

CHAPTER 8:

CONCLUSION – PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

This research report has examined the issue of land in Zimbabwe and its joint effect on domestic and foreign affairs. The international relations and human rights discourse have been used as the theoretical basis for this investigation.

Chapter one introduced and familiarised the readers to the research topic, and highlighted the reason for the specific chapters and how they related back to the research topic. Zimbabwean history was discussed in the second chapter in order to place the country in historical context and to unravel past processes that have effected the present. This chapter also familiarised the reader with the country itself, and revealed the effect that past and present land redistribution has had on the internal politics in Zimbabwe. The third chapter provided an examination of international relations discourse that placed the topic in political and international context. This chapter was also used to explain the theories that were applied in subsequent chapters. In chapter four, a discussion of the land issue in Zimbabwe followed, which assisted in linking the current land issue with the history of the country, and showed how it has changed over the years. Chapter five examined the development of the notion of human rights, highlighted their importance in the life of any nation state, and then looked at human rights violations in Zimbabwe. Chapter six and seven dealt with the Zimbabwean foreign policy, and the foreign policy of international states and organisations respectively. Both these chapters investigated the effect of Zimbabwean land redistribution on this foreign policy. This chapter will summarise the findings of the entire study.

The Aim of This Study

The ultimate aim of this study was to provide in - depth insight into land redistribution in Zimbabwe. The land issue was applied to different subjects of analysis in order to give the research a multi – layered approach, and to place it in political and geographical context. It was through this multi – layered analysis that the aim (which was expressed in chapter one) was achieved.

SUMMATION

*Harare - About 60 farmers in one of the most productive agricultural areas of Zimbabwe shut down their farms on Tuesday to protest against the ongoing land invasions by self-styled guerrilla war veterans. The sprawling, emerald green fields of winter wheat in the rich Glendale area about 80 km north of Harare, usually dotted with labourers and arced by sprays of irrigation sprinklers, were abandoned and eerily silent on Tuesday. Virtually the only people at work were security guards manning electrified gates and workers performing essential tasks such as milking dairy cows. "We have struggled to get police support in containing the very malicious round we are in now," said Malcolm Vowles, administrator for the CFU in the region. "The community made its stand, that until farming is returned to normality and we can operate in safety and without interference, the district is shut down."*¹

This was the situation in Zimbabwe in 2000. The farmers believed that farming would be returned to normality, yet instead violence and illegal squatting perpetuated, with hundreds of farmers fleeing the country. Also, due to the destruction of viable farmland, the Zimbabwean economy is in ruin. This research report highlighted issues that led up to the land crisis, what has essentially caused it, and what affects it is having. All these factors were incorporated and concluded in chapters 1 to 7.

Journalist Allister Sparks believes that the current crisis in Zimbabwe is of Mugabe's making – that he began with a policy of integration at the beginning of Zimbabwe's independence but then for populist reasons embarked on a different policy that has resulted in what we see now.² Zimbabwean history (Chapter 2) shows that land was an important commodity from as early as the white settlers began dividing it up. Unfortunately, the land and human rights that the African nationalists fought the white Rhodesians for has not been attained legally or upheld responsibly. Even though one of the stipulations agreed upon at the Lancaster House Conference was safe – guards for whites in terms of land, President Robert Mugabe has had a subsequent fifteen years to follow a peaceful and comprehensive land redistribution programme.

The theory chapter (Chapter 3) highlights causal explanations based on prior occurrences. This means that international relations theory and international law are applied to events in Zimbabwe and policies connected to it. The focus with this theory was mainly on individual state actions because these form the basis of both domestic

and foreign policy. However, the notion of sovereignty and state actions was incorporated into the workings and importance of the international community as a whole. From this notion of world community stems moral duty, and the importance of human rights in a globalising society. Foreign policy analysis was tackled by looking at different cases, and how input and output variables change and affect one another. By placing Zimbabwe in the context of international law, the treaties it is party to could be examined, and domestic legislation highlighted (due to the fact that the legislation was introduced to side – step international law).

Chapter 4 focussed on the present day land situation, and recent events that led up to it. These included the 1998 land conference, the subsequent squatting on land, the destruction of the Zimbabwean economy, the ZANU – PF 1990 election promise to speed up the land redistribution process, bad economic decisions taken by the Zimbabwean government (for example, ZIMPREST), and Zimbabwe's entry into the DRC. All these points are significant because they highlight aspects of the land issue in Zimbabwe that have effected the interest and opinion of the international and regional community, not to mention issues that have effected Zimbabwean domestic politics – for example, the illegal seizure of land and economic collapse.

The chapter on human rights (Chapter 5) was significant because it unravelled the notion of human rights – that is, why they are so important in the world today, and the role they are playing in the Zimbabwean land redistribution programme. This chapter examined how the end of World War II saw customary rights evolve into the concept of human rights. It also suggested that globalisation is one of the reasons that human rights play such an extensive role in the international community today. Cultural relativism of human rights was compared to universalism, and it was concluded that although not all constructs of human rights are Western, the basis of the rights used in international law are. This led on to an examination of rights theory, which is significant because it added to the notion of human rights by applying it to specific models, for example, “constitution without constitutionalism” – in this case, the construct of rights was compared to the application of rights, and it was shown that a construct is only as good as its application. Rights were also placed in the context of Zimbabwe, and specific human rights abuses were examined to highlight not only a growing problem, but also actions that are drawing the attention of the rest

of the world. This chapter was concluded by linking human rights to foreign policy in order to show the relationship between rights abuses and international reaction, as well as how rights affect the foreign policy decision – making of nation states.

Chapter 6 examined Zimbabwean foreign policy toward South Africa and Britain. This placed Zimbabwe in a regional and international context. This is important because it provides a better understanding of relationships between countries in Southern Africa, and it provided better insight into the bad relationship that Zimbabwe and Britain have. The complexity of interstate relations was emphasised by examining Zimbabwe's foreign policy with South Africa during Apartheid years to what is today. Zimbabwe is now largely dependent on South Africa both economically and socially.

Chapter 7 examined the role that the international community has played in Zimbabwe. South Africa has moved from a policy of destabilisation to one of “quiet diplomacy”. This is important because it highlights different leadership skills and different objectives due to the changing contexts (Apartheid SA versus a democratic SA). In terms of foreign policy, Zimbabwe seems to have turned away from what one would term ‘internationalism’, that is: “a general foreign policy orientation characterised by international cooperation, international law and institutions, economic interdependence, international development, diligence in seeking arms control, and restraint in the use of force.”³ Instead, Zimbabwe moved towards a policy of dependence (on South Africa), and weak diplomacy. It is still an active member of regional organisations, yet has not successfully achieved the aims of any negotiations brokered by countries like South Africa.

Britain, on the other hand, withdrew monetary funding meant for land redistribution from Zimbabwe and later expelled it from the Commonwealth. This highlights a strong foreign policy objective where rules (that is, good governance) need to be adhered to. Again this is significant because it depicts a strong, humanitarian decision – making style. The style of regional organisations, however has been more “quiet diplomacy”. This is important because these organisations represent the region and are therefore viewed as opinion leaders in the Zimbabwe situation by the rest of the world.

Zimbabwean land reform is a complex matter. Not only is it embedded in the history of the country due to the actions and effects of colonialism, but it has also transformed over the years since power changed hands from the white Rhodesians to the African nationalists.

The land issue in Zimbabwe has had a permanent and forceful effect on Zimbabwe's internal politics from as far back as colonialism, and has also greatly affected the foreign policy approaches of Zimbabwe, Britain, and South Africa. The contribution that this research makes to the field is that it places the land issue in Zimbabwe on the international stage, and it links international relations and human rights discourse with foreign policy. It also incorporates Zimbabwean history into the explanation of the effect of land redistribution in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Way Forward For Zimbabwe

The first recommendation is that Zimbabwe follow South Africa's example of land redistribution where rule of law is upheld by a strong, fair, transparent judiciary and government, and the farmers are compensated by the government through land bank loans. Also, South Africa's land redistribution has not upset the economy.

Unfortunately, the Zimbabwean land reform programme has progressed too far for this recommendation to be effective. This is because corruption in the government and judiciary is now rife, and land has already been possessed illegally, with many farmers fleeing the country.

The second, and more realistic recommendation is that Mugabe not be re-elected, and for the Zimbabwean people to take a stand against corruption, intimidation, and vote for democratic leadership. This leader would then need to put a stop to the violence. It is recommended that Zimbabwean government put an end to the violence, and then establish a commission whereby past injustices can be verbalised so that the country can start healing. This is a form of transitional justice. Zimbabwean infrastructure would have to be rebuilt slowly, and the economy would need to become a main focus of domestic policy. The country would need a new constitution,

and a strong, transparent judiciary. It would also be better if the ruling party were allowed a strong opposition.

The third recommendation is that the election process be made free and fair by a strong monitoring presence and well – planned election and voter education:

It is clear that the haphazard application of the law last year (2000) is already having a negative effect on the prospect of free and fair elections in Zimbabwe. Parliamentary by-elections, mayoral elections and local elections have been consistently marred by violence. It is imperative that the government scrap a proposal to limit voter education only to the government-run Electoral Supervisory Commission. It is also crucial that they invite all willing election monitors, whether domestic or international, to observe the election process both on the voting days and in the crucial run-up period which has traditionally seen the vast majority of violence and intimidation.⁴

The last recommendation is that Zimbabwe recognise the importance of the international community, and become a player in this community. A transition from the Zimbabwe we see today to a democratic Zimbabwe would definitely require international involvement. Also, rebuilding Zimbabwe will require huge amounts of international funding. This also implies, however, that the regional and international community should get involved in Zimbabwe as soon as possible. The sooner the crisis in the country is ended, the more there will be to salvage.

Endnotes

¹ “Farmers ‘Shut Down’ in Dramatic Protest” - from News 24 (SA), 19 July 2000 (accessed from <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jul23.html> on 20 January 2005), pp. 1.

² Taken from an interview with Allister Sparks – South African journalist and author – 28 June 2005.

³ Farer, T. J., “International Law: The Critics are wrong” in Olsen, W.C. (ed) The Theory and Practice of International Relations, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991, pp. 113.

⁴ “Who was responsible? Alleged Perpetrators and Their Crimes During the 2000 Parliamentary Election Period” - July 2001 (accessed from <http://www.hrforumzim.com/evmp/evmpreports/whowasresp0107/whowas0107c.htm> on 24 July 2005), pp. 1.