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EDITORIAL NOTE

This special issue started with a wholistic review of the different dynamics of insecurity and defence threats within the African states.

The first article presented the challenges of kidnapping, terrorism and police brutality in Nigeria. It reveals that the Nigerian state has been weighed down by the multiple threats of progressive terrorism often carried out through mass abduction of villagers, groups and targeted travelers. Unfortunately, the hope of the victims for rescue is often worsened by the increasing culture of police brutality, which turns the expected saviors into part of the popular source of terror.

The second article presents military coups as a major threat in West Africa. In contemporary times, West African states have become a centerpiece of continuous coups and failed coups. This wind of coups in West Africa is largely driven by the culture of corruption, nepotism and bad governance which creates ungoverned spaces for insecurity and a beautiful environment for coup plotters to launch their attacks and win public opinion. The article that followed unraveled the negative wind of human trafficking and the negative psychology as well as false hope that drives victims into the untold hardship. The situation is worsened by the crisis of untold hardship that goes with reintegration.

Furthermore, the next article presented the crisis faced in the Contemporary Zimbabwean state. These crisis were driven by a combination of neocolonialism, bad governance, land crisis and poor fiscal policy which weakened national spirit of development and undermined nation building process in Zimbabwe. The last article evaluated the culture of military rule. It unveils the multiple corruption, nepotism, ethnicity and human rights violations within the Nigerian state under military rule. The implications became that the Nigerian state was high jacked and pushed away from the part of democratization towards the part of militarism in the post-independence years of the state.

Finally, I wish to invite you to take your time and read through the wonderful contents of the articles. They are highly scholarly and have sound promise of satisfying your intellectual appetite.

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POLITICAL VOLATILITY, FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN POST-COLONIAL ZIMBABWE, 1980-2008

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Abstract

This paper examines the administration and financial downfall in post-colonial Zimbabwe, focusing on the period between 1980 and 2008, with specific attention to how political volatility influenced national development. The main objective is to investigate the extent to which administrative mismanagement, authoritarian governance and inconsistent economic policies contributed to Zimbabwe's prolonged developmental crisis. Employing a qualitative historical methodology, the research draws upon archival government records, economic reports, academic literature and international financial data to assess the dynamics between governance and economic collapse. The paper highlights key events such as the Gukurahundi massacres, the centralization of executive power under ZANU-PF and the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme, revealing how political decisions aimed at regime survival undermined institutional integrity, agricultural production and investor confidence. Findings indicate that poor fiscal discipline, patronage-driven policy choices and the militarization of public administration catalyzed hyperinflation, unemployment and the decline of both public services and national currency. The analysis further identifies how global sanctions and diplomatic isolation exacerbated internal dysfunction, pushing Zimbabwe into economic freefall by 2008. The paper concludes that Zimbabwe's post-independence trajectory offers critical lessons for understanding the link between governance quality and development outcomes in post-colonial African states. It emphasizes the need for transparent administration, institutional reform and inclusive policymaking to reverse long-term decline.

Keywords: *Zimbabwe, political volatility, economic collapse, governance, post-colonial Africa.*

Introduction

The post-colonial development of Zimbabwe has been marked by the inter-tangled relationship of legacies liberation struggle, administrative struggle and economic instability. With this treasure trove of natural resources and a fairly diversified economy, Zimbabwe, emerging

in 1980 out of colonial rule, was considered by most people as a possible success story in the Sub-Saharan Africa. But in about thirty years, the nation suffered economic breakdown, hyperinflation and mass social disorientation. The fork of where it was at birth and its slowly declined, raises a question of looking further at how

governance influenced the development process of the two periods that is 1980-2008 (Meredith, 2002). At the core of this question, lies the idea of political volatility, especially how the then democratic-driven state transitioned and came to become authoritarian-led country in terms of the Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). The high level of authority concentration in the executive, the diminution of institutional counter-balances and militarization of the government activities has all made the administrative inefficiency and financial impropriety (Raftopoulos & Phimister, 2004). Such transformation not only inhibited the civic engagement but also undermined the administrative components of physical discipline and public accountability that led to the inability to achieve economic recovery.

In addition, political survival not developmental policies influenced the decision making of the state in policy making especially through the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) and overspending of constituencies (Sachikonye, 2003). This brought about poor investment environment, destroyed agricultural sector and led to mass capital flight. These internal decisions accelerated the downfall of Zimbabwe with regard to funds, together with international sanctions (Richardson, 2005). This paper aims at exploring how the implementation of administrative governance and political uncertainty interacted to impede the economic growth of Zimbabwe between the year 1980 and 2008. It asks questions of how government systems, policies and instability in governmental leaderships were converted into system decay. Zimbabwe is an example on how the lack of good governance combined with unopposed political authority can negatively affect progress of post sovereignty African countries. It points to the absolute necessity

of institutional reforms, political accountability and democracy-oriented policy making in achieving socio-economic stability in the long term (Bratton & Masunungure, 2008). Comprising of ten sections, section one embodies the introduction, section two analyzed the administration and struggle for power consolidation in Zimbabwe after independence, while section three examined weakness in the economy and the fall of the institutions of the nation. Similarly, the political volatility and its effects on nation development were explained in the fourth section, while the fifth section took a glance at the land reform policy and agricultural decline. In section six, hyperinflation, monetary policy, and financial system collapse were critically discussed. Section seven embodied the social consequences of administrative and economic collapse while sanctions and diplomatic isolation were extensively discussed in section eight. Recommendations were provided in the ninth section on the possible ways to solve the problems engendered, the tenth section dealt on the conclusion.

1. The Administration after Independence and the Struggle for Power Consolidation:

When Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, it received administrative system which was organized, even though it was racially biased, Zimbabwe had a new government under Robert Mugabe with the mission of addressing colonial injustices by embracing inclusive governance and planning. Nonetheless, this initial administrative hope was overtaken by ambition by government to concentrate the power and control major institutions almost immediately (Ndloven-Gatsheni, 2009). The bureaucracy soon turned to be politicized with loyalty rather than credibility in gaining the positions.

Among the most important of developments in the aspect was the Gukurahandi campaign (1983/1987) in which state security organs targeted perceived political opponents in Matabeleland. Not only did the bloodshed foster ethnic divide, it also served to delegitimize the state and take administrative attention away and to focus on national development (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, 1997). The consolidation of one party state through the formation ZANU-PF by merger between ZANU and ZAPU expanded one party rule and weakened the political opposition. By 1990s, the system had changed into authoritarian authority where the formulation of policies had been monopolized by the executive arm of government. The independence of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and local councils were eroded and they would be co-opted to provide services to the ruling party (Bracking, 2005). Administrative reforms were only superficial and actual decision-making was even further darkened and partisan. Such centralization were carried into the local governance which derailed participatory development. There was political interference in the budgeting and service delivery to the urban and rural councils and this caused a lot inefficiency and misallocation of resources (Chaikapa, 2010). Civil servants had to work in the face of fear and patronage that took precedence over professionalism and innovation in administration. In that way, the impossibility to introduce a meritocracy and accountable administrative was at the epicenter of the decline of Zimbabwe after independence. The state bureaucracy instead of being a means to nation-building was now to be used as a means to in maintaining the regime at the expense of development goals (Makumbe, 1998).

2. Weakness in the economy and the fall of the institutions of the nation.

The post independence Zimbabwean economic policy went back and forth between socialist and capitalist ideologies, leading to lack of commitment and overall effectiveness. First, the state employed expansionary fiscal policies that focused on the area of education, health and social equity, but the latter were not complemented by productive investments or the effective mobilization of revenues (Zhou & Zvoushe, 2012). With the stagnating economy, the state resorted to more borrowing, printing and donor funding.

The implementation of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1991 forced upon by IMF and World Bank, changed the course of things. Although ESAP was supposed to liberalize the economy, it brought in unemployment, cut in social expenditure and shrinking of the public sector which reduced poverty and inequality (Bond & Manyanya, 2002). Instead of modernizing state institutions, ESAP undermined them and made service delivery ineffectual and grew the informal economy.

By early 2000s, the government introduced the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme that redistributed white commercial farms to blacks who were in-turn unarmed and had no resources or expertise. Although such a policy was anchored on historical factors, it was able to destroy agricultural productivity, foreign exchange earnings and food security (Richardson, 2005). There was also reversal of agro-industrial interconnections and rural jobs as the commercial agriculture failed.

The state wanted to fund political spending and to pay war veterans through printing excess money which led to hyperinflation.

During the period between 2007 and 2008, the level of inflation surpassed 76 billion percent which made the Zimbabwean dollar worthless and destroyed the banking sector (Hanke & Kwok, 2009). The credibility of the institutions particularly the national treasury and central bank was totally destroyed.

Finally, economic mismanagement based on bad governance, policy shift and absence of institutional checking also denied the principles of national development. It has stabilized the poverty spiral, eroded the ability of the state organizations and created more suspicion among citizens towards government agencies (Raftopoulos, 2009).

3. Political Volatility and Its Effects on Development of a Nation.

Party politics was volatile not only in Zimbabwe; it became a primary characteristic of the general governance structure. Most elections which followed after 1985 saw the use of electoral violence, manipulation, repression of voters, and marginalized young people making them avoid participation in politics and stabilized authoritarianism (Bratton & Masunungure, 2008). The state increased coercive means of control when the late nineteen nineties saw increased popularity of opposition forces which included the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

This political mess trembled to the core of the priority development areas. The civil society organizations that had always been instrumental in service provision and accountability to the public were harassed or banned. The media, academicians, and political critics were being constantly imprisoned, which staged expression of disagreements and weakened the democracy domain (Moyo, 2004). This atmosphere is what prevented the formulation of long-term, all-inclusive development policies.

The justice system and the parliament also took a toll as its role more often than not was to justify the move made by the executive instead of an act of supervision. The developmental projects were politicized and allocating permissions to land, food aid, and resources of the state became a tool of political patronage (Sadomba, 2011). State provision of services was based on political loyalty and not on community needs.

Foreign investment dwindled at a high rate, especially, following land reform and violence related to the elections in the 2000s. The reasons as given by the investors included political stability, property rights, and rule of law as the main obstacle. This not only decreased the amount of capital that entered the country but also caused technological stagnation and loss of jobs most notably in the mining and manufacturing sectors (Jenkins & Knight, 2002).

Therefore, in politics, volatility was a factor and reflection of underdevelopment. It established a situation that made policies to be based on electoral expedience rather than developmental sense that led to continuation of economic deterioration as well as administrative failure (Mano & Mugabe, 2009).

4. Land Reform Policy and Agricultural Decline

Land reform has been one of the most significant and controversial policy initiatives in post-colonial Zimbabwe, shaping both political legitimacy and economic performance. At independence in 1980, land ownership was highly unequal, with a small white settler population controlling the most fertile land, while the black majority occupied marginal areas. Addressing this imbalance was therefore central to the nationalist project and framed

as a moral and developmental imperative (Moyo, 2000).

In the first decade after independence, the government pursued a gradual land redistribution strategy based on the “willing buyer, willing seller” principle negotiated at Lancaster House. This approach maintained agricultural productivity and macroeconomic stability but failed to satisfy popular expectations for rapid redistribution. Limited funding, administrative bottlenecks, and weak political will slowed progress, allowing land grievances to persist (Sachikonye, 2003).

By the late 1990s, land reform became increasingly politicized. Rising unemployment, declining economic performance, and the emergence of strong opposition forces intensified pressure on the ruling ZANU-PF government. Land redistribution was reframed as a revolutionary necessity rather than a developmental policy, laying the foundation for more radical and disruptive interventions (Raftopoulos, 2009).

The Fast-Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), launched in 2000, marked a dramatic shift in policy direction. Implemented through farm invasions and compulsory acquisitions, it bypassed established legal and administrative procedures. Although intended to correct colonial injustices, the program was characterized by poor planning, violence, and weak institutional oversight (Richardson, 2005).

Administrative failure was central to the agricultural collapse that followed. Beneficiary selection was often driven by political loyalty rather than farming capacity, resulting in elite capture of prime land. New farmers frequently lacked access to credit,

inputs, and extension services, undermining productivity and sustainability (Moyo, 2000).

The decline in commercial agriculture had cascading effects across the economy. Zimbabwe lost major export earnings from tobacco and maize, foreign exchange shortages intensified, and agro-processing industries collapsed. Food insecurity increased sharply, forcing reliance on humanitarian assistance and further straining state resources (Kanyenze et al., 2011).

Socially, land reform deepened inequality and conflict in rural areas. Farm workers were displaced without compensation, while communal farmers struggled to adapt to new land-use patterns. The absence of clear tenure systems created uncertainty and discouraged long-term investment in agriculture (Sachikonye, 2003).

Ultimately, land reform illustrates how politically driven development policies, when poorly administered, can undermine both equity and economic stability. While redistribution addressed historical grievances, its chaotic implementation contributed significantly to Zimbabwe’s administrative and financial downfall, highlighting the importance of institutional capacity in development planning (Raftopoulos & Phimister, 2004).

5. Hyperinflation, Monetary Policy, and Financial System Collapse

Zimbabwe’s hyperinflation crisis represents one of the most extreme cases of monetary breakdown in modern economic history. By 2008, inflation had reached unprecedented levels, eroding the value of money and paralyzing economic activity. This crisis did not emerge suddenly but evolved from years of fiscal mismanagement and politically

motivated monetary policies (Hanke & Kwok, 2009).

A key driver of hyperinflation was the persistent budget deficit. As economic performance deteriorated and revenue declined, the government increased public spending to maintain political support, particularly among security forces and civil servants. Lacking access to international credit, the state turned to domestic borrowing and money creation to finance expenditures (Zhou & Zvoushe, 2012).

The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) lost its independence and was transformed into an instrument of political survival. It undertook quasi-fiscal activities such as subsidizing agriculture, funding parastatals, and financing government programs without parliamentary approval. These interventions expanded the money supply uncontrollably, fueling inflationary pressures (Bond & Manyanya, 2002).

Monetary instability destroyed confidence in the financial system. Banks struggled to function as savings were wiped out and lending became impossible. Multiple currency redenominations failed to restore trust, further undermining economic predictability and institutional credibility (Makoni, 2013).

Hyperinflation had devastating effects on households. Wages became worthless within days, pensions collapsed, and basic commodities became inaccessible. Citizens resorted to barter trade, foreign currencies, and informal markets as survival strategies, accelerating the informalization of the economy (Mlambo, 2017).

The collapse of the financial system also discouraged investment and entrepreneurship. Businesses could not plan,

price goods, or access credit, leading to widespread closures and unemployment. Skilled professionals emigrated, intensifying brain drain and reducing national productive capacity (Jenkins & Knight, 2002).

Social inequality deepened as those with access to foreign currency or political connections survived better than ordinary citizens. Corruption and rent-seeking flourished in the chaotic monetary environment, further weakening governance and public trust (Raftopoulos, 2009).

In essence, hyperinflation was both a consequence and a catalyst of Zimbabwe's financial downfall. It reflected the subordination of economic institutions to political imperatives and underscored the necessity of monetary discipline, institutional autonomy, and accountability for sustainable development (Hanke & Kwok, 2009).

6. Social Consequences of Administrative and Economic Collapse

The administrative and financial collapse of Zimbabwe had profound and long-lasting social consequences, reshaping livelihoods and development outcomes. As state institutions weakened, the provision of basic public services deteriorated, reversing many of the social gains achieved during the early post-independence years (UNDP, 2008).

The health sector was among the hardest hit. Hospitals faced shortages of drugs, equipment, and personnel as professionals emigrated in search of better conditions. Public health crises, including cholera outbreaks, exposed the fragility of the system and the inability of the state to protect citizens' welfare (Bond & Manyanya, 2002).

Similarly, the education system experienced severe decline. Once a model in Africa, it

suffered from underfunding, declining teacher morale, and poor infrastructure. Many schools closed temporarily, and learning outcomes deteriorated, undermining human capital development (Kanyenze et al., 2011).

Economic collapse intensified poverty and unemployment across both urban and rural areas. Formal employment opportunities disappeared as industries shut down, forcing households into informal economic activities. This reduced income security and limited access to social protection mechanisms (Mlambo, 2017).

Women and youth were disproportionately affected by the crisis. Economic hardship increased vulnerability to exploitation, early marriage, and child labor, while youth unemployment fueled social frustration and migration. These dynamics weakened social cohesion and intergenerational stability (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

Political polarization further fragmented communities. Access to food aid, land, and public services was often conditioned on political loyalty, reinforcing exclusion and resentment. Development assistance became politicized, undermining its effectiveness and fairness (Sadomba, 2011).

The crisis also triggered mass emigration, particularly to South Africa, Botswana, and the United Kingdom. While remittances provided a vital survival lifeline, the loss of skilled labor weakened state capacity and long-term development prospects (Makina, 2010).

Overall, Zimbabwe's social crisis was inseparable from its administrative and financial downfall. The erosion of state capacity, combined with political volatility, produced widespread human insecurity. This

experience highlights the centrality of people-centered governance and inclusive development strategies in post-colonial African states (UNDP, 2008).

7. Sanctions and Diplomatic Isolation

The introduction of international sanctions is one of the most controversial factors pertaining to the economic crisis in Zimbabwe. After the seizures of controversial land and cases of electoral fraud and abuse of human rights in the first decade of the 2000s, Western powers such as the United States and European Union placed targeted sanctions on Zimbabwean elites. As far as these are not blanket economic sanctions, such measures involved travel bans, freeze of assets, and restrictions of bilateral aid (Chigora & Guzura, 2011). The government on the other hand chose to refer to such sanctions as neo-colonial sabotage and ignited the nationalistic fervor and accused foreign influencers of domestic missteps.

The restrictions worsened the fact that Zimbabwe was isolated when it comes to international financial markets. Lending by multilateral banks or banks of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank was suspended on account of arrears and failure to redeem policies hence international credit venues and developmental funds are blocked (Makoni, 2013). This added to the economic crisis particularly when the internal sources of revenue evaporated in light of the breakdown of the important sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing.

Also, the confidence of the private sector and foreign direct investment were speculative to the sanctions. Zimbabwe had risk shot to the roof and the multinational companies either fled or placed operations on hold. The loss did not only result in the loss of jobs and technological stagnation, but interfered with

the export oriented sectors such as the tobacco, tourism and mining (Kanyenze et al., 2011). The net impact of all these was the contraction of the formal economy and the growth of informal trade as survival skill.

The resulting action by Zimbabwe was a policy of strategic shift towards the East and China, mainly to use the initials Look East. Although this alleviated the situation financially and gave investments in infrastructure, it was not enough to overcome the loss of Western capital, or reinstitute capacity (Tendi, 2010). It was also argued that the Chinese alliances were not open and tried to serve and shut the elite more than facilitate general development.

Moreover, the reliance on Eastern partnership altered Zimbabwe's diplomatic posture but did not resolve structural economic weaknesses. Chinese investment often prioritized resource extraction with minimal value addition or employment creation. This reinforced Zimbabwe's dependence on primary commodity exports and limited industrial diversification (Mlambo, 2017).

The sanctions regime also had indirect social consequences. Reduced donor funding affected health, education and humanitarian programmes, particularly during periods of food insecurity and public health crises. Although humanitarian exemptions existed, bureaucratic obstacles and political mistrust hindered effective aid delivery, deepening social vulnerability. (Bond & Manyanya, 2002).

Hence, whereas internal mismanagement had been the leading factor destroying Zimbabwe, its status as pariah on international scene escalated the financial demise of the country. At this point, international sanctions alongside diplomatic isolation left Zimbabwe with little recovery options ahead of it (Mlambo, 2017).

In sum, international sanctions and diplomatic isolation intensified Zimbabwe's economic crisis but did not singularly cause it. While external pressures constrained financial recovery and international engagement, internal governance failures, political volatility and policy mismanagement remained the fundamental drivers of decline. Zimbabwe's experience underscores the complex interaction between domestic political choices and external forces in shaping development outcomes in post-colonial African states. (Raftopoulos & Phimster, 2004)).

Recommendations

The history of failure in Zimbabwe when it comes to both administration and finances implementation demands system-level changes and restructuring. To begin with, the restructuring of the institutional trust via open governance is necessary. This involves returning of the independence of national institutions like the judicial system, the central bank, and the electoral commission in the desire to make the governing process, rule based and not personality based (Bratton & Masunungure, 2008). Enforcement of institutional controls and encouragement of a system based merit system of civil service appointments would enhance better implementation of policy and accountability of the people.

Second, the economic policy is to become sustainable and inclusive. New land reform initiatives that aim to be more productive and favorable to smallholders by providing them with capital, training and technology should be undertaken. Controlling wastage in the public sector, providing parliamentary watchdogs on budgets and stabilization of the currency by utilizing good monetary policies should be reinforced to restore fiscal discipline (Zhou & Zvoushe, 2012). The capital flows and the revival of the industries

require the policies that boost investors confidence, including enactment of property rights and fulfilment of contracts.

Third, the political space should be democratized so that long term development planning can be done. This entails protection of civil liberties, empowerment of opposition, and implementation of electoral reforms that will thwart state capture by dominant elites. The civil society organizations are to be considered as collaborators of development and able to provide different opinions and state accountability (Moyo, 2004). Improvements in government-stakeholder dialogue are possible to reduce confrontation and introduce the idea of cooperative governance.

Fourth, Zimbabwe needs to re-engage international partners on the basis of mutual respect and commitments in the name of reforms. The debt relief and the long-term investment will be severely dependent on the reconstruction of relationships with financial institutions like IMF and World Bank. The normalization of diplomatic relations should be correlated with standards of governance so that they do not repeat the patterns inherited by usurping the country in the past (Makoni, 2013). It should also diversify its international partnerships to prevent any cases of dependency and give an equal standing.

Lastly, a nationwide reconciliation is necessary so as to heal historical differences that were brought about by years of repression as well as land conflict, and violent elections. Speaking the truth, restorative justice, and encompassing nation-building approaches can bring social cohesion that will ensure stability and development. The lack of political healing and administrations reform will make economic solutions unsustainable (Raftopoulos, 2009).

Conclusion

The 1979-2008 history of Zimbabwe is a cup of blood in that they are characterized by a blending of political instability, administrative incompetency and economic ruin. Though the independence has been acquired with large potential, the country could not even become a stable and successful post-colonial state. In its place, authoritarian rule, politicization of the administration, and unstable policy-making pulled down state capacity and economic basis. These effects were institutional degeneration, a high level of poverty and the sinking of the trust of the people in the state (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

The root of this decline was the aspect of the regime placing more importance to ideals such as political survival as opposed to development. The rent seeking activity of using the resources of the public first to guard power instead of dispensing services created loss of efficiencies, misuse of resources and lack of proper supervision. Economic policies like uncontrolled monetary growth, the poorly executed land reform and the rejection of technocratic advice further fuelled the financial crisis and resulted in one of the worst periods of hyperinflation to have ever occurred in history of the world (Hanke & Kwok, 2009).

The environment of political repression and absence of democratic accountability contributed to poor climate of governance that did not encourage innovation, participation and investment. These structural deficiencies were potentiated by the international isolation and targeted sanctions, not, however, the main cause of them. Consequently, the situation in Zimbabwe became a symbol of developmental issues of post-independence African countries (Mlambo, 2017).

Nevertheless, the story of Zimbabwe can also serve as a good example. It evidences the values of good governance, institutional integrity, and participatory policy making in the national growth. It can also re-discover the eventual and more importantly, the far-fetched price that political instability and policy-making, initiated at the elite level without reflecting the understanding of the grass root requirements, take. Unless the true reform takes place, history will repeat itself.

Conclusively, it can be stated that the current way of governance in Zimbabwe must be reimagined, as there is no other way to correct the situation than providing the population with economic solutions to every problem. To ensure sustainability of development, the state has to move towards becoming a tool of national reformation, as opposed to an instrument of political subjugation, based on transparency, equity and accountability (Chikuhwa, 2004).

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