

# Development Denied: Autocratic Militarism in Post-election Zimbabwe

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**This article examines the recent ideological position of ‘Vote for Development’ which the ZANU-PF government in Zimbabwe pursued during the election campaign of March 2005, and the brief period of freer expression that accompanied the campaign. This strategy of power, the willingness to seemingly embrace democratic process, is then compared with the post-election situation in Zimbabwe, where despite having entrenched themselves in government, the ZANU-PF leadership is conducting a campaign to destroy the infrastructural, physical, economic and social assets of the urban poor. I review the ‘Operation Restore Order’ against informal traders, and the ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ (‘Operation Clear Away the Trash’ – or grime, rubbish, filth) of 25 May to early July 2005 against peoples homes, and ask how we can categorise the Zimbabwean state in its contemporary, seemingly contradictory, form.**

*They the villagers had been straining together in one direction for years, and Matenge [fictional chief] had been straining in the opposite direction, always pulling them down. Because of this they had politely avoided him, but today they wanted to see his face when their cattle were dying while his cattle were safe ... They wanted him to know they were not after his Chevrolet or big house. They would even tell him this with gentle smiles and pleasant gestures and reassure him that it was only their lives they wanted to set right and he must not stand in their way (Bessie Head (1969), *When Rain Clouds Gather*, Heinemann, pp. 172-3).*

*He (Maurice Nyagumbo) has learnt that only total confrontation can be opposed to total oppression ... For him such liberation means more than the transfer of power to a new set of masters, even though they be black (J. Conradie (1980), Preface to M. Nyagumbo, *With the People: An Autobiography from the Zimbabwe Struggle*, Allison & Busby, London.*

In reviewing these two historical moments, the article illustrates how the politics of spoils has operated during the election period and after, concluding that the current destruction of the livelihoods, homes and sometimes lives, of the urban poor is part of a longer running turn to authoritarianism by ZANU-PF (see Raftopoulos, 2003), the election experience notwithstanding. I also argue that this authoritarianism is a default mode of an anti-developmental, spoils-based political economy, which is partly conditioned by international isolation and illiquidity: excluded by the IFIs from access to hard currency, and initially dissembled by structural adjustment, the elite pursues a zero-sum extractive form of accumulation against its own citizens.

## Operation Restore Order & Operation Murambatsvina

These 'operations' serve to steal from the poor to reward and resource government uniformed personnel with the spoils of the election: the 20,000 vendors arrested by the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises Development [sic] in May 2005 watched their wares destroyed or stolen by the police, to make way for other traders with party cards. The government claimed they were trading illegally, but most were licenced, including the 3,000 Bulawayo small traders whose City Council pleaded with the Government to respect the licences it had issued. These included the traders of Unity Village in Main Street, Bulawayo (opened by Minister John Nkomo); and of Fort Street Market (opened by Cain Mathema, now Governor of Bulawayo). Other legal markets destroyed include the Green Market in Mutare (where traders had paid Z\$800,000 for shop licences as recently as January) (Sokwanele, 17 June 2005); Fifth Avenue and Avondale in Harare, and established tourist markets across the country from Beitbridge, to the 'Baghdads' and craft stands of Victoria Falls (Sokwanele, 15 June 2005) and structures at Kariba, leaving little hope for an already desperate tourist industry (see Zambezi Times Online, 29 March 2005).

However, the violence is also wanton, symbolic and punitive, signifying ZANU-PF's determination to maintain power and social control in the face of a population who (probably) didn't provide a majority vote for it, with areas who voted for the opposition MDC the worst affected. The security personnel [sic] moved from destroying small businesses to peoples' homes, making at least 200,000 people homeless (and perhaps as many as 1 million), and costing the lives of the weak and vulnerable including two babies who had been reported as frozen to death in the winter cold (Habitat International, 9 June 2005; Joint NGO Statement, 23 June 2005). Sokwanele summarise that:

*Already, vendors' licences are being reissued in Harare – but only to those who have a valid ZANU-PF card. Similarly, in those areas that have been razed to the ground, such as White Cliff Farm, land is already being re-pegged, and the sites are being allocated to members of the army and police. Furthermore, people from MDC supporting cities are being displaced into ZANU-PF strongholds in rural areas, where it is quite simple – those who do not support ZANU-PF will not be allowed access to food this winter (Sokwanele, 18 June 2005).*

Whole suburbs are disappearing, razed to the ground by bulldozers, police and army, horses and dogs, with ever-present overhead buzzing helicopters, and then burnt out as the army becomes bored of herding people into lorries. These include Hatcliffe Extension, Mbare, Joshua Nkomo and White Cliff Farm. Other places affected are the Harare suburbs of Mabvuku, Glenview, Dzivarasekwa and Chitungwiza; the Mutare suburb of Sakubva (but not Chikanga, where many junior Central Intelligence Officers (CIOs) have taken up residence); other areas in Bulawayo such as Chinotimba and Killarney; Victoria Falls, Chipinge, Kariba, Chinhoyi, Beitbridge, and Gwanda.

In Killarney squatter camp, Bulawayo, concrete churches, cooperative development schemes and schools were razed, although many residents had already taken down their own homes before the arrival of the army and police – such is the acute fear of this regime and desire to keep hold of building materials from total destruction. In Hatcliffe, a mosque, churches, a school and shelters for orphans of the HIV pandemic, were bulldozed as the distraught nuns of the Catholic church and their very small charges looked on (Sokwanele, various June 2005). Meanwhile, Zengeza MP, Goodrich Chimbaira and St Mary's MP, Job Sikhala went into hiding, as the security services [sic] threatened them with arrest for inciting resistance, while an

estimated 45 per cent of Chitungwiza's one million residents who had lived in informal housing, were made destitute (SW Radio Africa, 20 June 2005). The new destitutes join the ranks of the already chronically poor, both housed and unhoused. For example, Bulawayo Mayor Japhet Ndabeni Ncube has recently accused the government of falsifying death records to hide malnutrition related death. He claims that the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) is working with the registry department to supply false figures to Bulawayo City Council, since recorded burials at the cemeteries do not tally with figures coming from the Registry Offices (ZimOnline, 17 June 2005).

Some displaced persons, an estimated 10,000, live on the roadside toward Dombashawa, others with Zimbabwean ID cards were returned in army lorries to their province of origin as stated on the card. They were taken to the Sabhuku (sub-chief), where they were more often than not asked for their ZANU-PF party card, and without it denied land and expelled again into the wilderness. Some 'home' villages expelled arrivals themselves: after all, often they too have no food. Those without Zimbabwean ID were initially taken to fenced holding camps and stored like beasts. The raised suburb of Mbare had many Mozambican traders, Hatcliffe many of the 200,000 displaced Malawian ex-farm workers from the misnamed 'Land Reform' of previously white-owned farms. The regime has no regard for such people: as Didymus Mutasa stated three years ago (Mutasa was made minister for national security in April 2005, putting him in charge of the CIO, Mugabe's secret police):

*We would be better off with only 6m, with our own people who support the liberation struggle ... We don't want all these extra people (The Sunday Times World, 12 June 2005).*

## **The Mutation of the Post-colonial Democratic State in Zimbabwe**

So how has such an exclusionary mode of political rule developed? In short, Zimbabwe now exhibits a form of authoritarianism that can be traced from the social transformation catalysed by the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) of 1991-95, the economic crisis after 1997, and the more general economic and moral bankruptcy of the post-colonial nebula of hybrid liberal democracy. In a general sense, authoritarian social formations are a consequence of failed markets,<sup>1</sup> and just as European fascism was born of the 1930s Great Depression, elements of fascist state practices can be traced to the failure of the first generation of structural adjustment in sub-Saharan Africa, and the continued failures of the second generation PRSP mechanisms. Interestingly, the Commission for Africa urges debt relief by arguing that failure to assist the weak neo-liberal elite in Africa will have dire consequences, such as wars, failed states and failed development (Commission for Africa, 2005). This article argues that it is failed market capitalism more generally that spurs a regression into authoritarianism, and that, in contradistinction to the Commission for Africa, it is liberalisation itself, or at least forced liberalisation, that can hasten the ascent into decline. Thus, providing development finance to political elites is not necessarily an insurance against failed development.

Thus, in Zimbabwe, inclusive social democratic development, briefly pursued in the early 1980s, was rejected (Astrow, 1984), and by 1991 the ruling elite had embraced capitalist individualism (see Dashwood, 1996; Mlambo, 1997:ix-x). ESAP saw further rapid accumulation by an expanded economic elite, who were positioned to take advantage of incoming development finance and new development projects, such that the programme increased social and economic inequality and widened class stratification (Bracking, 1999). While a commitment to social welfarism was

retained for much longer in the institutions of the working poor and rural subsistence farmers (Sachikonye, 2001:153-158), events ultimately undermined these discourses, as ESAP prompted an economic fire sale of outdated production capacity and the construction of an austerity based competitiveness for some new ventures (see Mwanza, 1992:4-7). In short, the ESAP of 1991-96 provided the momentum for the economy to become uncompetitive in key industrial sectors (Chipika et al. 2000; Sachikonye, 1999) while causing increased hardship for the poor and promoting uneven development (Mlambo, 1997). There was a rapid generation of finance capital and an associated finance class, made up of patronees of the ruling party, working in autonomous companies, yet dependent on the party-state for their sustenance in key respects, most centrally around the allocations of foreign exchange and business licences (Bracking, 1999).

However, overall the liberalisation of capital markets lead to deindustrialisation, although this was not experienced by all industrial sectors (Chipika et al. 2000:105-7), and increased poverty (Mlambo, 1997:85-88). As a consequence, sections of the established industrial elite were bankrupted, the economy contracted, but social privilege ensured that access to resources was enjoyed by some as a consequence of state sanction and instruments, and large firms experienced benefits from ESAP (Chipika et al. 2000:108). Thus, as a result of ESAP, divisions began to emerge between beneficiaries of state support through indigenisation and empowerment policy, and pre-existing and independent capitalists.<sup>2</sup> The 'party capitalists' increasingly viewed 'free market' entrepreneurs, such as Strive Masiyiwa, as linked to imperialist and white interests, and labelled them sell-outs to national liberation, resenting accumulation outside party networks (see Bracking, 2003). Since 1997 businesses run by people identified as 'outside' the ruling party have increasingly been run out of the market, their operating conditions made hopelessly impossible by targeted failures to the power supply, invasion by Chinotimba's 'War Veterans', or simply bureaucratic obstacle and revoked licences. The election slogans in 2005 even included an overt ideological endorsement of the 'Industrial Chimurenga', the forcible takeover of profitable businesses by the ruling 'party-state' in the 'empowerment though takeovers' policy (see below).

The collapse of the post-colonial liberal state and market economy are not complete, however, and reference is still made in government discourse to tenets of ideological liberalism, and ironically to the desired modernity and rationality of the West. For example, the resonance of the post-colonial in the ideological landscape is evident in the justification, if it can be called such, for *Operation Murambatsvina*. Zimbabweans were assured in the state media that those so cleaned up were 'only *tsotsis*' (thieves), and that the modern urban lifestyle of honest Zimbabweans required that all housing and trading should be certified, sanctioning the removal of the troublesome poor. *The Herald* even gave evidence of the precedent for this urban social policy from the UK case, claiming that 'Britain orders demolition of 400,000 illegal houses', in the UK Midlands and North, aimed at giving the United Kingdom a new outlook. *The Herald* continued that Zimbabwe had 'recently embarked on its own clean-up campaign to rid the country of illegal settlements, makeshift industrial and market stalls', with the implication that legitimacy from the former precedent could be conferred on the latter, such that in both cases [sic] displaced people were to be resettled in planned areas (*The Herald*, 9 June 2005). Needless to say, that while some stands, apparently for zero deposit, and rural resettlement areas are available to card carrying members, there is no generalised provision for the displaced.

Legality aside, informal settlements are themselves testament to the failure of urban planning to fully escape the path dependence of the colonial era, with housing schemes and industrial development peripheralised to peri-urban ghettos. Chitungwiza, for example, has, or had, become by 1998 a settlement of nearly one million poor people, far larger than the residual Central Business District and central suburbs inherited from the white settlers, such that 46 per cent of the total urban population were residing in Greater Harare, which includes these satellite towns (CSO, 1998). Cautioned, and well-researched warnings of the urban housing problem have not been acted upon, so that informal settlement became the only answer for the poor (Tevera and Chimhowu 1998:13-17). The low income housing schemes launched in the 1980s failed to meet the huge demand for accommodation (Kamete, 1998), so that for much of the 1990s informal squatter settlements around Harare have existed despite the authorities' periodic clearances (Tevera and Chimhowu, 1998:15-16).

Given low tolerance of large settlements – such as those near the Mbare Musika bus terminus (cleared for Queen Elizabeth II's visit in 1991), Porta Farm or Churu Farm – homelessness became disguised by the growth of backyard shanties and a rental market in these informal dwellings. Tevera and Chimhowu (1998) reproduce a Harare City Council (1989) summary that in Glen View 28 per cent of stands had shanties by 1989, with figures high for all high density suburbs and highest for Tafara at 57 per cent. The authors' further survey work reveals an average household size in backyard extensions of 4.2 persons in 1998, varying from 5.7 persons in Mbare to 3.8 in Glen View (Ibid.).

It is these shelters which have now been largely demolished, in a reversal of the tolerance shown in the 1990s toward informal dwellings. In that sense, this change in urban housing policy, to forcible removal, is reminiscent of political trends more generally, where hoary problems such as poverty are increasingly met by a rejection of an inclusive welfare paradigm *per se*. Dating from the late 1980s, and encouraged by ESAP, the inclusiveness of political discourse has been eroded by an autarkic development ideology framed around the interests of the elite. The latest incident underlines the extent of this tendency toward social conservatism, with the government demonstrating their mastery of a 'redlined' development project (see Ferguson, 1999:238-254), by redefining citizenship as preferentially belonging to the political class, the inheritors of the revolution.

Their disdain for the poor is partly related to the conservatism that they have rediscovered from the erstwhile white elite: a desire for poverty to be out of sight. It also has a contemporary frame, where the continued poverty of the urban informal sector has become a constant reminder of industrial decline, formal sector unemployment and the contraction of the economy brought on by the retreat of the IFIs since 1998. The poor are also a visible reminder of 'underdevelopment', a circumstance which questions the legitimacy of the modernity and conspicuous consumption of the new rich. Urbanisation is thus substituted in favour of a romanticised return to the land, where not uncoincidentally political pressure to provide welfare for the poor is much less.

## **The Political Context of Social Authoritarianism**

In *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*, Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos further outline the skeleton of the institutional and ideological contradictions of the post-colonial in the present context (2003). While the meaning here might differ

somewhat to that which these authors would provide, the antimonies of the post-colonial are reflected in the acute observations and conceptual constructs which form their analysis. It is worth citing from the introduction at some length, on current 'core discursive divides' and 'political dichotomies':

*a historicised and racialised assertion of land restitution and justice, versus an ahistorical, technocratic insistence on liberal notions of private property, 'development' and 'good governance'; a new form of 'indigenous', authoritarian nationalism (based around claims of loyalty and national sovereignty), versus a non-ethnicised, 'civic' nationalism (grounded in liberal democratic notions of rights and the rule of law); a radical, Pan-Africanist anti-colonial, anti-imperialist critique of 'the West', versus a 'universalist' embrace of certain aspects of neo-liberalism and globalisation; and a monopoly claim over the commitment to radical redistribution, versus a monopoly claim over the defence of human rights* (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003:17).

The authors continue that these polarities are 'in large part' founded in competing narratives of Zimbabwe's national liberation history (see Ranger, 2003), a key notion employed in the Government's recruitment of consent. In this 'unfinished business' of the national liberation struggle, the country is depicted as being in a permanent, unending war against the (former) colonialists and imperialists. They have also, however, provided an analysis which resonates outside Zimbabwe, which speaks to an essential aspect of post-colonial politics observed elsewhere: the finely balanced path dependent on choices between consolidating the liberal democratic state or resourcing the patrimonial state; between the emergence of the neo-populist, or the consolidation of the social democratic (on South Africa, see Szeftel, 2004), and by extension here, the potential for the emergence of fascist social process within the state. What is referred to here as the 'party-state' emerges from the process whereby the ruling party effectively invades and fills the public space of the state, as was also the case in Gramsci's account of fascist Italy, until the two are not dissociable (see Kaulemu, 2004).

There are circumstances which catalyze such contradictory politics, outlined by Cousins in Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003), in relation to the real 'failure of post-liberation 'development democracies' to address the structural, social and political legacies of colonial and apartheid rule' (Ibid. p.37). This failure is of course related to the parsimonious aid and trade policy environment of the indentured neo-liberal adjustment period since the early 1980s. This context provides the opportunity for authoritarian nationalism, and the politics of economic restitution, to combine and counter development failure ideologically, in opposition to the social incrementalism of neo-liberalism. However, and of significance here, this combination of nationalism and radical sounding economic restitution can ironically be pitted against SAP-induced austerity discursively without benefiting the poor materially, since it hides the deepening of class stratification. Also, and here really is the rub, the combination of nationalism and populist restitutionalism, actually undermines radical liberal and social democratic discourses which could beneficially include the poor. Similarly, the project of nation-building has undergone an exclusionary revision with a

*shift from national development to a revived nationalist revolution, manifested and managed through an ever-deepening authoritarianism, (which) has involved a racial reconfiguration of the terms of national belonging and access to land, security and citizenship ... based primarily on an essentialised narrowing of the principles of inclusion* (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003:38-9).

Thus the urban poor have been increasingly depicted as 'unrooted' and 'totemless', with lesser claims to citizenship because of a distance from the rightful inheritors of the nationalist revolution, the *mwana wevhu* (lit. sons/children of the soil) (Ibid.), while the citizenship of white Zimbabweans has been increasingly denied. The current expulsions of the urban poor reveal the extent to which citizenship has been narrowed.

## **The Parliamentary Election: a Compromised Performance**

The key policies of the 31 March 2005 election confirm these trends. The economic crisis after 1997, and political crisis after the failed plebiscite of February 2000, were worsened by the notoriously violent parliamentary elections of June 2000, and then by the (also violent) Presidential 'The Economy is the Land: the Land is the Economy' and local council elections of 2002. This election was free of the extreme political violence of these earlier elections, but it was not 'free and fair' of more sophisticated interventions. These included gerrymandering, an inaccurate voters' roll, intimidation in that an 'environment of repressive laws were extensively used', and inaccurate counting (see Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), 2005:5-6, 16, 8 and all).

However, the ruling party ZANU-PF, through the 'party-state', did go to extensive lengths to meet the majority of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) *Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections* (2004). Indeed, a number of initiatives were taken by the newly formed Zimbabwean Electoral Commission (ZEC) to meet best practice in the conducting of elections. The amount of polling stations was increased and three boxes instead of one, assigned to alphabetically organised surnames, were provided to ameliorate queuing. The elections were held in one day, using transparent ballot boxes and indelible ink to prevent multiple voting (which did, however, wash off quite easily), and the (original) counting occurred *in situ*, to avoid security issues around the protection of the integrity of ballot boxes overnight and in transit. School teachers were recruited and trained as observers and largely prevented violence or party propagandising around the polling stations. A surprising few weeks of 'Glasnost' emerged, consumed eagerly by the general population who relished the possibility of a 'fair fight' at the polls. Campaign posters from all the candidates papered walls with proficient regard for the equity of numbers of posters per candidate. Supporters of the competing parties drank together and large numbers of people attended MDC rallies.

Significantly, and with an estimated 500 regional and international observers present (ZESN, 2005:26), the election was largely free from violence. Some bodies were not accredited to observe, which included the SADC Parliamentary Forum, the Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA), the Commonwealth, the European Union, and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. However, despite these exclusions, competent agents did observe and monitor the electoral process and the degree of participation from relevant and accredited observer institutions was high. Local observers – which included the army of teachers combined with accredited and respected Zimbabwean institutions such as the Institute of Governance of Africa University and the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN, 2005:26) – agreed that major improvements in the Zimbabwean democratic process were in evidence. In a technical sense the elections were, up to the final tally, an accurate measurement of the votes cast.

There have been some excellent accounts of this election by, in particular, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (2005), and proficient commentaries, such as those by the Sokwanele/Zwakwana group on the final night and final count, and on the key numeric discrepancies which suggest the result was compromised (Sokwanele, 5 April 2005). Highlighted by Sokwanele, and discussed by the ZESN (2005:43-45), is the difference between the votes cast figures mysteriously announced (accurately) on television on 31 March by a ZEC official, and the aggregated totals for the candidates announced on 1 April 2005. For example, ZEC announced 19,763 people had voted in Chegutu, but the next day total votes cast for the candidates added up to 24,828. By contrast, in Beitbridge, ZEC announced that 36,821 people had voted, but the totals for the candidates only added up to 20,602 (*The Standard*, 6 April 2005, see also *Independent*, 8 April 2005), while Goromonzi, Manyame, Kariba, and Mutare South also had significant discrepancies (ZESN, 2005:45). Such discrepancies were possible, because in many constituencies polling results were phoned through to an opaque central officer to be collated, and not pronounced in situ as promised (Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), 6 April 2005). Official copies of tabulated results from polling stations and at constituency level, and details of postal votes have not been made available to the public by ZEC.

Yet the election was endorsed by the South African government observer Mission, led by the South African Labour Minister Mr Membathisi Mdladlana who declared it largely conformed to the SADC *Guidelines*, and 'reflect(ed) the will of the people' (Mdladlana, 2005). They had not reviewed the tallying mechanisms used above the level of the Constituency at the opaque Election Supervisory Commission (ESC), (although their rapid endorsement of the result continues to stymie international solidarity for Zimbabweans). Also, the SADC observer team, led by Mrs Pumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the South African Mineral and Energy Minister, reported that the election was 'peaceful, credible and dignified' (SADC Observer Mission, 2005), although one member, Democratic Alliance MP, Dianne Kohler-Barnard, walked out of the final meeting in disgust and dissent (Kohler-Barnard, 2 April 2005). The SADC Electoral Commissions Forum (SADC ECF) Mission (2005) and African Union Observer (AU) mission (2005a; 2005b) were similarly congenial, although all missions raised some critical issues, and the AU Observers asked for a 'probe' into the results (*Daily News*, 5 April 2005).

However, significant in constitutional terms is the fact that the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC) is an independent body only in so far as it remains accountable to the higher institution of state, the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), on to which members of the military are seconded. The ZESN go further, and point out that the multiplicity of election management bodies in the country – the ZEC, ESC, Registrar-General of Voters and the Delimitation Commission – is contrary to the SADC *Principles and Guidelines*, adopted before these elections by the Zimbabwean government (ZESN, 2005:9). Thus policy areas still outside the ZEC include the question of who is allowed to vote (under the Registrar General), and those in the Diaspora were denied such a right; and the demarcating of constituency boundaries, carried out by the Delimitation Commission, which reduced urban constituencies.

Critically, the process of registering to vote held in February 2005 did not succeed in providing an accurate roll, and was carried out by the Registrar General. It was also carried out after the Delimitation exercise. The high numbers of people 'turned away' on the day, as many as 10 per cent in some constituencies (*The Zimbabwe Independent*, 1 April 2005), but rising to 25 per cent in some constituencies (ZESN,



2005:41) were depicted as people who had carelessly forgotten their ID by the state media, but were principally those whose names were missing from the electoral roll. The reasons why people were turned away have not been measured, but it has been reasonably suggested that some were not included because they had Ndebele surnames, or because they did not live in a 'formal' house which would appear on (much) earlier rolls.

In brief, the electoral process was improved logistically, and conformed to best practice guidelines for elections in circumstantial and contextual terms. However, ZANU-PF behaved strategically when it came to deciding well in advance who would be able to vote, and then on how the counted votes would be reported inaccurately.

## **Zimbabwean Elections 2005: A Performance of Power**

Beyond the procedural label of 'free and fair', an evaluation of these elections raises a number of interesting points concerning the nature of power in the Zimbabwean state, which include reflecting on the continued popularity of the Government in some areas. First, the tenacity and expedience of ZANU-PF's patriotic nationalism as a post-colonial ideology was reflected in the vigour with which its candidates, party workers and supporters campaigned. There is an uncomfortable truth here for opponents of the regime, in that the election campaign from ZANU-PF resonated successfully with peoples' concerns in the areas of gender and development and the protection of national sovereignty. The MDC, by contrast and perhaps understandably, appeared less well versed in how they might run the country and the policies they would pursue. Second, it was clear that the MDC, excepting in rural areas where members of the Executive were personally known, failed to significantly penetrate the ZANU-PF heartlands, where they have a clear disadvantage in terms of communication. Indeed, rural remoteness continued to deny the poorest a practical choice, in that many were not aware that there was one, or believed the ideological warning that the MDC were a vanguard for the return of the colonialists. In other words many choose ZANU-PF from an individual assessment of their practical interests, however conditioned, a step too uncomfortable for many Western journalists to make.

One person's propaganda is here another person's ideological position, and to conflate the latter into the former is to display the arrogance of Eurocentrism. For example, there is a large number, probably a majority in the rural areas, who remain committed ZANU-PF supporters. Many of these supporters are women who were particularly pleased with the central role given to gender in this election, which included the use of 'women only' shortlists and the appointment of Comrade Joyce Mujuru as a Deputy President in the lead up to the poll. Although others contest that 'women only' shortlists were used disproportionately in constituencies where the sitting ZANU-PF MP was thought to be less than loyal, and some see Comrade Mujuru's appointment as expedient in preventing a more weighty candidate for the Presidency from emerging, ZANU-PF loyalists saw a commitment to gender and development, enhanced by International Women's Day rallies during the election campaign.

For those rural constituents of a slightly more ambivalent loyalty, a mixture of ideology and realism/sanction brought in the vote, in a variant of the Prisoner's Dilemma. Whereas a 'citizen' is conceptually connected to the state by reciprocal obligation and fiscal accountability, thus theoretically having some power over

policy and development outcomes, the rural Zimbabwean is a subject (see Mamdani, 1996) in that development resources are within the largesse of the ruling party, or 'party-state'. They were reminded of this in the electoral language of donation, as opposed to rights within a social contract that was used at rallies. The MP (of whatever constituency) was persistently depicted as having paid for resources from their own pockets, as having 'given' the voters of area  $x$  goods  $y$  in recognition, and expectation, of their continued loyalty. In seats where the incumbent was MDC, in a variant of this exchange, the people were assured of forgiveness and future reward if they voted correctly this time, and reminded of the dearth of resources they had received with MDC representation. For example, 'Comrade Kasukuwere said voting for ZANU-PF would bring development to Mufakose since the elected MP would be from the ruling party' (*The Herald*, 28 March 2005).

The other reason for a majority ZANU-PF rural vote, other than genuine support and political patronage, is, accordingly to one Gutu shop owner, 'fear', and rural Zimbabweans are 'easily afraid' (personal exchange, 27 March 2005). Contextually, this is in relation to 25 years of post-Independence failed development, where everyday life in rural areas such as Gutu, Masvingo, Chivi and Matabeleland South, have largely been hermetically sealed in colonial conditions, with no electricity, pumped water, media, brick houses, and with much reduced expectations and aspirations. The 'Vote for Development' campaign sits uncomfortably with the human indignity of rural areas that have hoped for development since Independence, but whose residents have grown old and tired of their own aspiration.

A closer examination of the campaign shows that threat and consequence – either reward or punishment – within the populist nationalist discourse were not hidden, such that symbolic violence was used even while actual violence was in abeyance, in the threat contained in the (mostly undoubted) return of a ZANU-PF government and how it would behave in the post-election period. For example, the main slogans of 'Vote for a Women', 'Vote for Development' and 'Consolidating our Sovereignty' were accompanied by a bombardment of newspaper spreads on (very conservative sounding) numbers of new schools, clinics, roads and University places provided since Independence by ZANU-PF, which represented the rewards of loyalty. These were accompanied by the '2005: Anti-Blair Campaign' headline policies listed as:

- Getting back your land
- An end to racist factory closures
- An end to racist withholding of commodities
- An end to politically motivated price increases
- An end to sanctions
- No safe havens for corrupt bankers
- No disruption to fuel supplies
- No to political interference
- Empowerment through takeovers
- Faster economic turnaround
- More foreign currency inflows
- Keeping our Zimbabwe
- End to Blair's MDC

And the final exhortation to 'Bury Blair, Vote ZANU PF'. At least the first four of these are referent to the supposed racist (white) undermining of the national liberation project and economy. In this trope, any economic malaise is, or has been, blamed on the white population, as a comprador representative of the British

imperialists proper. Similarly, the policies of rejection of 'political interference' and affirmation of 'keeping our Zimbabwe' resonate with the repeated message that the British are considering reinvading, coinciding with sporadic reports of troops allegedly found at the Mozambique border, or British spies training MDC youths in South Africa to form an advanced invasion party or to unleash violence (*The Sunday Mail*, 20 March 2005). The message is of perpetual war, the 'unfinished business' of Hammar and Raftopoulos's title, of fear and threat from the outside world requiring repulsion by the brave liberationists and their trained armed service personnel and party militias.

Significantly, in terms of the mode of economic accumulation in Zimbabwe, and pertinent to the analysis above, the policy of 'empowerment through takeovers' appears as the first 'positive' policy after 'getting back your land' such that the mode of policy implementation can be assumed to be found in the same model of power. That is, some state-endorsed 'legal' instruments of transferring ownership combined with state encouragement for the activities of self-professed agents of restitution, such as the War Veterans. In this discourse, empowerment can refer to the kleptocratic government policy of intimidating business owners, both black and white, into deserting their businesses to be taken over by the Youth militia, 'Green Bombers', or War Veterans. These are the promised spoils of the election, with the 'End to Blair's MDC' remaining ominously ambiguous but related to the T-shirt slogan of 'consolidating our sovereignty'.

On the campaign trail, electors were also reminded that the Glasnost period was a chance for them to do as they were expected: to vote loyally for those who fought for the country and be rewarded with various markers of 'development' or face a future of violence and destitution if they did not do the right thing. Urban voters in Harare and Bulawayo, who had already endured retaliation for voting MDC last time in the slashing of Council budgets, and eventual usurpation of their democratically elected Councils in favour of ZANU-PF appointed Commissions (see Kamete, 2005; and Davies, 2005, on Harare), were still prepared to run the gauntlet of fear. The 'Operation Murambatsvina' is their reward, since they are now the metaphorical 'trash'. The rural voters were indeed more easily scared, but also more easily moved by the rhetoric of national patriotism and the promise of development, which many of them still adhere to ideologically.

## **Post-election Consequences: Restoring Economic Control**

Since 1997, Zimbabwean politics have been marked by a President, and government, struggling to maintain authority and legitimacy. After three difficult and allegedly stolen elections, the ruling elite has decided that forced dispossession, social engineering and de-development is the answer to the problem of maintaining power. The economy had been in decline since the War Veterans payout of 1997, which had sparked a 50 per cent loss in value of the Zimbabwean dollar (Sachikonye, 2002:14), while the withdrawal in 1998 of the Bretton Woods institutions exacerbated government debt. Even by 1999, over 75 per cent of Zimbabweans, up from 40 per cent in 1990, were living under the poverty line (Sachikonye, 2002:15). By 2005, less than 20 per cent of adults were employed in the formal sector (Sokwanele, 18 June 2005), while hyperinflation in the post-election period, as a consequence of the artificial production of money before the election, has led to further acute shortages of basic commodities. The government is acting both in retaliation for its urban defeat, and pre-emptively to avoid opposition arising from

the near impossibility of everyday life. However, while the election results no doubt provide the trigger for this behaviour, there is also a more long-running structural cause, embedded in the political economy of crisis.<sup>3</sup>

While ESAP (1991-95) began the process of liberalisation of the economy, and while the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) was designed to follow it from 1996-2000, the Bretton Woods institutions withdrew funding in 1998. The subsequent anarchy of unplanned liberalisation has included hyperinflation and the emergence of a dual economy, exacerbated by illegal seizures of property. During the crisis period of the last 8 years, many bankrupt businesses have been bought for a fraction of their real or potential value, such that the state-class has benefited from economic crisis and insulated itself from inflation by investing in a largely bullish stock exchange (of the relisted companies). The mining sector is becoming indigenised as multinational corporations withdraw (ZimOnline, 15 June 2005), while the illegal seizure of farms continues (Sokwanele, 17 June 2005). Indeed, processes of liberalisation, ironically politically problematic in their planned IFI format, are prolific and successful in their current form. Workers and peasant livelihoods have been devalued to the point of destitution as assets, goods and labour markets are squeezed by crisis conditions and illegality. The ruling elite has benefited from the profitability of asset stripping, rent taking, worker impoverishment, and government patronage.

However, the internationalisation of these businesses has been problematic, largely as a consequence of the draining of the banking system of foreign exchange, itself largely caused by the forced removal and destruction of white – and increasingly non-ZANU-PF, but black owned – agribusinesses and large farms. With tobacco, floriculture, winter season agricultural exports, ceramics, furniture, cloth, cement and ranching businesses disrupted, earned foreign exchange is extremely rare. The principle form of export income has ironically become the remittance earnings of migrant workers, themselves mainly forced out by the economic recession or political violence, such that the new party-state class have grown to view these remittances as the potential financial saviour of the ‘Third Chimurenga’, prompting an ambiguous attitude to international migrants.

However, with a large spread between the official and parallel exchange rates – or arguably, between the ‘forced’ and ‘real’ economy-international migrants have largely chosen to move their money informally, unofficially, and exchange it illegally in the recent period. The 2004 ‘HomeLink’ scheme for Diaspora income seeks to prevent this by enlisting money transfer companies, including Western Union and MoneyGram, into the ambit of the government scheme, and making this the only legal way to send money (other than bank transfers which attract a heavy commission) (*The Financial Gazette*, 27 March 2005). In other words, the ‘real’, liberalised economy had escaped the state class, with millions of Zimbabwe’s urban, peri-urban and trading rural poor using some asset income from a distant migrant to produce a putative, competitive but informal trading economy. Indeed, popular merchant capitalism was the only vibrant sector, giving confidence to the ideas of a new political movement for democratic change, the MDC. The post election strategy of ZANU-PF seeks to capture control, and thus reverse these gains of the people.

It is here that we find the structural political economy context for the arbitrary, violent and dissembling actions of the newly installed government: the peoples’ development had escaped their control and this is uncomfortable to their deeply

authoritarian models of social order. In the post-colonial, post-independence ideology of 'patriotic nationalism', wealth is the rightful property of those that fought for it – those in power and their cronies – not the inheritance of the informal sector. Autonomous capitalism is a threat to this form of authoritarian power, and thus the people involved must be cleaned up like so much rubbish in the 'Operation Murambatsvina' campaign.

## Conclusion

The riot police who entered Killarney on 9 June 2005 were acting without any warrant or court order and in defiance of a statutory provision (The *Urban Councils Act*, section 199) that affords to the local authority alone the right to remove illegal structures, and even then only after due process of law and notice to those affected. However, such 'facts', including the facts that many of these homes were legally built, and the businesses legally licenced, and the listing of any number of UN instruments of censure in response to their destruction, fall outside the worldview of illiberal autocratic militarism. Zimbabwe state action is instead justified by its exponents through extensive propaganda and enacted by a police and army machine trained in unaccountable, but 'patriotic' violence. Sadly, many Zimbabweans also believe the government explanation that the action is required to reduce crime in urban centres, and some report an improvement in that regard.

Thus, the ZANU-PF government, and a large minority of Zimbabwean people are antithetical and deaf to the exhortations of liberalism as found in the numerous human rights instruments that are currently being infringed. Well tutored, they believe such criticism to be imperialist propaganda. Indeed the international groups wanting to express solidarity with the marginalised have a discourse problem. These agencies repeatedly cite detractions from human rights instruments<sup>4</sup> which codify liberal and social democratic values, while the Zimbabwean regime pursues its forced social engineering using justifications from another paradigm, a residual national liberationist and anti-imperialist paradigm which obscures lawless authoritarianism and remodels it as patriotic nationalism (on this latter see Ranger, 2003). Also, the Zimbabwean regime retains a supportive core in the armed services and rural population, which makes it difficult to express solidarity with its victims, despite the valiant attempts of the internal opposition to expand political space and democracy.

However, as we can see from the process of managing the election (or conducting a performance of an election), the Zimbabwean regime is still embedded in its post-colonial justifications and flirtations with the semblance, if not substance of democracy. The ruling party went to great efforts to win the election on 31 March, toting computers into schools, printing free T-shirts and money, promising tarred roads, food and 'development', and exhorting that 'We are a sovereign nation! We will never be a colony again!' However, the people also knew of the consequences of voting for the sell-outs and compradors of imperialism – the MDC – in the negation of all the above and violence and hunger besides. The practice of solidarity has to recognise this continued ambiguity in the ruling party; its claimed adherence to democracy and the ideological defensiveness of its people, the majority of whom believe they live in a democracy which is threatened by imperialists. This bears on imminent international intervention when on the day of the clearance of Hatcliffe Extension the government issued a formal invitation for the UN World Food Programme to return.

The international humanitarian community is now in one of those increasingly common moral quandaries where it might act to concretise and normalise a process of human rights abuse – feeding the non-citizens, the stateless, and the ‘not wanted’ in the camps to which they have been assigned – rather than being able to influence redress of the initial act of betrayal. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court has codified the deliberately widespread or systematic transfer of a civilian population as a crime against humanity. This current forcible transfer of large parts of the Zimbabwean urban population, with estimates of numbers affected ranging from 100,000 to 2 million, to rural areas and camps, relegates them to a state of dispossession, and likely destitution or starvation, and is thus just such a crime. The international humanitarian community needs to help the victims, but choruses of liberal affront are insufficient to prevent this (or any) rotten elite from building on the success of such practices, when those behaviours are simultaneously a strategy to retain power and wealth.

The Zimbabwean government maintains a network of security and uniformed personnel in an authoritarian state machinery for the purposes of ruling through fear and strategic violence.<sup>5</sup> To counter this, internal opposition within ZANU-PF has periodically been visible, with some party members seeking to re-establish party democracy. Other ZANU-PF supporters have resisted the razing of their homes. In the upper echelons there has also been dissent, which led, for example, to the sacking of six Provincial Governors and Cabinet heavyweights, such as Jonathan Moyo and Emmerson Manangagwa, in the lead up to the election. However, internal change in authoritarian regimes can be hopelessly slow, such that other African governments need to do more to build African institutions able to respond to authoritarian governance with a solidaristic policy able to restore social justice to abused peoples. The protection of sovereignty against imperialism is laudable but inadequate as an African foreign policy position when it allows authoritarian state violence to go unchecked.

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## Endnotes

1. Polanyi warned us, ‘fascism, like socialism, was rooted in a market society that refused to function’ (cited in Stiglitz, 2001:xv.). According to Stiglitz, he saw, ‘fascism and communism ... [as] not only alternative economic systems; ... [but] represent(ing) important departures from liberal political traditions’ (Ibid.). I am not arguing that Zimbabwe is a fascist state in a strict definitional sense, but that its practices have similarities to this historical form.
2. There remains a job of research to establish how ownership and wealth has changed in Zimbabwe since 1994. On similar processes in South Africa there is the excellent Iheduru (2004).
3. This expresses itself in a short term liquidity problem, met by courting Chinese investment in the five-year long ‘Look East’ policy; where Operation Restore Order was initially justified as responding to Chinese traders’ demands for protection of their legal ventures against unfair competition (ZimOnline, 21 May 2005). The Government of Zimbabwe has also recently bought six fighter jets from China (*The Guardian*, 14 April 2005); and resettled Chinese farmers on former white owned lands and unproductive black-owned farms in a ‘land-for-investment’ scheme (ZimOnline, 18 May 2005), including on Eirene Farm, previously seized by Perence Shiri from its owners Hamish Charters (Sokwanele, 17 June 2005).

4. See Habitat International Coalition Housing and Land Rights Network (HIC-HLRN) (2005) for an excellent summary of the Human Rights instruments the ZANU-PF government have violated during Operation Murambatsvina

5. It is this use of an authoritarian and antiliberal state dominated by a single party, using uniformed antidemocratic armies and party militia in the pursuit of nationalism as a defence against a supposed external enemy that confers core elements of fascism to the current situation (see McLean, 1996:177-8 for a definition of fascism) While fascism is deeply embedded in European history and state formation, the term has a generic meaning in the retreat from free market capitalism, democracy and liberalism, and Sokwanele use it in this context (14 June 2005). Members of ZANU-PF would do well to remember the principles of social democracy, before the fruits of liberation are lost on the well-trodden historical path of authoritarian in the name of (someone else's) 'revolution', or 'liberation'.

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