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2017

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Mahuku, Darlington Ngoni (2017) Militarizing politics or politicizing the military? Interactions between politicians and the military in Zimbabwe, 2000-2013, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <https://hdl.handle.net/10539/24724>

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MILITARIZING POLITICS OR POLITICIZING THE MILITARY? INTERACTIONS BETWEEN POLITICIANS AND THE MILITARY IN ZIMBABWE, 2000-2013



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Abstract

The thesis analyses civil-military relations in Zimbabwe since independence, but especially during the period from 2000 through 2013. A central question is why an outright military coup has not occurred, despite severe political and economic crises. The question is broken down into two linked sub-questions: (1) the "classic" civil-military relations question of why the military have not seized power from civilians and (2) the question why no "populist military revolt" has occurred, despite the kind of hyperinflation that has triggered such revolts in countries like Ghana and Ethiopia. The analytical framework relates these questions to two "nested games": (1) between the military elite and the civilian political elite, and (2) between the military elite and the military rank and file. On the first question, I argue that a degree of "fusion" between military and civilian political elites has helped to pre-empt a conventional military coup, with a partial politicisation of the military and a partial militarisation of civilian politics. On the second question, I argue that the civilian leadership has used a combination of nationalist/liberation ideology, material incentives, and the threat of violence, to maintain cohesion between the military leadership and rank and file soldiers.

Key words

Civil-military relations, Military elites, Military rank-and-file, Politicians, Zimbabwe, Militarisation, Politicisation, "nested-game"

Declaration

I declare that the thesis is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree in the Department of International Relations in the School of Social Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. To the best of my Knowledge, it has not been submitted before any degree or examination in any other University.

Darlington Ngoni Mahuku
Date:

Supervisor: Professor Rod Alence
Date:

Dedication

The thesis is dedicated to my late father Victor Takanyiswa and all members of the Mahuku family.

Acknowledgements

Without the rigorous comments and suggestions from Professor Rod Alence I would not have been able to come up with this thesis; I express my greatest appreciation to him because he has made me what I am. He has guided me into the world of academia since the time I started studying for an Honours and Master's degrees in International Relations. The University of Witwatersrand is my academic home. I thank Professor Gilbert Khadiagala and all the academic team in the Department of International Relations for your support and advice. Outside Wits, I also thank Dr. Martin Revayi Rupiya, Professor Adrienne Lebas, Dr. Gwinyai Dzinesa, Dr. Henning Melber, and Dr. Ibbo Mandaza, Dr. Max Chinyanganya and the late comrade and prolific writer and patriotic son of Zimbabwe Alexander Kanengoni. May your soul rest in eternal peace; it is unfortunate that I only finished the thesis after your untimely death. I also thank all my informants and academics who accorded me the time to interview them, your efforts are greatly appreciated especially in telling the Zimbabwean story on civil-military relations.

Though I was not able to interview him my desire to do this research was also spurred by Dr. Dumiso Dabengwa's speech when he officially opened the 1991 international academic symposium when he said "we urge the emergence of a class of scholars capable of withstanding threats and intimidation and rising above racial, ethnic and tribal considerations. The new breed of Zimbabwean social scientists ought to stand up against the suppression of any information and should develop an ever-critical mind with respect to facts, especially purported facts and actions of political leaders. Anything short of cultivating a tradition of selfless enquiry and exposure of the truth will constantly lead to a nation of sycophants and robots without the necessary powers of independent thought which we should all cherish." I believe that I have also made my contribution in my own way.

I also want to thank members of my family upon whom this study would never have been a success. I thank you very much for your constant support. Special mention goes to my wife Isabel and my daughters Gamuchirai and Rufaro my mother Mercy. Members of the family, Dr. George Simba, Padington, Salang, Tsitsi, Everjoy, Chiedza, Tinashe, Rutendo, Patience, Pfungwa, Mr Farai B. Chifetete, Cornelius, Uncle Steve Siziba and wife; Friends, Bowden B.C. Mbanje, Tendai Michael Rupiya, James Pasirayi and fellow lecturers at Bindura University of Science Education I have no words with which to thank you for your support, may God bless you all.

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Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BMATT	British Military Assistance and Training Team
BOS	Bureaucratic-Oligarchic Syndrome
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CG	Civilian Government
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
CIOGD	Central Intelligence Organization Director General
CMR	Civil Military Relations
CZC	Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition
EOIs	Expert Opinion Interviews
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ESC	Electoral Supervisory Committee
FTLR	Fast Track Land Reform
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
JHC	Joint High Command
JOC	Joint Operation Command
LMM	Liberation Movement Model
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MEs	Military Elites
MLs	Military Leaders
MMD	Movement for Multi-Party Democracy
MNR	Mozambican National Resistance
MR&F	Military Rank & File
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NCC	National Command Centre

NCOs	Non-Commissioned Officers
NSC	National Security Council
PPR&F	Political Party Rank & File
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RSF	Rhodesia Security Forces
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SS	Security Sector
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSL	Security Sector Leadership
SSR&F	Security Sector Rank & File
VCDR	Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZDF	Zimbabwe Defence Forces
ZDI	Zimbabwe Defence Industries
ZEC	Zimbabwe Election Commission
ZIPA	Zimbabwe People's Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe Independent People's Revolutionary Army
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army
ZRNA	Zimbabwe Rhodesia National Army
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police