preferences of outsiders are not the same as the institutional preferences of leaders, and only sometime are they the same as those held by members of the winning coalition…*

> *If there institutional role changes, their incentives shift and so does their behavior…They may be constrained to implement democracy, as we will discuss shortly, but absent such constraints they can be expected to favor a rigged electoral system. (Bueno de Mesquita et al.,2003, pp. 375 -376)*

This change in a leader's incentive is confirmed in the following two chapters when we deal with Mugabe's coming to power in 1980 and the intentions of good governance and democracy which seemed to guide him.

The analysis of documentation on Mugabe and the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe is extensive and varied. In *Dinner with Mugabe (2008)*, Heidi Holland delves into the life of Mugabe and theorizes on his transition from a freedom fighter to a tyrant. Holland concludes that he is a leader who is out of touch with reality. A 28 year reign of paranoia began as a genuine hero who had conquered the country's white supremacist regime but will be remembered by most as a tyrant who ruined his country. At 84 years of age today, Mugabe is unapologetic and continues to blame the economic crisis on the European Union and Britain. In a book that culminates with a 2 hour interview with Mugabe, Holland confirms that the tactics used by the President to maintain power are in his mind completely justifiable in order to protect the country from colonialism. When asked if he had any regrets, Mugabe replied, "No, no regrets. You go into a fight. It's a fight against colonialism. You make sacrifices." (p.242) Twenty eight years after liberation and Mugabe still appears to consider governing a continuous struggle against colonialism.

Martin Meredith, covers Zimbabwe from independence until 2002 and provides his views on Mugabe's role in the fall of Zimbabwe. *Our Votes, Our Guns* (2002) presents the recent history of Zimbabwe focusing on Robert Mugabe and why initial hopes were high that he had the intelligence, political awareness and vision to help the country recover from years of colonialism and civil war. But as time went on, Mugabe became increasingly autocratic and his tactics increasingly violent. In recent years he has unleashed a reign of terror and

corruption in his country. “The shock of his defeat in the referendum in 2000 was thus all the more profound. His reaction was to resort to the methods that had served him so well in the past: violence and intimidation.” (p.236) Meredith recounts the events leading up to the 2002 elections by taking us through Gukurahundi and the Matabeleland massacres, the deal with the war veterans and the subsequent land issues which have all but crippled the state’s economy. All in the name of wiping out his opponents and ensuring support from key political allies, the military and the ruthless war veterans to ensure his political survival. “Determined to remain in power, he used all the resources of government to attack his opponents, sanctioning murder, torture, and lawlessness of every kind.” (p.236)

As mentioned earlier, for the purpose of theoretical examination, the paper will focus on the period beginning in 2000 until 2008. In *Zimbabwe’s Plunge* (2002), Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya give a succinct synopsis of the difficulties beginning in 2000 brought on by two decades of (mis)management by Mugabe.

> *One sign earlier that year was the electorate’s rejection of a constitutional referendum promoted heavily by the Zanu government. In desperation, Mugabe resurrected Zanu’s most militant, often virulent strain of nationalist demagoguery, attempting as time ran out to simultaneously ‘solve’ the long-standing land distribution problem, terrorize supporters of the opposition, and pass the buck for his own failings to the country’s small white population, foreign countries (especially Britain and the US), imperialism in general and the IMF in particular. (p. 74)*

Information and reports on the elections by the media and by NGOs which outline the lead up, Election Day and post election period was also analyzed. This documentation has provided insight into whether the elections were considered to be true democratic actions or simply tools used by the authoritarian

regime to present a democratic facade. It also provided details into what has been done by the Mugabe regime to postpone the election results, intimidate voters and exclude selected foreign journalists and observers. These documents include various reports from the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) and the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA). These sources of data are invaluable in order to study the election process and any manipulation of the process by the political parties or state.

Additional documentation includes reports from various international and domestic organizations who report on the economic collapse of Zimbabwe. The reports deal with unemployment, inflation, food shortages and the health and democracy crisis caused by the economic meltdown. Reports from organizations such as the International Crisis Group (ICG) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) in addition to scholarly journals and various media reports were used to collect data on the declining state of Zimbabwe's economy and standard of living.

By using existing documentation which sets the framework for authoritarian rulers to develop strategic relationships and hold questionable elections in the name of democracy, I hope to add to the existing body of knowledge around the authoritarian state of Zimbabwe and its leader through a closer look at the tactics used to circumvent the democratic process and retain power despite a collapsed social and economic state of the nation primarily through the selectorate theory outlined in *The Logic of Political Survival*.

Research conducted was given appropriate ethical considerations. Research conducted by document analysis was done with documentation that was used was in the public domain and properly referenced. According to the WITS ethical guidelines, approval of the research paper proposal was obtained from the Wits University Ethics Committee.

Chapter 2

Mugabe's coming to power and the period leading up to 2000

Given the failing state of Zimbabwe, it is imperative to understand the history of the current government of Robert Mugabe in its failure to provide democratic freedom and a functional economy. What has lead to the government's failure? According to Mugabe, the economy is failing due to the enforcement of trade sanctions and the reduction in development aid. (Chadenga, 2008) Given that the international community appears willing to remove these impediments to economic development once Robert Mugabe leaves power, the President still maintains his grip on power. Even though the vast majority of the population are suffering under an economic meltdown, a rapidly declining life expectancy, and citizens associated with the opposition continue to suffering brutal beatings, the ability of Robert Mugabe to not only retain his grip on power but what appeared to be his ability to justify his continued leadership to members of the African community and avoid pressures to resolve the crisis for so many years is perplexing. (Baldauf & Schatz, 2008)

This chapter will provide an historical background to Mugabe's coming to power and the first 20 years of his reign including the brutality which came to light very soon after coming to power. Gukurahundi, interpreted as "the sweeping away of rubbish" (Meredith, 2002, p.66), began in 1982, when Mugabe unleashed his special North Korean trained army to quash any opposition rising from political dissidents from Zapu led by Joshua Nkomo. This unleashing resulted in the deaths of several hundred dissidents but also thousands of civilians. Beginning from the massacres in Matabeleland throughout the 80's using totalitarian powers devised by the Rhodesian leader Ian Smith to his own Presidential Powers Act in 1990 has allowed him to in effect rule by decree.

This chapter will lead to the 2000 elections and the growing desperation of the government brought on by the electorate's rejection of a constitutional referendum earlier that year. The chapter will also look into the increasing

terrorization of opposition supporters and the country's economic failings due to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the war vets and the land distribution issue.

A Brief History of Rhodesia

What is now known as Zimbabwe was formally named Rhodesia after Cecil Rhodes, an English born businessman and South African politician, in 1895. European immigrants took advantage of Rhodesia's rich mineral and agricultural resource potential which eventually led to demand for more land which resulted in the passage of a series of land apportionment acts that reserved certain areas for Europeans. These land acts culminated with the control of 46.9% of Rhodesia's land under the whites, who comprised 5% of the population. (Stone, 2007)

In 1964, the white majority population, growing more concerned about the possibility of majority rule replaced Prime Minister Winston Field, who was accused by the white population in Rhodesia for being too moderate and not moving quickly enough to obtain Rhodesian independence, with Ian Smith. In 1965, Prime Minster Smith led his Rhodesian Front Party to an overwhelming victory in the general elections. On November 11, 1965, after lengthy and unsuccessful negotiations with the British Government, Prime Minister Smith issued a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from the United Kingdom. (US State Dept., 2008)

Prior to this UDI, Britain wanted assurances from Rhodesia that, before independence was granted, they would move toward majority rule. The white Rhodesians refused to give such assurances. Britain considered the UDI unconstitutional and illegal but they did not enter into the realm of military force to gain back control of Rhodesia. The UDI prompted international sanctions and guerrilla war but since Britain did not intervene to uphold British law, the white Rhodesians were allowed to continue their apartheid system of rule.

Anti-government guerilla activity increased dramatically causing uncertainty in the 70s. “In 1974, the major African nationalists groups--the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which split away from ZAPU in 1963--were united into the "Patriotic Front" and combined their military forces.” (US state Dept, 2008) The violence and economic sanctions continued to put pressure on the Rhodesian government and in 1976, “the Smith government agreed in principle to majority rule and to a meeting in Geneva with black nationalist leaders to negotiate a final settlement of the conflict.” (US State Dept, 2008)

In order to bring closure to the Rhodesian issue indefinitely, deliberations with all parties began at Lancaster House in London on September 10, 1979. Three months later on December 12, British Governor Lord Christopher Soames arrived in Salisbury to reassert British authority over the colony. “His arrival signaled the end of the Rhodesian rebellion and the ‘internal settlement’, as well as the beginning of Zimbabwe's transition to independence.” (US State Dept, 2008) All remaining sanctions were lifted and on December 21 the parties signed an agreement calling for a cease-fire, new elections, a transition period under British rule, and a new constitution implementing majority rule while protecting minority rights. (US State Dept, 2008)

Zimbabwe held pre independence elections in February 1980 where nine political parties campaigned. The elections were monitored by hundreds of observers, most of who concluded that the elections were free and fair and reflected the will of the people. Robert Mugabe's ZANU (PF) party won an absolute majority and was asked to form Zimbabwe's first government. Mugabe won 57 seats of 80 reserved for blacks, becoming Zimbabwe’s Prime Minister. The Rhodesian Front Party won all 20 seats reserved for whites.

Prime Minister Mugabe spoke of national reconciliation and reconstruction.

> *His priorities were to integrate the various armed forces, reestablish social services and education in rural areas, and*

> *resettle the estimated one million refugees and displaced persons. Mugabe also announced that his government would begin investigating ways of reversing past discriminatory policies in land distribution, education, employment, and wages.* (US State Dept, 2008)

A New Zimbabwe

In seeking national reconciliation, Mugabe's announced his cabinet which included members of ZANU-PF, PF-ZAPU, and independent white members of parliament (MPs) and senators.

This inclusive policy of reconciliation was mostly successful during the country's first two years of independence. “Ian Smith and many of his associates held seats in the parliament where they participated freely in debates. Likewise, Joshua Nkomo, Mugabe's rival as leader of the nationalist forces, was included in the first cabinet along with several other members of PF-ZAPU.” (US State Dept, 2008) However, this honeymoon was not to last. According to Bond and Manyanya, the inclusiveness was soon to be undermined. “Under the rubric of nationalism, Zimbabwe’s state and ruling Zanu party became indistinguishable during the 1980s. A lower-middle class was quickly built through the bureaucracy and corruption and patronage systems emerged.” (2002, p.25) The issue of loyalty within the bureaucracy was ensured through healthy salaries and the hopes of entering into the leader’s ‘winning coalition’ assuring perks and benefits unavailable to the vast majority of the population. “There were also lamentable ethnic overtones. Shona dominance of the state included repression of the minority Ndebele people.” (2002, p.25)

Serious unraveling of the inclusiveness began when Government security officials discovered large caches of arms and ammunition on properties owned by ZAPU. This led to Nkomo and his followers being accused of plotting to overthrow Mugabe's government. Nkomo and his closest aides were expelled

from the cabinet. This resulted in PF-ZAPU supporters forming a “campaign of dissidence against the government.” (US state Dept, 2008)

> *Centering primarily in Matabeleland, home of the Ndebeles who were PF-ZAPU's main followers, this dissidence continued through 1987 and involved attacks on government personnel and installations, armed banditry aimed at disrupting security and economic life in the rural areas, and harassment of ZANU-PF members. Occasionally, some demanded that Nkomo and his colleagues be reinstated in the cabinet. More frequently, however, dissidents called for the return of farms and other properties seized from PF-ZAPU.* (US State Dept, 2008)

In 1983-84, the government declared a curfew in areas of Matabeleland and sent in the army in an attempt to suppress dissidents. Gukurahundi, interpreted as “the sweeping away of rubbish” (Meredith, 2002, p.66), began in 1982 when Mugabe unleashed his special North Korean trained army (5 Brigade) to quash any opposition rising from political dissidents from Zapu led by Joshua Nkomo. This unleashing resulted in the deaths of several hundred dissidents but also thousands of civilians. The Fifth Brigade also “imposed stringent curfews, banned all forms of transport, closed shops, and blocked drought relief supplies for villagers facing starvation.” (Meredith, 2002, p.67) Nkomo and his lieutenants repeatedly denied any connection with the dissidents. While this event was largely ignored by the Western media, it still remains a significant scar on the people affected and on the country’s history as a whole. “Zimbabwe’s honeymoon was over. Matabeleland became an indelible stain on Mugabe’s record and on Zimbabwe’s post independence history.” (Meldrum, 2005, p. 65)

In the 1985 elections, ZANU-PF increased its majority, holding 67 of the 100 seats. ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU agreed to unite in December 1987, and the parties formally merged in December 1989. Although ethnic tensions simmered, this unity pact set the stage for a de facto one-party state which lasted until the

2000 parliamentary elections. “Once Zapu was repressed and co-opted, the opposition consisted of two parties that could not attract more than a fifth of the electorate: the Zimbabwe Unity Movement in 1990 and Forum Party in 1995.” (Bond & Manyanya, 2002, p. 25) “Mugabe’s early efforts to codify the one-party state in law were beaten back by not only human rights advocates and various small right-leaning political parties, but by international opinion, at a time Mugabe sought extended access to global financial markets.” (Bond & Manyanya, 2002, p. 25) In fact, Mugabe’s desire for a one party state led to his actions to do whatever was necessary to achieve this. In *Mugabe: Teacher, Revolutionary, Tyrant (2008)*, Andrew Norman states that Mugabe’s determination to crush all opposition is clarified by his statement made in 1983. “The one-party state is more in keeping with African traditions. It makes for greater unity for the people. It puts all opinions under one umbrella whether these opinions are radical or reactionary.” (p. 79) This was seen by many observers, however, as one of Mugabe’s key failures which led to future problems. Andrew Meldrum writes that “although he tortured Matabeleland into submission, he never succeeded in achieving his goal of a one-party state. After Zanu-PF swallowed Zapu in 1987, Mugabe ruled over a de facto single-party state, it is true, but he never succeeded in making it illegal for any other party to challenge his rule.” (2005, p.73)

Mugabe and his party won another overwhelming majority in March 1990 winning 117 of the 120 election seats. However, voter turnout was only 54%, and the campaign was not free and fair in the sense that opposition candidates and supporters were subjected to harassment and some violent attacks. The merger between the PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF was reflected in the campaign manifesto which put the contribution of the parties to the liberation struggle at the forefront. This left the only other serious rival ZUM (Zimbabwe Unity Movement) headed by Edgar Tekere without a chance. This political domination did not stop the violence and intimidation that ZANU PF has become famous for. (US State Dept, 2008)

> *None of the other political parties made any significant impact. A lower intensity of such violence as there was in the general elections is attributable in part to the merger of the two principle parties. ZUM candidates and supporters were nevertheless often given a hard time. In the Midlands, Masvingo, Manicaland, and Mashonaland East they were subjected to harassment and vilification and accorded little police protection. ZUM members were attacked in the Gwero, Karoi, Kwekwe, Makoni Central, and Mufakose constituencies. Patrick Kombayi, mayor of Gweru and a former ZANU-PF official, was abducted and shot but remained in the race. There was also an attempt on the life of Jerry Nyambuyaa, also a ZUM member.* (Lodge, Kadima & Pottie, 2002, pp. 442-443)

The 1990s continued to witness unrest with demonstrations by the student movements, trade unionists and workers expressing their discontent with the government.

> *Students protested in October 1990 against proposals for an increase in government control of universities and again in May 1991 and May 1992, when they clashed with police. Trade unionists and workers were also vocal critics of the government during this time. In June 1992, police prevented trade unionists from holding anti-government demonstrations. In 1994, there was widespread industrial unrest. In August and September 1996, thousands of civil servants demanding salary increases organized a national strike and in October and November of the same year, nurses and junior doctors went on strike over salary issues. (US State Dept, 2008)*

Things were changing rapidly and the legitimacy of the government was fading fast. This opposition was having an effect on Mugabe. In one particular

case Mugabe clearly showed his tactics of attacking a minority in order to gain the support of the majority. In 1995 at Zimbabwe's International Book Fair with a theme on Human Rights and Justice, Mugabe railed against homosexuals. Andy Meldrum who watched the perplexed faces of young children sitting on the floor during the speech states "It was a classic example of Mugabe trying to regain his waning popularity by attacking a minority group. In other speeches, he would vilify Jews, the British, white farmers, church leaders, human rights organizations and any group that challenged him." (2005 p. 92) This tactic appeared to work along with his control of the media, the huge level of state control over the economy and industry and the security forces. All of this allowed Mugabe and his party to keep organized political opposition to a minimum through most of the 1990s.

To be fair, the unrest spreading throughout the population was not only the fault of Mugabe and his party. The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which was designed in 1990 for the most part by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund was set up to "deregulate and indebt an economy seen as overprotected and inefficient." (Bond & Manyanya, 2002, p. XV) The effects of ESAP on Zimbabwe have documented by many observers. Bond and Manyanya outline its failures.

> *In reality, ESAP failed miserably. GDP growth only reached 5% during one year (1994) and averaged just 1.2% from 1991-1995. Inflation averaged more than 30% during the period, and never dropped anywhere near the 10% goal. The budget deficit was more than 10% of GDP during the ESAP era (with no prospect of getting down to the targeted 5% from a drought-related high of 13% in 1994/1995).* (2002, p. 32)

It is important to remember as well that the ESAP was brought in due to Rhodesia's economic difficulties including increased budget allocation on defense and the cumulative effects of the sanctions mentioned earlier. However,

the ultimate collapse of the economy appears to have been precipitated however by decisions made by Mugabe in order to maintain the support of what he believed to be an essential element of his 'selectorate'. "The precise moment that the Zimbabwean economy began its generalized plunge was probably the late morning of 14 November 1997, when over a four-hour period, the Zimbabwe dollar lost 74% of its value." (Bond & Manyanya, 2002, p. 38) This plunge was due to what Bond and Manyana believe to be the two political events in September-October 1997 that attract the most blame from commentators while keeping in mind the existing financial woes brought on by the former government of Ian Smith.

> *First, bucking strident advice and monetary arm-twisting from international financial institutions, Mugabe paid off a challenge to his legitimacy from more than 50 000 liberation war veterans by granting them Z$50,000 each plus Z$2,000 per month pension. The excombatants were successful essentially because their 1997 demonstrations in Harare and intense harassment of Mugabe caused acute embarrassment. The World Bank immediately suspended balance of payments support.*
>
> *Mugabe also suddenly announced that at last government would begin implementing the Land Designation Act, and 1500 mainly white-owned farms were identified for redistribution. Even though only partial compensation was promised – covering buildings and infrastructure, not inflated land value – again this raised the likelihood of fiscal convulsion. The damage to the commercial agricultural sector and related industries would be heightened by the fact (and past experience), as conceded by the agriculture minister in a subsequent radio broadcast, that the recipients of the farms would include wealthy politicians ahead of land-starved peasants. (This patronage route was important, at a*

time other state-based options for embourgeoisement were closing.) (2002, p.39)

With the effects of ESAP and growing independence for the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), widespread opposition to the ruling party began (Moore, 2005, p. 129), leading observers to believe that these decisions by the government appear to have been motivated simply by regaining or holding key support for Mugabe. “Because the ZANU-PF was reliant on support from Shona areas and the rural districts, including the war veterans who were dissatisfied over the pace of land reform, Mugabe was pressured into implementing this more proactive land redistribution.” (Stone, 2007)

This political and economic upheaval, not to mention worsening human rights conditions, resulted in the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in September 1999. In February 2000, the MDC’s first opportunity to challenge Mugabe came during the referendum campaign on a draft constitution backed by the government which among other things would have allowed Mugabe to seek two additional terms in office, granted government officials immunity from prosecution, and authorized government seizure of white-owned land. The referendum was easily defeated. In the days leading up to the referendum, Andy Meldrum was waiting in line at the Registration office in Harare. “I eventually succeeded in getting my national registration papers but much more importantly, I picked up the mood of the people. My day at the Registration office told me that average people were not inclined to endorse the constitution in any way.” (2005, p. 123) Meldrum continues that after the results were announced, “Young people started shouting that Mugabe had been given a yellow card, like in a football match, and that in the parliamentary elections he would be given a red card and sent off the field altogether.” (2005, p. 124) This excitement and hope for the future was not to last long. “Within 2 weeks of the rejection of his constitution, he (Mugabe) had come up with a new strategy that would crush his opponents, quell the stirring of unrest within his party and reinvigorate his image as the most radical African leader: the land invasions.”

(2005, p. 125) This government sanctioned group of war veterans was characterized by forcing white farmers from their land and included violence against both farmers and farm employees.

The constitution referendum was the first time people voted against the Mugabe regime in clear protest. However, later that same year Mugabe defeated newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opposition in June 2000 parliamentary elections, though missing two-thirds majority needed to change constitution. According to the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, the referendum and elections held in 2000 was good for the people of Zimbabwe given the fact that the referendum was defeated and ZANU PF did not receive the necessary majority in parliament to make changes to the constitution. It also concluded that the government was not prepared to give up power easily.

> *The year 2000 saw many different violations of human, as well as political, rights. The much-needed overhaul of Zimbabwe's Constitution foundered over basic issues of executive power. The people's rejection of attempts to extend what they saw as already over-arrogated power led to massive violence, during which human rights were abused on a large scale. Manipulation of the electoral process, including attempts to render monitoring ineffectual, endangered existing political rights. But the results of the election meant that Zanu-PF no longer had the capacity to amend the Constitution without subverting at least eight opposition MPs. In an attempt to win back its earlier two-thirds majority, and control of the Constitution, it has used violence in by-elections similarly as in the general elections. (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001)*

As noted earlier, true opposition to Mugabe began in 1999. The MDC was formed and former National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) chair, and trade union leader Morgan Tsvangirai became the head of the MDC. Brendan Stone provides a succinct analysis of where the MDC drew its support. This included:

> *…non-Shona speaking regions, or about one-fifth of Zimbabwe's population, including the Ndebele Matabeleland minority, as well as urban centres, and the NCA's support base. The "economically privileged white minority," which had hitherto supported ZANU-PF, or abstained from elections, turned their support towards the MDC. Essentially, the party managed to unite the many diverse elements oppose to Mugabe's ZANU-PF government, running on an 'anybody but Mugabe' platform. (2008)*

As we can see, after losing some of his initial supporters such as the white minority population and the non-Shona speaking regions, Mugabe became increasingly reliant on the rural Shona population, the army and the war vets in order to pursue his quest for continued and unfettered power. According to Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure, this support base was reinforced through the politicized party-state.

> *The major prize that ZANU-PF won at independence was the apparatus of the state, including its military machinery and economic resources. Since that time, the party has sought the vanguard role in society—as well as the supremacy over the state—historically associated with communist systems. The ruling party and public administration are fused, and organizational structures are conflated at all levels—the party is married to the state.* (2008, p.44)

A party-state supported by an ethnic constituency and military force appears to have been the beginning of a long extended fight for Mugabe to remain in power and continue to rule into the 21st century regardless of the consequences to the land and people he helped liberate.

Chapter 3

Focusing its strategy - Events from 2000 – 2008

The survival tactics used by Mugabe and Zanu-PF during the period of 2000 to 2008 will be examined in this chapter, with a focus on the elections held within this period as well as the increasing role of the military in the day to day governing of the state.

This chapter will take us to the most recent elections held in 2008. These elections appeared to be somewhat free and peaceful but the strong showing by the opposition resulted in unprecedented delays in the announcement of the official results followed by a countrywide campaign of violence and intimidation against supporters of the MDC. The violence, killings and intimidation throughout the run off presidential election in June, 2008 led to the withdrawal of the opposition candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, from the race. With no opponent and an army of intimidating supporters, Mugabe secured a victory which was widely condemned by most of the international community, including, for the first time, several members of the African Union. (Heinlein, 2008) We will see that these tactics of intimidation and violence were used in the 2002 and 2005 elections as well.

The decade began on a positive note for the opposition movement. By defeating the government in a constitutional referendum in 2000, and winning 57 out of 120 contested seats in parliamentary elections that year, the MDC challenged ZANU PF's hegemony. On the other hand, it has also put the government and Mugabe on a path of election rigging, violence and intimidation not seen since the liberation fight for Rhodesia. The blatant manipulation of the electoral process, not seen prior to the elections in 2000, was combined with an all out war of intimidation and violence towards anyone not supporting the ruling party of Zanu-PF and its leader, Robert Mugabe.

> *A rattled ZANU-PF retaliated with repressive legislation and violence. It introduced the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), a colonial-style instrument aimed at inhibiting the opposition's political gatherings. The party also unleashed war veterans in a chaotic campaign to evict white farmers from commercial farmland, and mobilized militias under the guise of a national youth-training program. In other words, ZANU-PF signaled in physical as well as ideological terms that it would not tolerate the emergence of a democratic opposition. And by rigging elections for the presidency in 2002 and parliament in 2005, the authoritarian regime honed its strategies for hanging onto power even in the face of legitimate electoral challenges. (*Bratton & Masunungure, 2008 *p. 45)*

During the presidential election held in March 2002 and the parliamentary election held in 2005, Mugabe resorted to using state machinery, war veterans and youth militias to intimidate, suppress dissent, gag media, manipulate food aid and violate human rights. Although these elections were denounced by international observers as neither free nor fair, both elections were endorsed by South Africa and, in 2005, by the African Union (AU) as well. (International Crisis Group, 2008) How did Mugabe manage to have the state machinery, war veterans and youth militias? According to Bratton and Masunungure, besides giving into demands by the war vets, after independence, ZANU-PF used demobilized war veterans and returnees from Zimbabwe's international diaspora to penetrate the civilian bureaucracy and the security agencies. (2008, p. 45) This was the beginning of the politicized party-state referred to in chapter two.

> *For example, in the run-up to the 1995 elections, a ZANU-PF official threatened to dismiss civil servants who might support an opposition party. In early 2001, war veterans stormed local authorities in opposition districts, locking local-government offices, closing schools, and demanding the dismissal of councilors, teachers, and other workers. The country's judiciary—the last*

> *bastion of autonomy from the party-state—was not spared. In 2001, the authorities launched a campaign to intimidate senior jurists into retirement and to 'restructure' the court system by naming a dozen new judges to the High and Supreme Courts. (*Bratton & Masunungure, 2008, *p.45)*

After the referendum defeat and a strong showing by the MDC in 2000, the stakes for Robert Mugabe in the 2002 election were extremely high. Mugabe, while ensuring that the process on Election Day was free and fair, was declared the winner over challenger Morgan Tsvangirai by a 56% to 42% margin. However, most international observers condemned the election as seriously flawed with the pre-election environment being neither free nor fair. Some observers believed that the election itself was marred by significant fraud and rigging. The Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) released a report on the 2002 elections and stated that although the polling day procedures appeared to be fair, the problems were in the climate leading up to Election Day.

> *Moreover, the Presidential Elections in Zimbabwe in March 2002 were conducted in an environment of strong polarisation, political violence and an election administration with severe shortcomings. The political and security climate in which the elections were conducted was complex, characterised by high levels of polarisation and political intolerance, lack of communication amongst stakeholders and lack of free flow of information to the electorate, all of which are necessary conditions for democracy to prevail.*
>
> *It was clear to us that while the actual polling and counting processes were peaceful and the secrecy of the ballot was assured, the Presidential election in Zimbabwe was marred by a high level of politically motivated violence and intimidation, which preceded the poll. While violent acts were carried out by supporters*

of both of the main political parties, it is our view that most of these were perpetrated by members / supporters of the ruling party against members / supporters of the opposition.

We were particularly concerned about the activities of paramilitary youth groups organised under a 'National Youth Training Programme'. Members of these groups were responsible for a systematic campaign of intimidation against known or suspected supporters of the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, MDC. The violence and intimidation created a climate of fear and suspicion.

In many areas, there were reports of a strong fear of expressing political opinions. Observers reported on clear instances of fear among voters. Despite several instances of intimidation of polling agents and police raids against the opposition party offices, polling agents of the two major candidates have been deployed in an impressive manner. (2002)

As a result of the tactics used by Mugabe in the 2002 presidential election, the United States, the EU, and other European countries imposed travel restrictions against senior Zimbabwean officials and embargoed the sale of arms to Zimbabwe. The Commonwealth also suspended Zimbabwe from council meetings when its election observer team found the election neither free nor fair. After extending Zimbabwe's suspension, Mugabe eventually withdrew his country from the Commonwealth. (US State Dept) Despite the international outcry followed up with sanctions, the 2005 parliamentary elections did not prove to be any less controversial. A report by the British House of Commons confirmed that intimidation and fear among opposition voters was still very real. The report included reports and observations made by several international organizations and by the US Embassy in Harare.

Commentators agree that there was much less evidence of violence during the 2005 election campaign than in the run-up to

the June 2000 parliamentary election and the presidential election in March 2002. However, opposition leaders and human rights groups claimed that there was still a high level of intimidation, and that the legacy of past political violence would affect the election result.

The report quoted the Human Rights Watch (HRW) election report released on 21 March 2005 and based on research in Zimbabwe in December 2004 and February 2005, and made the following assessment:

The government of Zimbabwe has greatly limited the space for the opposition to campaign. It has restricted the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly in many parts of the country. Opposition party members and ordinary citizens have been intimidated by ruling party supporters and officials, war veterans, and youth militia. The government has, thus, substantially infringed the right of Zimbabweans to freely form and express their political opinions and electoral judgments. In short, due to this climate of intimidation and repression, the playing field for the 2005 election has not been level.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) report was included with the House of Commons report and stated:

President Mugabe and ZANU-PF appear to have approached the elections with twin goals: first, to ensure they could control the results; and secondly, to do so in a way sophisticated enough that some international observers could call the exercise "clean". They did not resort to violence as often as in the past and even tolerated a number of opposition campaign rallies and speeches but the threat of physical harm … was never far below

the surface. Much of the window dressing of a fair contest was permitted but the regime still engaged in systematic abuses.

The International Crisis Group report is quoted again when they stated that "by any objective standard, the election was neither free nor fair", commenting:

While the means employed to capture the election were more sophisticated and less violent then in the past, the result was the same. To find otherwise, it was necessary to look past ZANU-PF's systematic use of propaganda, violence, electoral manipulation, targeted disenfranchisement and abuse of humanitarian relief.

Finally, the House of Commons report also included the election observations of representatives from the US Embassy in Harare quoting their findings as follows:

…ZANU-PF agents and the police appeared to have improper roles in the supervision or conduct of the polling stations and in the operation of ZEC constituency tabulation centers. In several instances, Embassy observers witnessed uniformed police participating in the vote compilation instead of ZEC officials at the constituency tabulation centers. In addition, some polling stations were located in areas that would be intimidating to some voters, such as next to police stations or within 200 meters of a ZANUPF office. Some polling stations also appeared to be associated with the distribution of food. Finally, in many polling stations observed, the percentages of voters turned away were as high as 30%. Compounding concern over the foregoing irregularities is the silence of the Zimbabwe Election Commission on crucial issues. It

> *has failed to release the voting results of any polling stations. It has failed to explain why its initial release of totals of ballots cast only included six of the country's ten provinces, nor explained why it never released results for the remaining four provinces. Moreover, it has failed to explain why discrepancies between its announced figure for ballots cast in constituencies for those six provinces differed so drastically from the subsequently released official combined vote totals for candidates in the constituencies…*
> (Andrews & Morgan, 2005)

In April 2007, the South African Development Community (SADC) mandated South African President Mbeki to mediate between Robert Mugabe's government and MDC. The mediation was an attempt to agree upon an election date and procedures to rewrite the constitution. Talks ended in January 2008, when Mugabe called a snap election to be held in March despite the MDC's call for elections to be held off until a new constitution was adopted and enough time existed to have a credible campaign.

On 29 March 2008, Zimbabwe held combined presidential and parliamentary elections. In the lead up, a wide variety of organizations and news media had expressed concerns about the inadequate preparation, evidence of irregularities associated with registration and inspection of the voters rolls, and concerns that the violence of the past would affect this campaign and election. Many observers suggested that the overall election environment was tarnished by the government's brutal history of stamping out democratic freedoms of speech and association. Opposition groups feared the worst. According to a 2007 Amnesty International report, fear of beatings and detention was common among the opposition groups and civil society organizations. Campaigning in the election, however, was relatively open and the opposition parties, including the government's biggest threat, the MDC, led by Morgan Tsvangirai, were able to campaign relatively freely and peacefully. The government did allow some international observers to observe the election process but only from countries

that they deemed "friendly" (International Crisis Group, 2008) but most foreign media were barred from the country. Despite the uneven playing field, it appears that Zimbabweans clearly signaled their rejection of the status quo. For the first time in the country's history, ZANU-PF lost control of parliament to the MDC. The outcome of the presidential election was controversial with unprecedented delays in the announcement of official results. The ZEC withheld the results for over a month calling into question the credibility and independence of the commission. Reports from various news media and civil society organizations reported a countrywide campaign of violence and intimidation against supporters of the MDC. (UN News Centre, 2008) When results were released voters gave Tsvangirai 47% against 42.3% for Mugabe warranting a run-off. However, Tsvangirai dropped out of the race several days before citing violence, intimidation and vote rigging providing Mugabe with an easy victory.

It appears that since these elections Zanu-PF and its leader, Robert Mugabe, are no longer in sole charge of the country and the runoff elections. It is believed by some Zimbabwe watchers that the members of the security establishment are believed to be directing day to day operations of the government, the election campaign and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission through the army, air force, police, prisons, and intelligence agency or the Joint Operations Command (JOC). While the important role of the JOC in the running of the country over the last couple of years was understood, they now appear to be playing a more significant role in the electoral strategy and within the electoral commission. According to Bratton & Masunungure (2008), all election results, including the long delayed announcement of Mugabe's loss to Tsvangirai in the first round of the 2008 election, were said to be forwarded to the JOC for approval before being sent to the national command center for release. Bratton & Masunungure have used insider accounts of what happened in the aftermath of the March 29th presidential elections stating that "by all reliable accounts, Zimbabwe's military quietly seized control and subverted the democratic process in the immediate aftermath of the first round of the March 29 presidential election." Among a number of accounts of what was actually happening behind

the scenes during the delay in releasing the results, they have documented that "there are credible reports that, on March 30, Mugabe informed his security chiefs that he had lost the presidential vote and intended to surrender power. However, Constantine Chiwenga, now commander of the ZDF—backed by police chief Augustine Chihuri, air force head Perence Shiri, and director of prisons Paradzai Zimondi—allegedly vetoed this proposal." According to their report, Chihuri, Shiri and Zimondi insisted that Mugabe remain in office, either openly with military backing or by contesting a runoff election, "the campaign for which would be run as yet another JOC operation. Code-named Operation Mavhotera Papi ("How Did You Vote?"), it would root out and target for retaliation all those suspected of casting a ballot for the MDC in the first round." (Bratton & Masunungure, 2008 pp.49 - 50) Eventually, it was decided that Mugabe would participate in a runoff and that the JOC would play an integral role in the process.

> *Internal ZANU-PF documents confirm that the JOC security chiefs ('with the party chairing') were in charge of logistics and operations in the runoff election of June 2008. ZANU-PF's strategy for the runoff election was 'electoral cleansing.' The objective was to kill MDC officials and polling agents, displace qualified electoral officials such as schoolteachers, and punish known MDC supporters. The targets of intimidation were not so much the solid MDC strongholds in the cities and the southwest, but politically contested areas in the country's middle belt and northeast where, in the first round of the election, voters had swung away from ZANUPF and toward the MDC. The object of electoral cleansing was to create 'no-go zones' (note again the guerrilla-insurgency terminology) where the ZANU-PF monopoly could be enforced at the local level through the direct and demonstration effects of violence. As further punishment, the party ordered food relief to be withheld from opposition sympathizers and commercial food supplies to be distributed only to shops operated by ZANU-PF*

> *supporters or personnel. The combination of physical intimidation and the denial of basic needs to MDC supporters meant that, in the words of a Shamva villager, 'only ZANU-PF people will vote. There are no opposition supporters. It will be a big advantage for them.' (*Bratton & Masunungure, 2008 pp. *51- 52)*

Although the perception of 'contested elections' can serve the purpose of demonstrating the incumbent's dominance, when the incumbent party has no intention of giving up power, then we are unable to declare these elections democratic. As we have seen, since 2000, Zimbabwe has held five elections with increasingly questionable results. Under the guise of democracy, elections are often held within authoritarian regimes such as Zimbabwe. In *Democracy and Development, Adam* Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, J.A. Cheibub and Fernando Limongi look at the democratic requirements for elections by discussing three features required for true democratic elections. This framework is useful in looking at Mugabe's electoral victories since 2000 and whether it was simply an exercise to promote the façade of democracy.

The authors argue that countries who are recently struggling to establish democratic institutions are being judged on whether or not they have contestation. Contestation is defined as "whether or not divergent political forces would be able to compete for governmental offices and to assume office if they won." Contestation entails three features: 1) ex-ante uncertainty, 2) ex-post irreversibility, and 3) repeatability.

Did the elections have ex-ante uncertainty? For instance, Przeworski's theory classifies democracy as a system in which incumbent parties actually lose elections. Was there a possible chance that the ruling body within Zimbabwe was willing to give up power? As mentioned above, according to reports, Mugabe was willing to give up power but his decision was vetoed by members of the JOC. If this is true, it is an indication of the increasing power of the shrinking inner circle or what the selectorate theory calls, the 'winning coalition'. Up to the most recent elections, there was very little indication that Mugabe was willing to give up

power considering the lengths to which his coalition went to manipulate and intimidate. We now see the winning coalition's desire to retain power in order to protect the benefits of their position within the winning coalition. This topic will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

Did the elections have ex-post irreversibility? Was the winner of the election able to assume office? Un-democratic elections are held if the opposition wins but the incumbent government has no intention of allowing them to take power. In a campaign speech being covered by media, the rhetoric of Mugabe led to much speculation as to whether the opposition would be able to take power if they did indeed win. The report stated: "the opposition Movement for Democratic Change will 'never rule Zimbabwe' in a weekend speech that - followed a pledge to arm war veterans and send them to fight in the event of an MDC victory."(Wallis, 2008, June 15). This is further supported by the observations of Bratton and Masunungure who noted that:

> *As in any electoral-authoritarian regime, competitive elections in Zimbabwe serve the useful purpose of demonstrating the incumbent's dominance, but only so long as the opposition can never win. Over time, it has become clear that the ZANU-PF cadres will never recognize an opposition victory at the polls or surrender control of a government that they regard as belonging indisputably to themselves alone.* (2008, p.43)

Finally, can the elections be repeated? A key feature of democratic elections is that they must be repeated. Whoever wins the current round of elections cannot make it impossible for the competing forces to win it the next time. "Democracy as Linz (1984) put it, is government is *pro tempore*. All political outcomes must be temporary: Losers do not forfeit the right to compete in the future, to negotiate again, to influence legislation, to pressure the bureaucracy, or to seek recourse to courts." (Przeworski, 2000, p.18)

Xolela Mangcu, convenor of the Platform for Public Deliberation at the University of Johannesburg, describes political outcomes as such:

> *The coming into being of a new class of political insiders always leaves in its wake a new set of political outsiders. Those outsiders will in their turn be insiders, also leaving in their wake a new set of outsiders, and so on. This is the historical cycle by which political communities are created. The challenge is never to prevent or fear such cycles but to understand that in democratic politics there are neither permanent insiders nor permanent outsiders but a constant displacement of political actors by others through peaceful means. (Mangcu, 2008)*

These conditions of democratic elections appear to have little relevance in Robert Mugabe's world. After 28 years in power with electoral victories clouded by accusations of violence, intimidation and murder, Zimbabwe appears to have witnessed anything but democracy especially since 2000.

Why did Mugabe bother to hold elections at all? According to Andrew Norman the answer in part, as will be confirmed time and time again, was that this presented Mugabe with the ideal chance to identify his opponents, whom he could then persecute. (2008) This observation is not to be ignored and coincides with Bratton & Masunungure's reported Operation Mavhotera Papi ("How Did You Vote?"). After the 2008 elections and as early as June 2008, over 50 Zimbabweans had been killed, at least 2,000 injured, and over 30,000 displaced as a result of widespread post-election violence, including state-sponsored violence. Due to these and other events, and out of concern for the lives of his MDC supporters, Tsvangirai announced in late June that he would not contest the runoff election. Voters went to the polls on June 27, and Mugabe was inaugurated for a new term as president on June 29. (US State Department)

Alois Mlambo provides more support for this theory. Shortly after the 2005 elections the government began Operation Murambatsvina (also known as

Operation Restore Order), supposedly to clean up the country of vendors and flea-market traders, illegal structures, illegal business enterprises, and criminal activities. (Vambe, 2008) Mlambo believes that all the crisis and political hardball by Zanu PF can be credited to the political opposition and its somewhat respectable showing in the elections from 2000.

> *…the historical background to Murambatsvina, emphasizing the failure of the government to live up to its earlier promise of providing health, education and housing for all by 2000 due to a number of factors, among which the poor performance of the national economy must rank very highly, especially in the aftermath of ESAP, which left the Zimbabwean economy worse off than before. The economy was dealt yet another severe blow by the farm invasions of 2000 and beyond, which made Zimbabwe a pariah state shunned by the West, led to capital and skills flight, the closure of local industries, growing unemployment and uncontrollable inflation levels that reduced a once vibrant country regarded as the region's breadbasket into a basket case. The rise of a strong political opposition movement in 1999 followed by its strong showing in the subsequent national elections so incensed and threatened the ruling party that it reacted in ways that eventually proved destructive to its citizens. Murambatsvina is clear evidence of this.* (Mlambo,2008, p. 21)

A UN Special Envoy sent to Zimbabwe to assess the scope and impact of Operation Murambatsvina estimated that some 700,000 people nationwide lost their homes, their source of livelihood, or both. Families and traders, especially at the beginning of the operation, were often given no notice before police destroyed their homes and businesses. Others were able to salvage some possessions and building materials but often had nowhere to go, despite the government's statement that people should be returning to their rural homes.

Thousands of families were left unprotected in the open in the middle of Zimbabwe's winter. (US State Dept) The operation continued into July 2005, when the government began a program to provide housing for the newly displaced. As of September 2007, housing construction fell far short of demand, and there were reports that beneficiaries were mostly civil servants and ruling party loyalists, not those displaced. The government campaign of forced evictions continued in 2006, 2007, and 2008 albeit on a lesser scale. (US State Dept)

David Moore, Professor of Development Studies at the University of Johannesburg, considers that Murambatsvina was a continuation of the government's inability to deal with its citizens.

> *Rather than being perceived as a sudden and almost inexplicable eruption of violence and terror on behalf of a ruling party shocked at its recent loss of legitimacy and inability to deal with economic crisis, Operation Murambatsvina should be seen as an almost logical extension of the techniques of a party that has consistently failed to rule Zimbabwe through consent rather than force or its possibility.* (2008, p.25)

For its part, the Mugabe regime defended the operation by describing the operation as an attempt to provide decent housing to the population although they have yet to deliver any new housing for the forcibly removed people. In a report released by Amnesty International, the promise by the government was not honored long after the destruction:

> *One year after the mass forced evictions, Amnesty International returned to Zimbabwe to investigate what, if any, action had been taken by the Zimbabwean government to restore the human rights of the hundreds of thousands of victims of Operation Murambatsvina.*

> *The findings… reveal that contrary to government statements almost none of the victims of Operation Murambatsvina have benefited from the rebuilding, with only some 3,325 houses constructed -- compared to the 92,460 homes destroyed during Operation Murambatsvina -- and construction has ground to a halt in many areas.* (Amnesty International, 2006)

As we have seen, since 2000, the military began to play an increasingly larger role in the strategic governing of Zimbabwe. With the emergence of the MDC as a viable opposition, Mugabe engaged the military and security forces in the political arena.

> *The party deployed state-security agencies to provide transport and logistical support to war veterans and other land invaders. The police, increasingly infiltrated by intelligence agents charged with enforcing loyalty to the party-state, actively harassed and impeded the main opposition party during "the long election campaign" between June 2000 and March 2002. In May 2001, army commander Constantine Chiwenga toured the barracks to mobilize electoral support for Mugabe; he warned that no soldier should ever take orders from MDC presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai or any other leader who had not fought in the liberation war.* (Bratton & Masunungure,2008 p.48)

Of course the intimidation tactics and violent actions by the Mugabe regime required the use of the military either directly or indirectly. The following electoral tactics which started in 2000 and outlined in *Zimbabwe's Plunge* could only be successful with the backing of the JOC.

> *applying fierce intimidation – including murder, torture and kidnapping – to thwart opposition votes here; shaving the tally from*

> *MDC strongholds by disallowing voter registration there; refusing access to election observers here; deploying police in a biased way there; getting rural headmen to disqualify or intimidate pro-MDC voters here; refusing youth the vote there; distorting political perceptions through the state-owned media (especially radio) here; prohibiting alternative radio and arresting private journalists there; detaining the opposition leader here; gerrymandering voting districts there; submitting bogus votes by overseas troops here; preventing votes by exiled Zimbabweans there.* (Bond & Manyanya, 2002, p.76)

We can therefore see that the governing of Zimbabwe came down to the ruling party and the security forces. These are two key organs of power which Bratton and Masunungure characterize as a "militarized form of electoral authoritarianism". (2008, p. 42)

This new prominent role for the military in the Zimbabwean regime has created the existence of a persistent use of violence against its own people in order to maintain power. Mugabe and Zanu PF continues to associate themselves with a war against the colonizers and therefore continue to capitalize on their success as liberators and their armed struggle against Rhodesia believing that they are the only ones who can lead Zimbabwe. This reign at all costs has led the country to economic disaster through mismanagement and the need to use the resources to co-pt key allegiances through patronage positions, corruption, pensions and pay-outs to angry war veterans. The redistribution of wealth became a key resource for government patronage and pay-offs.

> *Over time, however, the benefits of economic redistribution became concentrated in the upper echelons of the party-state. Cabinet ministers, senior civil servants, security-force commanders, senior judges, and ZANU-PF parliamentarians were awarded the best properties confiscated from commercial farmers. These*

> *political insiders also gained privileged access to scarce foreign-currency funds at artificially low official exchange rates. The military brass developed a taste for political plunder as they accumulated vast streams of wealth from mining concessions or trading and transport contracts secured through Zimbabwe's armed intervention in the Congo War of 1998–2003.* (Bratton and Masunungure, 2008, *p. 46)*

This theory of economic disaster however is not accepted by all. Brendan Stone (2008) believes that the economic sanctions imposed by the west caused unemployment to rise to over 70 percent are often overlooked by Western academics and journalists. They prefer to portray the crisis solely as a result of land reform or Mugabe's mismanagement. Andrew Meldrum would partly agree that land reform was not entirely the fault of Mugabe:

> *There is more than enough blame to go around on all sides in Zimbabwe's land controversy. White farmers refused to accept that large-scale redistribution was needed. Donors who were aware of the simmering problem did not take an early lead in persuading the government to revise and continue with their plans. But the largest share of the blame must be apportioned to the government for losing interest in effective land reforms. It only returned to the issue when it thought it could make money or political capital out of it.* (2005, p.135)

It appears that the land reforms were one area where Mugabe hoped to gain political capitol due to political desperation. The economic crisis and the Mugabe regime's resistance to give up power despite the economic and moral desecration of Zimbabwean society has lead to the violence, oppression and the rewarding of loyalty all at the expense of the vast majority of the population. Not surprisingly, under such circumstances we see an increasingly isolated regime

unable to keep the masses happy and needing to inflict severe punishment and oppression to those who dare speak up against them. This increased violence, intimidation and life threatening hardship has spread to all sectors of the population causing Mugabe's much needed winning coalition and selectorate to decrease in size and become members of the disenfranchised sector of the population. For an autocrat, relying on electoral rigging, this does not bode well for the continued survival of an authoritarian regime.

Chapter 4

Analysis of a dictator – A theoretical perspective

This chapter will look into the patterns of behavior of authoritarian governments. The document analysis of theoretical perspectives provides a framework of analysis of authoritarian governments and how they maintain power. In particular, this chapter will closely examine the issues of loyalty, oppression and electoral processes. The documentation researched helps to place Mugabe and the actions that enabled him to maintain power through co-option, corruption, oppression and violence in context. The background to Mugabe's coming to power and his subsequent 28 year reign provided in the previous two chapters can be further explored through this chapter's analysis of authoritarian government theory.

It is a commonly held belief that every political leader wants to keep their job. In *The Logic of Political Survival* we see that the authors begin with the view that every political leader faces the challenge of how to hold onto his or her job and that "everyone in a position of authority wants to keep that authority and that it is the maneuvering to do so that is central to politics in any type of regime." (2003, p. 9) Obviously, we can then infer that all incumbent leaders have rivals and "the competition for political office has always been fierce." (2003, p.16)

This competition results in the need for loyalty among key backers within a leadership circle. This key group is what Bueno de Mesquita et al. refers to as the *winning coalition*. They are the subset of the larger *selectorate*[3] whose support is essential if the incumbent is to remain in power. The authors look into the need for leaders to take care of their backers to ensure loyalty at least for the time being. It is necessary to take care of key backers who have the ability to remove the leaders if they so desire. The authors state that "leaders working under institutional arrangements correlated with authoritarianism are wise to establish special privileges for their backers like the special stores party members enjoyed in the Soviet Union. Doling out special privileges often is vital to their political survival. Autocrats can be forgiven bad policy, but they are not

likely to survive the elimination of patronage or the corrupt benefits of cronyism." (2003, p. 19)

However, taking care of their backers goes hand in hand with the leader's opportunity to not only serve their country but it also "holds out the prospects of great personal aggrandizement." (2003, p. 22) The authors believe that "the behavior of the leader arises from their own self-interest in holding their positions. If that coincides with or is compatible with the welfare of the citizenry, many will benefit. If the welfare of a leader and the welfare of the society are at odds – our theory and data will indicate that they often are – it is more likely to go well for the leader than for society." (2003, p. 21) For Mugabe, is his behavior due to this self-interest or sense of entitlement? Either-or, the affects on the welfare of the society appear to remain the same.

Before continuing, let us examine definitions of the groups involved within political leadership sphere as they appear in *The Logic of Political Survival*.

> *All polities consist of three nested and changeable groups, as well as a national leadership and prospective substitute leaders, referred to here as the challenger. The largest of the three nested groups is the set of all residents within the state. Within this set of people there is a smaller group that has a formal role in expressing a preference over the selection of the leadership that rules them, though their expression of preference may or may not directly influence the outcome. We call this group the selectorate (Shirk 1993). Each member of the selectorate has some chance, albeit the probability may be small, of becoming an essential supporter of the incumbent. We call the subset of the selectorate whose support is essential if the incumbent is to remain in power, the winning coalition. When we say these backers of the leadership are essential, we mean that they control the resources vital to the political survival of the incumbent. If enough members of the winning coalition defect to a rival politician, the incumbent loses*

> *office. The smallest set of individuals is the leadership, which actually makes decisions about gathering and allocating resources.* (2003, p. 38)

The question then arises, who becomes the key member within the leaders circle or part of the winning coalition? According to Bueno de Mesquita et al., this is based on the concept of *affinity*. The authors explain a*ffinity* as the "idea that there are bonds between leaders and followers that both can use to anticipate each other's future loyalty."(2003, p. 60) They continue that these factors that influence affinity "may be clustered, as in ethnic or religious preferences, or they may be tied to tastes about personality, ideology, political-party identification, experience, family ties, charisma, or what have you." (2003 p. 61) Basically, however, a leader would prefer to form coalitions with people that they like rather than dislike and with people who inherently like them. (2003, p. 61) Thus, people they have an affinity with. Interestingly, when discussing affinities, the authors look at societies that have a rigged electoral system such Zimbabwe.

> *This is, we believe, the key characteristic of lumpy or correlated affinities. They create bloc leaders – essential coalition members - who collectively deliver the requisite number of nominal coalition members-who reduce the size of the actual winning coalition….This means that a candidate who can gain a group leader's support can count on the group leader to deliver a bloc of votes, a phenomenon especially common in settings in which patron-client relations are strong. Such a circumstance makes it relatively inexpensive to buy support among a few members of large groups, thereby ensuring the reality of a small winning coalition with the appearance of dependence on a large coalition.* (2003, p.64)

In Zimbabwe, accusations of such processes are rampant. Government or party officials from within the President's inner circle are organized to deliver the votes. Martin Meredith writes of large numbers of Zanu-PF supporters and war veterans being sent to towns to intimidate voters. In one district during a mayoral race, one provincial governor rebuked civil servants who did not chant Zanu-PF slogans and stated that "All civil servants were required to chant: 'Forward with Zanu-PF and President Mugabe, down with the MDC and Tsvangirai' before conducting any official business with the public." (Meredith, 2002, p.216) Reports of village chiefs delivering votes for the incumbent President and political party and having this loyalty rewarded with a new vehicle or other financial reward are common place. The domestic NGO, Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) released a report on the 2008 Harmonized and Presidential run-off elections and stated that in "most rural constituencies, voters were reportedly herded to polling stations by traditional leaders, instructed to vote for the ruling party candidate and also ordered to record their ballot papers' serial numbers and after polling give them to the local leaders."

Loyalty and land reform are two intertwined issues. A 2007 Transparency International report on global corruption claims that the allocation of farms and land was mostly used to pay off high-ranking party and government officials.

> *There is a considerable body of evidence that indicates that the occupations were not spontaneous actions by land-hungry peasants, as claimed by the government, but an orchestrated campaign by the ruling party, the security agencies and various government departments. The occupiers perpetrated widespread acts of violence against the commercial farmers and farm workers, who were seen as sympathetic to the MDC. Thousands of workers were driven off farms and left destitute. The occupiers used the farms as bases from which to hunt down and attack opposition supporters in rural areas. After white farmers were expelled, the government, which has been*

> *repeatedly criticised for corruption, allocated the best land not to landless peasants, but to high-ranking party and government officials, with some acquiring several farms each.* (p. 36)

This loyalty and payoff of key members such as village chiefs illustrates how a *winning coalition* can be much smaller than that which makes up the *selectorate* but still determines who the national leadership will be. Bueno de Mesquita et al. offers an extreme example from Kenya of a single Returning Officer who was able to falsify the results of an election. An election which, for the most part, appeared to be free and fair. It could be said that the size of *winning coalition* was “one”. One man who was able to deliver the victory. Thus, the loyalty of key individuals in the sphere of political survival is key. (2003, p. 55)

However, it is important to note that loyalty alone is not sufficient to maintain political survival in such ‘small winning coalition, large selectorate systems’. Loyalty must also be accompanied by oppression and oppression accompanied by loyalty. “Make no mistake about it, no leader rules alone. Even the most oppressive dictators cannot survive the loss of support among their core constituents.” (Bueno de Mesquita et al, 2003, p. 28)

As such, oppression is another key tool of securing autocratic rule and according to the authors of *The Logic of Political Survival*, autocrats often are oppressors and they often stay in power because they do not hesitate to repress opposition and oppress their citizens.” (2003, p. 32) When societies do not have “orderly methods of change that revolve around the rule of law” but instead “prevent alterations in selection institutions by oppressing those who are dissatisfied with current arrangements”, (2003, p. 338) they are most commonly referred to as autocracies or authoritarian governments. These governments oppress and punish their opponents through “confiscation of their wealth and imprisonment, to torture and execution.” It should also be noted that oppression does not always have to be brutal to be effective. “Sometimes the threat of

exclusion from private benefits in the future is enough to deter defections from the winning coalition." (2003, p. 339)

Although leaders oppress opponents to deter threats to their leadership, the authors continue by explaining three separate targets and reasons for oppression in their theory.

> *First, leaders may seek to punish challengers. If successful, a leader would not face challenges to her rule because rivals would be unwilling to run the risk of suffering the punishment if their challenges failed to displace the current leader. Second, leaders may seek to punish members of the selectorate who support a challenger. If successful, challengers would be unable to garner sufficient support to unseat the leader. Third, leaders may seek to punish the disenfranchised who might be engaged in revolutionary action against the regime. If repression is successful, a revolution could not be organized, removing this threat to the leaser from outside the selectorate.* (2003, pp.339 -40)

In the case of Zimbabwe, we are aware of Mugabe and his government meeting each of the three reasons for punishment within the selectorate theory. The arrest and beatings of opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai, harassment, intimidation and violence against MDC supporters and the destruction of informal homes and businesses in Operation Murambatsvina are just three examples of this.

The theory of Bueno de Mesquita et al. continues by asking and delving into the answers of four related questions concerning oppression. First, when is oppression useful in deterring challengers and their supporters? Second, when do leaders have most interest in using oppression to hold onto power? Third, when can leaders recruit those who will carry out the oppressive measures against opponents? Fourth, when is oppression likely to succeed in deterring challenges? (2003, p. 340)

First of all, according to the authors, oppression is intended to deter challengers by raising the costs of failure for unsuccessful opponents. Mugabe has successfully oppressed any serious contests from outside the winning coalition. Constant harassment, a brutal beating by police and the ominous assassination attempts against the main challenger to Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai, has allowed Mugabe to remain in power after battling several elections against the leader of the MDC.

According to the selectorate theory, it is also important for authoritarian systems with small winning coalitions and large selectorates, to engage in the "most brutal and extensive oppression of prospective challengers." (2003, p. 341) This was especially true in Mugabe's post 2000 government when it became necessary to engage in increasingly oppressive and violent measures. These threats of prospective challengers to the leader may come from inside the winning coalition. According to the theory, a successful challenge requires the defection of enough members from the winning coalition in order to reduce the required number of members in the coalition. If that challenger is from within the winning coalition then he automatically begins with one member of the winning coalition, himself. Therefore, according to the theory, "leaders should more fiercely oppress members of their own winning coalition who lead challenges than other challengers." (2003, p. 341) Some even argue that those close to the throne are the biggest threat to the leader. Mugabe has never hesitated to oppress those who he believed were challengers to his authority. Both Jonathon Moyo and Edgar Tekere were both removed from the President's inner circle when he believed that their power and influence was becoming a danger to his survival.

Furthermore, oppression is also used against possible supporters of challenges from within the selectorate. "Any challenger needs supporters to come to power, and so leaders may use oppression to deter selectors from joining the nascent coalition supporting a challenger." (2003, p.341) Once a challenger is identified, the danger arises for a leader since members of the selectorate may be inclined to support a challenger if they believe that it offers some hope of entering the winning coalition.

Secondly, since a small winning coalition such as that in an authoritarian regime provides the leader and the few members of the coalition with resources normally used for the public good as in democratic systems, then the stakes of losing these resources are much larger for authoritarian leaders. Large winning coalitions such as democracies provide primarily public goods and allow the leader to retain only a small amount of resources for their own use. This substantial loss provides leaders in small winning coalitions with a strong motivation to hold on to office by all means necessary. (2003, p.342) As we have seen in the case of Zimbabwe, this strong motivation to hold on to office has led to serious oppression and economic collapse.

Thirdly, leaders do not carry out oppressive measures themselves especially when oppression is extensive as it is expected to be in small winning-coalition systems. (2003, p. 343) Such extensive oppression requires the recruitment of a large number of people into the organs of repression whether they come from within the winning coalition in the form of party members and of course the military and police force. “The foot soldiers of oppression are more willing to do what it takes to protect the leader when they benefit from her rule. Members of the winning coalition are obvious recruits because they have an interest in protecting their position, so as to continue to collect their private goods.” (2003, p. 344) As in Zimbabwe with the military and police as key oppressors, “authoritarian systems must rely on the winning coalition to suppress revolution because most members of the selectorate are unlikely to benefit from the current system, and so will not fight hard to preserve it.” (2003, p. 344) This is especially true when resources are limited which will also ultimately affect the size of the winning coalition. Over time, the size of the winning coalition in Zimbabwe has decreased to such a small number given the declining resources with which the leader can offer members for their loyalty. It would appear from the economic situation within Zimbabwe that dangerous ground lays ahead for autocrats such as Mugabe who depend on oppression when they are no longer able to keep the military and police within their coalition due to a lack of resources to pay them off for their loyalty.

Fourthly, according to *The Logic of Political Survival*, oppression is attractive to authoritarian leaders because prospective challengers and their supporters find that the threat of oppression is more credible coming from them than from democratic leaders. “As with the three previous questions, a small winning coalition and large selectorate is the pattern most conducive to effective oppression.” (2003, p. 345)

As examined in previous chapters, oppression in Zimbabwe is real. In a Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum pre-election report, *It’s the Count that Counts: Food for thought*, it would appear likely that such reports of harsh and systemic violence around election periods would induce fear of participation among Zimbabweans opposing the ruling party.

> *In a recent series of analyses of the data contained in the Monthly Political Violence Reports of the Human Rights Forum, the Redress Trust points out that, between July 2001 and December 2004, the Forum identified 11,456 cases of gross human-rights violations. Many of these violations involved murder, rape and torture, which was sometimes of a sexual nature. The violence was systemic, co-ordinated and occurred in all constituencies throughout the country, with the rural areas being the worst effected. The violence over the documented period was closely indexed to election periods suggesting that it was as much a part of the then election strategy as is its present abatement. Ruling party politicians made numerous inflammatory statements that encouraged violence. Certainly nothing was done to curb its incidence.* (2005, April)

According to the *Logic of Political Survival*, systems with a small winning coalition and a large selectorate encourage oppression, both in intensity and magnitude. Within such systems there is “a greater incentive to challenge the leader, a greater incentive for the leader to hang onto power by all possible means,

a greater ability to recruit those who will carry out the threats, and greater credibility because of the longer tenure of their leaders." (2003, p. 346) As we have seen, this is a true reflection of the authoritarian regime within Zimbabwe.

Oppression is also often justified as a means of protecting the country from the evil or oppressive forces of the opposition which are often backed by external forces. In reality, it is more a case of protecting the leadership, and those benefitting from their rule, from losing what they believe are rightly theirs to hold on to at any cost to the nation.

In *Zimbabwe's Long Agony*, Bratton and Masunungure state that the behavior of Zimbabwe's rulers is best understood in the context of their belief that ZANU-PF has a right to rule in perpetuity. The ruling party's intolerance of political opposition was born during the liberation struggle. Indeed, according to the authors, liberation politics were marked by intense intrigue, violent purges, and leadership assassinations. (2008)

> *Soon after independence in 1980, the supporters of Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU were portrayed in the official media as 'dissidents,' and their purported armed rebellion was crushed via ethnic massacres in Matabeleland between 1982 and 1987. The ruling party later hounded presidential aspirants—Edgar Tekere in 1990 and Morgan Tsvangirai in 2002 and 2008—with assassination plots or treason trials or both. In increasingly racist terms, ZANU-PF depicts the MDC as a stalking horse for regime change funded by the British, European, and U.S. governments (then–British prime minister Tony Blair was a favorite target) and for favoring liberal political and economic reforms that deny the historical contribution and socialist agenda of the guerrilla movement. Under the terms of the incongruously named Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (2002), which bans foreign journalists and outlaws independent publications, alternative views are restricted. Summarizing the party's position on electoral competition, a*

> *government propagandist urged that 'the stampede for democracy should not undermine the gains of the liberation war.'* (2008, p.44)

Statements by ZANU-PF officials and the President himself "reflect a persistent sense of political entitlement" according to Bratton and Masunungure. (2008, p.44) Mugabe himself claimed "Only God, who appointed me, will remove me, not the M.D.C., not the British, Only God will remove me!" (Dugger & Bearak, 2008)

Where does this sense of entitlement come from? Has it always been there? Not so for many of the world's dictators. *The Logic of Political Survival*' theory on small-coalition, large selectorate regimes, states that "we can expect that any time an incumbent has a fairly unconstrained opportunity to choose institutions, the choice will be an autocracy with a strong loyalty norm." (2003, p.378) The authors correctly note that this choice was made by Fidel Castro, Mao Zedong, Ho chi Minh, and many other victorious revolutionary leaders despite their earlier declarations of support for democracy. "The selectorate theory leads us to infer, as intimated earlier, that the pro-democracy declarations were sincere when these revolutionary leaders were outsiders, but their incentives shifted once they became insiders." (2003, p. 378) In our case study, Mugabe was one of those leaders. In the initial years of the regime much attention was given to the health and education sectors. "He took an already excellent school system and expanded it to make primary education both free and compulsory, extended health care and encouraged small business." (Hill, 2003, p.9) In more recent years, we witnessed how Mugabe's land distribution program and business deals have been conducted through corruption, collusion and nepotism all at the expense of the national economy and the general population.

Once leaders have chosen this autocratic path, it appears, according to Bratton and Masunungure that they continue to desire the veneer of political legitimacy provided by managed elections and the appearance of the rule of law. (2008, p.52)

This desire to legitimize themselves to the world and to the people is best described by the authors of the 2008 ZESN elections report:

> *The relative importance of elections in the democratization process is key in that the success of any democracy depends primarily on the conduct of participatory, competitive politics, particularly free and fair elections that render legitimacy to the incumbent. However, elections in themselves are not sufficient to ensure democracy because even military juntas also hold elections to try and buy legitimacy from their victims. Electoral experiences, especially in Africa, suggest their potential double-edged nature. On one hand, by organizing periodic elections, governments create some semblance of democratic legitimacy and at the same time, by placing those elections under tight authoritarian controls, they try to cement their continued hold on power. Their dream is to reap the fruits of electoral legitimacy without running the risks of democratic uncertainty. Balancing between electoral control and electoral credibility, governments situate themselves in a nebulous zone of structural ambivalence.* (2008, p.1)

How do these rigged electoral systems fit into the *Logic of Political Survival* theory? According to the authors, it is common in rigged electoral systems to create a false sense of belonging to a political party. In the former Soviet Union, it was membership in the Communist Party. In Zimbabwe it is the admittance to the liberation fighting Zanu-PF party that gives people the hope of eventually becoming a member of the inner circle or winning coalition. Supporters of such governments also tend to be particularly loyal because the risk and cost of exclusion if the challenger comes to power are high. (Bueno de Mesquita et al, 2003) This desire to belong leads to a large selectorate. However, the leader still manages to limit the number within winning coalition.

> *All rigged electoral systems create artificial scarcity in some designated proficiency, typically in membership in the single approved political party, thereby guaranteeing that membership is valuable. As in the Soviet system, so too in virtually all rigged systems, any selectorate member could be granted the opportunity to gain the requisite additional qualities to make it into the winning coalition, but to protect the value of those additional qualities, only very few actually are given that opportunity. The consequence of this choice of selectorate members for entry into a winning coalition is that many people are candidates for entry into a winning coalition, but only a tiny subset are chosen. Thus rigged electoral systems have a large selectorate and a small winning coalition.*
> (Bueno de Mesquita et al, 2003, *p. 54)*

Since 2000, Mugabe has been able to rule by mobilising his supporters in land grabs, intimidating and killing MDC members, driving thousands of informal settlement dwellers into the rural areas, using anti-colonial rhetoric and purging his own party of any threats. However, the recent political defeat in the March 2008 harmonized elections, despite the rigged electoral system, threatened the regime to such a degree that the country was taken over by the civilian-military junta which effectively blocked any form of democracy in Zimbabwe and enforced a Mugabe landslide in the June runoff through violence and intimidation. Even further undermining the legitimacy of his authoritarian rule.

Even though the leadership within Zimbabwe followed the text book pattern of behavior of authoritarian governments they were still unable to rig the 2008 harmonized elections in their favor. Through fierce oppression against proclaimed and perceived opponents and blatant payoffs to key loyalists within the winning coalition, the leadership was still unable to secure a majority in parliament or a first place finish for the president, the leader of the liberation movement. This obviously weakens the chances of political survival of authoritarian leadership and may serve to increase the number and strength of

potential challengers to the leader. Chapter five will explore the issue of potential challenges to authoritarian rule.

Chapter 5

Challenges to a leader

The power sharing deal in September 2008 was the first crack to appear in the armor of the father of the liberation movement. For the very first time in Zimbabwe's history, Robert Mugabe had to share the stage with someone who had won an election against him. Someone that he has repeatedly vilified in speeches, in his own media and in countless exchanges with SADC and the AU over the years. Moreover, he did this in front of a host of leaders from the region. And in doing so, the myth that he alone is the only leader of Zimbabwe was shattered. Although more and more Zimbabweans have been coming to this realization for a while, leaders in SADC and the AU have taken more time to appreciate it. Even this small crack in the armor has been long overdue in the minds of many Zimbabweans. In 2006, a Helen Suzman Foundation poll indicated there was an opposition majority within the Zimbabwean electorate of over 60 per cent but as in previous elections, voting behavior may be affected by violence and intimidation. (Johnson, 2007)

Why has Mugabe been able to survive for so long given the vast majority's unhappiness with his rule and the crumbling state of the economy which has lead to Zimbabwe bordering perilously close to becoming a failed state? Where is the opposition and those willing to replace him in order to improve conditions for those outside of Mugabe's winning coalition?

Samuel Huntington asserts that despite the causes and negative effects of authoritarian governments on a society, this does not always translate into a democratic transition. According to Huntington, "democracies are created not by causes but by causers." (1991, p.107) This begs the question: Has Mugabe been able to sustain power due to the lack of strong "causers" or political opponents? In fact, many in the media have praised Morgan Tsvangirai for his courage but have been less generous when opining about his intellectual ability to unseat a

seasoned dictator. (Dugger, 2008) Will any possible replacement of Mugabe hold the determination, strength and wisdom to hold off the current political and power elite who are in positions of privilege and do not want to see these positions weakened. Bratton and Masunungure note in *Zimbabwe's Long Agony* that if a more democratic system is ever installed in Zimbabwe, they will "face enormous challenges in neutralizing the power of politicized and militarized elements that have thoroughly penetrated the state." (2008, pp. 42–43)

Despite the upcoming challenges to possible democratic replacements, the ability of Morgan Tsvangirai to be that replacement is doubted by many observers. Several sources in the media have been critical of Tsvangirai through editorial and opinion pieces. In November, 2008, South Africa's Business Day printed an editorial which stated:

> *Tsvangirai has been the author of his own misfortune in many respects, especially his sloppiness in signing a power-sharing agreement that left so much critical detail in the air. It is also claimed that Zanu (PF) changed key aspects of the agreement before the signing ceremony and that Tsvangirai failed to pick these up, which if true is a severe indictment of his leadership ability.* (2008, November 11)

According to *The Logic of Political Survival*, a challenge for the challenger will always be the ability to guarantee that the prospective defectors will always be members of his winning coalition. The difficulty of this however is what the authors claim is a substantial advantage for the incumbent leader. (2003, p. 60) Similarly, however, it is also necessary for the incumbent leader to have the ability and the resources necessary to maintain the support of essential backers.

In the case of Zimbabwe however, the dilemma associated for Mr. Mugabe in the recent power sharing agreement could weaken his ability to hold on to members of his winning coalition as there will likely be strings attached to donor funds which would make it very difficult for him to continue the patronage

and payoff system. According to William Wallis of the Financial Times, we may be seeing the second crack in the armor.

> …*access to patronage including US dollars at the discounted official exchange rate, has become increasingly centralized at the reserve bank. Should Mr. Mugabe lose control of this, he might struggle to hold his support base together.* (2008, Oct. 28)

If these are cracks in the armor, let us look at other challenges that would threaten the political survival of a dictator. According to Bueno de Mesquita et al. political survival can be threatened in three distinct ways. These include domestic challenges to leadership, revolutionary challenges to individual leaders and the political systems they lead, and external threats in the form of military attack by foreign adversaries.

In Zimbabwe, we have seen the domestic challenges faced by Mugabe through the opposition parties especially the MDC and its leader Morgan Tsvangirai, but also via powerful former members of the inner elite such as Simba Makoni, the former Finance Minister and a presidential candidate in the 2008 elections. As for the other two threats, given the dire state of affairs in Zimbabwe, one can imagine the possibility of a revolution but there has been little or no threat of military attacks by foreign adversaries especially given the fact that Mugabe is supported by members of the African Union or there is a lack of will and means to take such action. (Georgy, 2008)

The authors of *The Logic of Political Survival* note that people can act in one of three basic ways to improve their relationship between their institutional preferences or what they expect from government and their institutional experience, what they actually experience.

> *They can try to alter the institutions where they live. This can be done through mechanisms ranging from the relatively benign to*

> *the extremely aggressive. For instance, institutions can be altered through such peaceful means as constitutional amendments on up through such aggressive measures as revolution, assassination, or coup d'etat. Alternatively, people discontent with the institutional arrangements can migrate to another country with a winning coalition and selectorate more in line with their own preferences. Finally, individuals can be disgruntled about their institutions but take no action, showing patience while they wait for circumstances to change and improve their lot.* (2003, p. 354)

In systems such as that which exist in Zimbabwe, small winning coalition and large selectorate, we know that such peaceful means such as changes to the constitution or even democratic elections are not common ways of changing the institutional arrangements and their place in them. As we have seen in previous chapters, with the exception of the constitutional referendum in 2000, the use of oppression and loyalty combined with a rigged electoral system does not provide such means of change with much success. Revolutions are one way in which autocrats are often disposed of however. For clarity purposes, the authors refer to revolutions as attempts by the disenfranchised to overthrow the system. (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, p. 368) That is, those who have been excluded from the winning coalition and the selectorate. "The selectorate theory suggests that revolutionaries are motivated by the intention to overthrow the existing political order so that the excluded (i.e., the revolutionaries and their followers) become the included." (2003, p. 368) The selectorate has two advantages in a revolutionary struggle. First, those defending the current institutions possess an advantage in the tools and skills of violence. As we discussed earlier, the military and police have been a critical component of Mugabe's selectorate. The leaders of the military command are also within Mugabe's winning coalition which has helped to ensure the loyalty of the armed and police forces. The intimidating forces within the selectorate are indeed a

strong advantage for the leader and a dissuasive factor for the masses within the disenfranchised.

The second advantage of the selectorate lies in its “greater ability to mobilize forces from its members because of an asymmetry of motivation.” (Bueno de Mesquita et al, 2003, p. 369) Members of the disenfranchised and the selectorate have to weigh the benefits and cost of fighting a revolution. The disenfranchised may gain the benefits of the selectorate if they are successful but is also likely to face oppression or even death if the revolution should fail. Inaction by the selectorate may result in loss of privileges and even death. Inaction is dangerous for the selectorate and the authors conclude that “passivity is safe for the disenfranchised. The opposite is true for the selectorate.” (2003, p. 369) This need to fight to hold on to what they have provides them with an advantage over a larger disenfranchised group who may also not be as organized.

In cases such as Zimbabwe, with small-coalition systems which are undoubtedly getting smaller as the ability of the leader to provide incentives to their winning coalition dwindles, they are doubly vulnerable to revolution. Bueno de Mesquita et al. states that when coalition size is small, there are many outsiders from which to draw revolutionaries. Second, small-coalition systems produce few rewards for outsiders, giving these potential revolutionaries cause to rebel. As we are aware, the selectorate, and especially the winning coalition, are greatly favored within such systems, and so should be very willing to fight for it since they have a lot to lose. (2003, p. 370) The threat of losing these special privileges ensures the use of violent and oppressive measures to protect what they have. Thus, we see the importance of civil-military relations.

> *In small winning-coalition systems, the military must be part of the selectorate to protect the system against revolutionary threats. Consequently, the military cannot be separated from politics in such systems. In large winning coalitions (such as democratic systems), though, the military*

> *is not needed to protect the system against revolutionary threats, and so can be professionalized and removed from politics.* (2003, p. 372)

Chapter three provided a background to the increasing role of the military in Zimbabwe which became even more apparent after the first round of harmonized elections in March 2008. We can therefore see that given the prominent role of the military in the winning coalition, revolutions have yet to play a role in the removal of Mugabe.

In a similar vein, the disenfranchised who do not participate in revolutions may for the same reasons migrate to another country with a winning coalition and selectorate more in line with their own preferences or those who are unhappy with their political institutions may not take any action and simply wait for circumstances to change and have their lot in life improved. We can see that this option is favored among many in Zimbabwe by the number of Zimbabweans who have crossed the border into South Africa seeking a better life while also escaping the oppressive political environment in their home country. A June 2008 Human Rights Watch report stated:

> *The recent arrival in South Africa of Zimbabweans fleeing political violence is only the latest wave of forced migration that includes tens of thousands of refugees who escaped mass forced evictions in 2005. Hundreds of thousands more left to escape economic deprivation and systematic violation of core social and economic rights caused by President Robert Mugabe's destruction of the Zimbabwean economy during the past three years. (p.1)*

Again, the threat of systematic oppression of anyone critical of the government would also mean that those who are unhappy and suffering would be inclined to wait for things to improve rather than risk making their lives even more miserable by criticizing the government. The fact of the matter is anyone

involved in any opposition movement within Zimbabwe appears to be at risk. In a 2002 report from the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, the vast majority of victims of violence stated that they were actually involved or suspected to have been involved with the opposition party.

> *Of the victims who reported to the human-rights organisations, 51% stated that they were active members of the MDC and that their membership was the basic reason for the crimes committed against them. A further 32% stated that they were not active members of the MDC: they either had no connection with the party or were merely related to someone who was. However of this 32% stated that the crimes committed against them were related to accusations about their possible MDC membership. Another 20% did not raise MDC membership as a reason for their violation, but in this group were farm workers, persons accused of crimes and persons who got into disputes with the police.* (2002, August)

Therefore, revolution is not a likely course of action due to the consequences of a failed attempt and thus, the winning coalition continues to rule. It would then be assumed that as the winning coalition becomes smaller, which we believe is happening in Zimbabwe given the lack of resources required to ensure the loyalty of those around the leader and ensure that there is enough to go around, the issue of how to reduce the size of the winning coalition is dealt with by means of purges. The term purge, as used by the authors refers to “the elimination of members of the winning coalition or the selectorate or both”. (Bueno de Mesquita et al, 2003, p.383) Leaders often want to purge from the winning coalition so they can reduce the amount they must spend on the remaining members and also, as we have seen earlier in this paper, purges may take place to eliminate perceived threats to the leader such as the purging of Moyo and Tekere, and also to reduce the size of the winning coalition to ensure

that there are enough resources for those remaining in the winning coalition. Purges can also take place by members of the winning coalition who prefer to reduce the coalition's size, purging individuals (other than themselves, of course) from coalition membership. This again can improve the welfare of those who remain in the coalition. (2003, p. 382) The reduction in the winning coalition improves the chances of the leader's political survival as long as there are key members still within the winning coalition. In Zimbabwe for example, the leaders of the military and police forces are key to the leadership's political survival and must remain in the coalition.

As mentioned earlier, purges also exist to reduce the chance of a challenger coming from within the winning coalition. This can be referred to as a *coup d'etat* which the authors believe is an "appealing strategy for members of the winning coalition who want to give voice to their discontent." (2003, p. 397) However, according to the selectorate theory, coups do not occur with a large winning coalition and they do occur when the welfare of the coalition members is poor. As noted earlier, all economic indications in Zimbabwe appear to be suggesting that Mugabe's ability to provide resources to his dwindling winning coalition members is becoming seriously compromised. This would therefore suggest that perhaps Mugabe's most serious threat to his political survival would be from his winning coalition.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In searching for the reason of how authoritarian powers are able to survive and in particular, how Robert Mugabe has been able to continue his reign of power for such a long time despite the failing state of the nation, we have discovered that the keys to maintaining power are loyalty and oppression. This loyalty and oppression are able to ensure favorable election results, quell revolutions and silence critics through intimidation or forcing them to migrate to other lands. Prospective challengers from within the selectorate or winning coalition are purged and the essential mix of key backers necessary for the political survival of the leader are held within the winning coalition.

This paper has focused on the years from 2000 to 2008 as a period of increased, intense and brutal oppression and election rigging. According to David Moore (2005) in the paradoxically titled piece *'When I am a century old': why Robert Mugabe won't go*, the creation of the MDC in 1999 and the Zimbabweans rejection of the constitutional referendum in 2000 brought a sense of the end for ZANU-PF and Mugabe. The pressure was on and Mugabe decided to release the war vets and really begin to ensure that ZANU-PF would not lose another contest at the polls. The results of this 'win at all costs' governance was grotesque. Moore notes that between 2000 to mid -2004 there were "128 murders, 37 attempted murders, 3 849 incidents of torture, 619 abductions and kidnappings, 2 042 arrests and detentions, 712 assaults, 259 displacements, 26 rapes, 33 disappearances, and 190 death threats all committed in the cause of ZANU-PF's continuing leadership." (2005, p. 131). As we discussed in chapter 3, this brutality and intimidation continued throughout the end of 2008.

The need for loyalty among the ranks of the winning coalition and selectorate was also examined. Mugabe has maintained alliances with key figures especially within the military and security forces. This ability to hold on to those with the gun may be due to the idea that those who participated in the

liberation war are the only people entitled to rule. (Moore, 2005) However, even a soldier's loyalty has its limits. In the last month of 2008, soldiers upset at not being paid, clashed violently with police after they started to protest in the streets of Harare. (Berger & Thornycroft, 2008, December 10) Dissent within the rank and file of the military could reduce Mugabe's power immensely and it appears generous offerings are required to maintain this key element within the winning coalition.

External forms of loyalty and support coming from most neighboring countries, with the exception of a few, such as Botswana, who lack the power and influence to bring about change, certainly contribute to Mugabe's holding on to power. (Moore, 2005) The quiet diplomacy and non-interventionist stance of members of the African community is, however, beyond the scope of this paper.

This paper has tried to provide evidence of Mugabe's logic of political survival. However, in doing so, it has provided little in defense of Mugabe's actions for the latter part of his rule and has agreed with academics, political scientists, journalists and governments that categorize Mugabe as an authoritarian leader, an autocrat and a dictator. As for the state of the nation, most westerners have laid blame squarely on the shoulders of the father of liberation. There are those within Zimbabwe who undoubtedly also blame him for the failed economy, oppressive nature and failing social systems and infrastructure. Perhaps Edgar Tekere speaks for many who recognized the hero within but felt things were allowed to spin out of control.

> *The old saying rings true, that you cannot hold one man responsible for all of a nation's ills. But, in Zimbabwe, it is becoming increasingly difficult not to believe that Robert Mugabe is right at the centre of the nation's problems; in my view, 90 per cent of the blame should go to him, and ten per cent to those who have uncritically huddled around him over the years.* (2007, p. 173)

This paper has also overlooked the small victories of justice and democracy within Zimbabwe. Brendan Stone notes several of these while arguing that Western sources tend to paint Zimbabwe as if the country were under the rule of one man, or a de-facto one-party state. He highlights several events between the ruling Zanu-PF and the opposition MDC that suggest otherwise.

> *First, the MDC was able to severely challenge ZANU-PF in the 2000 election. Second, the NCA movement was able to overturn President Mugabe's suggested constitutional amendments. Third, Zimbabwe's elections have witnessed increasing international monitoring, and none have been overruled by African monitoring agencies. In fact, Zimbabwe became the first country to modify its electoral structure to conform to SADC guidelines. Finally, the judiciary demonstrated its independence when it acquitted Tsvangirai of treason. (2007)*

The paper did begin, however, with an extensive overview of the history of Zimbabwe. One must reflect on the history of a nation being led by an authoritarian government to truly understand what has brought them to power and what keeps them in power. While examining the political survival of authoritarian leaders in general and Robert Mugabe in particular through the selectorate theory; perhaps this paper did not fully address colonialism and its influence on the autocratic style of governance of Mugabe which includes his justification of his continued oppressive regime in order to defend the country from further foreign intervention. Obviously, leaders such as Mugabe and political parties such as ZANU-PF unite its followers through such anti-colonial rhetoric.

Raymond Suttner, a professor with the University of South Africa explains that in a number of African countries, single parties, often derived from national liberation movements (NLMs) such as in Zimbabwe and in South Africa or former

military regimes, often hold power continually. For instance, despite the existence of a multiparty electoral system, governments such as the ANC in South Africa have endured as 'dominant' parties. Suttner correctly points out that it was such liberation movements that brought democracy to Africa.

> *Colonialism was an inherently undemocratic system and it was the liberation struggles that ensured people voted for the first time. What ensued afterwards is a separate question and whether it was inevitable or is irreversible needs more than assertion but argument. (2004, p.763)*

However, according to Suttner, these NLMs also claimed and often received recognition as the sole and authentic representative of particular peoples. Even after liberation, Suttner believes there was an inherent danger that many liberation movements treated post liberation elections as “constituting a formal confirmation of what had already been earned, and seen themselves as already enjoying a right of representation that had been permanently conferred.” (2004, p. 765)

This feeling of entitlement also discussed in chapter 4 has, according to Suttner, lead to the existence of such authoritarian states such as Zimbabwe.

> *This quality of being the nation, that was ascribed to or claimed by the parties that led countries to independence, became one of the bases on which one-party states were advanced and opposition parties systematically suppressed. It also became one of the reasons why NLMs, turned ruling parties, were reluctant to consider exiting from government, as in contemporary Zimbabwe. This does represent a tendency, but whether a tendency is irreversible or realizable depends on the capacity for contestation, which varies in different countries and situations.* (2004, p. 765)

The colonial past and liberation movement has undoubtedly played a major role in the political survival of Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF. Those within Zimbabwe and those on the continent who remember the colonialism inflicted upon countries throughout Africa see Robert Mugabe as a liberator and bringing democracy to the country. But the reality for many Zimbabweans today appears to be quite different. After 28 years of one party rule, Zimbabwe has witnessed increasingly oppressive actions by the government to remain in power and have suffered with the squandering of the country's wealth through corruption, collusion and the rewarding key loyalists to the government.

How do authoritarian leaders, such as Mugabe, remain in power and circumvent the democratic process? The crux of their ability lies in the theory provided in this paper arguing that oppression and loyalty which manages to deter opposition and enables election rigging. As indicated in previous chapters, the unsubtle means by which Mugabe has ensured loyalties through the distribution of the state's riches and has violently put down any perceived or real opposition has enabled him and his regime to remain in power.

In the end, however, what enables authoritarian governments to remain in power may be what has brought them to power as much as the tactics used to remain in power. As Suttner, Bratton and Masunungure and others in the media have suggested and reported, there is often a sense of entitlement that accompanies an authoritarian leader who has taken the seat of power through a liberation struggle. For some, this sense of entitlement may have come even before taking power. Once the sense of entitlement has been instilled in a leader, they are willing to do anything to hold on to what they believe is rightfully theirs. In her psychobiography of Mugabe, Heidi Holland reveals a portrait of a leader who believed that he was entitled to rule at his discretion and for as long as he desired.

> *Robert Mugabe believed he was born to rule and behaved accordingly. Once the king, always the king, he reckoned. In his*

> *idealized view, his loyal subjects would worship the ground he trod forever. In reality, the great majority of Zimbabwe's people supported him enthusiastically for 20 years. It was only when his policies began to impoverish the country that they turned against him. Characteristically, Mugabe never forgave them. Growing ever more vengeful, he ripped down their shelters, destroyed their livelihoods and snatched the food from their mouths. Those in his court who remained loyal to him were richly rewarded with money, property and power. In death, they were buried amid extravagant fanfare at Heroes Acre, the monument to Zimbabwe's liberation struggle on a hill outside Harare.* (2008, p.192)

Whether Zimbabweans have the capacity for contestation to reverse the notion of a 'liberator being the nation' is the issue facing the nation and region at the moment. The question therefore is now that we have seen how authoritarian leaders remain in power and circumvent the democratic process, how long will Mugabe enjoy this status of entitlement before even oppression and key loyalties are unable to ensure the political survival of the father of liberation and the deliverer of democracy.

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[1] As of February 11, the opposition parties began a power sharing government with Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara being sworn in as Prime Minister and first deputy Prime Minister respectively. The power sharing government appears unstable in its early days of formation and only time will tell if it is a workable arrangement.

[2] The selectorate theory will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4.

[3] Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) credit Shirk (1993) with the term "selectorate."