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The Sovereign State of Zimbabwe and its Resistance to Repressive Neoliberal Democracy

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Abstract

When African states experience the democratisation, the state becomes a target of international negative criticism. The African state becomes preoccupied with hegemonic issues and uses all means and machinery to defend its grip on power. This paper acknowledges the “Africanness” of post 2000 state in Zimbabwe. It also argues that post 2000 Zimbabwean state is a victim state. Zimbabwe’s experience in the new millennium has rarely been analysed using any views contrary to Neoliberalism. By acknowledging this gap, the paper argues that only a state that chooses to stand against Neoliberalism is forced by circumstances to earn the labels such as “brutal”, “election fraudster”, “totalitarian”, “gross abuser of human rights” churned out of the Human Rights lexicon. The argument deviates from the conventional Human Rights and pro-Neoliberal discourse that is dominant in describing post 2000 state in Zimbabwe. The paper uses secondary sources to analyse pre and post 2000 Zimbabwe, and concludes that Global Financial Institutions were the key players in setting up Zimbabwe for a repressive resistance to democratic

change. It argues that the Global Financial Institutions created a new reality that forced post 2000 Zimbabwe to respond in the way it felt appropriate as a sovereign state – to retain power or let go.

Keywords: *Authoritarianism, Neoliberalism, Power, Resistance, Sovereignty, State*

1. Introduction

Studies on post 1991 IMF and WB (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) Structural adjustments programmes (SAPs) in Zimbabwe have persecuted the state for its failure to respond positively to their effects. Some have unleashed scathing attacks on the post-2000 Zimbabwean state for its undemocratic stance. This paper adopts a different line of reasoning by arguing that from 1991 the Zimbabwean state degenerated into a pathetic victim of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (WB and IMF) structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). First, the paper demonstrates that SAPs were a foul tactic for preparing the Southern African nation for a pro-liberal democratic state by 2000. Second, it analyses socio-economic and political data to demonstrate that post-2000 Zimbabwean state was indeed engaged in a political longevity battle against neo-liberalism. The paper explores political corporatism approach post-2000 used to retain power, control and political longevity against other mushrooming and threatening parties and organisations.

The paper re-conceptualises post 2000 state in Zimbabwe as a victim of neoliberalism eventually coerced into resisting neoliberalism. It also attempts to describe the nature of post 2000 Zimbabwe and find out how the state was set up for failure by the Bretton woods institutions.

2. Background of the study

The Africanness of the Zimbabwean state is best appreciated within the scope of post-colonial African states conditions that distinguish them from Northern countries. The post-colonial African state face challenges of reconstruction. Since the 1950s, the newly independent African states focused on the rebuilding and reconstructing their identities and endorsing their ideological position in the world. Former liberation leaders who are widely referred to as nationalists/revolutionaries and their nationalist movements found themselves transitioning from being

freedom fighters into the political characters and officers. Their sole goal was to sever relations with their former colonial masters. The liberation leaders quickly assumed a one-party system, which was in total control of the state and society (Clapham, 2012). The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which later formed a union with the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) formed the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) in 1987 has been in power since 1980. Across Africa, various states such as Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Libya, Angola and Tanzania replicated the single party system as an appropriate mode of reorganizing society. It was believed that national unity and development could be achieved through this system.

Most nationalist liberation movements in post-colonial states labeled themselves socialists. In the post-independent Zimbabwe, the Mugabe regime adopted the scientific Marxist-Leninist socialism, which sought to redress the colonial racial inadequacies between the white minorities and the black majority in all levels of life. Makaye and Munhande (2013) report that on the verge of Zimbabwean independence 75% of the rich arable land was owned by 4000 farmers, whilst the poorest agricultural land was occupied by the black majority. The social services sector reflected the same pattern as well as the civil service, industry, economy and private sectors. The 'Growth with Equity: An Economic Policy' was the first policy enacted by the Zimbabwean government endorsing its socialist sentiments in the new state (Nyaruwata, 1988). The policy sought to foster a socialist democratic and equalitarian society with the aim of "removing imperialist exploitation, create and maintain high employment levels, improve and extend the economic base and social infrastructure and to reform the fiscal and monetary systems" (Makaye and Munhande, 2013:63). Despite the socialist ideological functions and the agenda of developmentalism in most post-colonial societies, the economic system remained mixed with public and private investments recognised as a way of pursuing and fulfilling the intended 'socialist' goals (Rabaka, 2014). Although the ideological standpoint and the development agenda looked intact, scholars such as Ake and Mamdani observed that there were many salient factors that weakened the functionality of the post-colonial state (Mbembe, 1992; Young, 2004).

It is evident that most protests in the post-colonial states have been linked to the land question and the failures of the nationalist leaders to redress the wrongs of the past. The black majority are increasingly agitated by increasing poverty, unemployment and cost of living. To maintain relevance and protect their ruling interests within the state most

African revolutionary parties branded every political opposition as Trojan horses for the former colonial masters or a western agenda driven with a 'regime change agenda'. This sentiment has served Robert Mugabe and ZANU PF well and kept them in power for more than three decades. Thus, Zimbabwe as a case study in point, portrays how the 'revolutionary party' ZANU PF increasingly embraced autocratic systems, displayed more predatory sentiments to accumulate wealth and justify the system based on sovereignty. Their heavy investments in "developmentalism" were heavily dependent on debts and donations, which were often, abused and consequently weakened the state (Mkandawire). The fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s saw the demarcation of most post-independent states as they felt irresistible pressure to liberalise (Young, 2004). Young (2004:25) states that:

...the 1990s and beyond are a sharply demarcated African politics. In high politics, the fundamental nature of post-colonial arrangements was challenged economically and politically, through demands - external and internal - for market liberalization and democratization. In ground-level politics, a multiplicity of contradictory processes was at work. The dramatic erosion of stateness itself in many cases - in the Weberian sense of the routine capacity to exercise ultimate authority within the territorial domain of sovereignty - opened space for a multitude of actors: informal traders, smugglers, warlords, arms traffickers, youth militia, local associations ('civil society'), women's organizations, religious groups, refugees.

It is evident that most post-colonial states were overwhelmed by changes because of their weak governance and external pressures. The revolutionary parties failed to acknowledge their failures, the impasses within their governing systems and the drastic liberal adjustments that resulted in dreadful social and economic situations. Most states struggled to meet service delivery, provide basic services and employment.

3. Conceptual framework

Several conceptualisations of neoliberalism confined in political, economic and political spheres have been advanced leaving the concept vague and open to biased interpretations. Writers such as Harrison (2005) have labelled as one loaded with confusion. Neoliberalism is explained as a hegemonic project bestowing power and wealth in the hands of local elite and institutional elite (Hahn 2008). Others such as Harvey (2007) have upheld neoliberalism as a theory of political and economic practice that pushes for freedom of the market, free trade and

private rights. Osimiri (2009) concurs that as an economic practice, neoliberalism insists on the free rein to the market, privatization and free trade are achieved through limiting a shrinking of state intervention in the economy. Arguably, it creates an illusion that once the state becomes less active in economic matters, stability and growth in domestic economies would result in improved social well-being nationality (Harrison 2010). Scholtze (2000) and Smith et al (2008) perceive it as an ideology that upholds the belief that the market forces will lead to prosperity, liberty, democracy and peace to society. Another core descriptor of neoliberalism is that it is a globalisation strategy of promoting global order through the free rein of the market (Salih 2001). In its political dimension, neoliberalism remains a political economic philosophy opposed to interventionist state by replacing it with a minimalist one that will ensure the interest of capital in the respective jurisdictions (Osimiri 2009). Within the same realm, it posits that Africa and the Third World economic challenges emanate from poor governance and gross failure in managing economies (Faulks 1999). For the purposes of this paper neoliberalism is applied as a western political ideology opposed to the state intervention in the economy and uses brutally subtle means to influence the politics of Third World nations. This paper uses desktop research methods which uses existing literature in order to elicit relevant data. The method was chosen for its low cost in comparison with field research. The internet (online desk research) was used extensively demanding sharper organisational, selection and sorting skills due to excessive data available (Stewart and Kamins 1993 and The Wallace Foundation 2009).

4. Setting up The Post 2000 Zimbabwe State to Resist Neoliberalism

Africa has not fared well under neoliberal economic adjustments programmes. Scholars such as Ake (2001) have remarked that on the governance domain SAPs arrived in Africa as impositions coercing governments while enforcing austere policies. Ake (2001) further states that SAPs go hand in hand with militarisation of society that ends up looking artificially incited but in reality fragmented, unstable and incoherent. Osimiri (2013) concurs with Ake by adding that the coercive imposition of neoliberal policies destroyed democratic and semi-democracies in Africa by encouraging the militarisation of politics in society. Hoovelt (2001) argues that neoliberal policies contributed to protracted civil conflicts across Africa. SAPs precipitated multiple unrest

and violence, riots have resulted into excessive cost of food and transport in most recipient nations in Africa. In addition, the devolution of currency within the neoliberalism framework negatively affected incomes as people could not afford imported commodities and local products were not an alternative (Osimiri 2013). The author further notes that there emerged a *laissez faire* capitalism that worsens levels of inequality and poverty. SAPs led to serious deepening of inequality between the rich and the poor triggering a wave of violent protest, and conflicts across the continent while creating uncontrolled political instability in recipient countries (Osimiri 2013).

The adoption of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) by the Zimbabwean government did not only have economic and social consequences but politically victimized the newly elected government such that it had to resort to any means necessary to retain power. As a result, the role and the nature of the state in the 1980s became a total contrast to its widely popularized savior's role it assumed during the pre-independence era. Thus, the state's role prior to independence was solely to mobilise the masses and rally against the then colonial regime of Ian Douglas Smith and maneuver through the labyrinth of forces, internal and external (Young, 1965:392). Analysisists of this period observed that African states' socio-political and economic progress or lack thereof was split between externalists and internalists. Kebede (2005) for instance raises a notable argument about the failure of post 2000 Zimbabwe as a post-colonial state as well as being a victim of the SAPs and its incapacity to deliver on expectations that led to coercive tactics for survival and a struggle for ensuring domination. The nature of the state in post 2000 Zimbabwe could be argued as partly a product of its inherent nature as a liberation movement in power as well as a victim of the neo-liberal democratisation agenda and American imperialism. The nature of the state in post 2000 Zimbabwe can be based on an externalist argument by focusing on the encroachment of neoliberal democracy in Zimbabwe in 1991.

SAPs were merely a hidden agenda advanced by the West to weaken the newly formed African states so that they could be vulnerable to the Western economic problems. For instance, SAPs never had any indication of any African industrialisation strategy to foster economic growth, rather SAPs emphasized on "free markets" to detach African states from their protectionist policies. The liberalisation of markets led to a total collapse of the local manufacturing industries within African states because the "infant" industries were exposed to un-balanced

competition with Western imports. It may be argued that by design and operations the WB and IMF have been the instruments of American foreign policy which serves to integrate Third World nations in the vision of a US dominated capitalist international economy (Ismi 2004:8). The author adds that the two institutions were to ensure that the subordination of Third World economies remain as suppliers of raw materials in the open market system as envisaged by the USA. Under the leadership of McNamara from 1968 the WB and IMF became instrumental in the acceleration of the Third world's integration into the international capitalist by adopting "export-oriented growth" thus discarding reliance on small, protected internal markets and attach themselves to flourishing western economies (Ismi 2004:8). When Third World countries were failing to service their bank loans obtained from western nations due to the oil crisis of the 1970s, the World Bank and IMF effected SAPs in the 1980s. It was not possible for Third World nations to resist SAPs as they appeared as the only way out the dire economic situation through borrowing from the World Bank to repay debts such that between 1984 -1990 they cashed in \$178 billions into western commercial banks (Ismi: 2004:8 - 9). SAPs had conditionalities to be accepted and effected as part of the package for securing the loans that one may summarise here. Third World nations had to reduce current account deficit, privatise industries, reduce government spending and impose user fees, liberalising the market, contraction of money supply, trade liberalise, dismantling of foreign exchange controls and allowing for a flexible labour market (Ismi 2004:9). The SAPs covered domestic policy, fiscal, monetary and trade policy, labour laws, health care, civil service requirements, environmental regulations, and government procurement (Ismi 2004:8). Even though Third World nations were not ready for SAPs, the West felt the project would go ahead as long as it would keep newly independent countries like Zimbabwe tied to the West. As part of the capitalist agenda the WB and IMF injected the neo-liberal ideology veiled by economic concerns by adding rudiments. It was believed that SAPs would be effective if recipient nations upheld good governance, functional democracy, gender equity, social justice, low levels of corruption, shared burdens and benefits of socio-economic change and maintenance of social welfare programs (Skosireva and Holaday 2010: 76).

An analysis of SAPs shows that despite the overt intentions, Zimbabwe ended up a mere victim of the architects of the imposition of economic structural adjustments programmes in Third World nations.

SAPs' implementation resulted in galloping inflation and balance of payments problems for the Third World nations such that they became easy prey to the West-driven calamities that were breeding political, economic and social instability. In support, Sawyer (1990) noted a sharp 'decline in the rate of growth in all sectors of the national economy, fluctuating foreign exchange rates which resulted in the overall loss in the foreign exchange that was paramount to debts payment'. It is clear that SAPs' conditionalities were never negotiable, rather they were the one-size-fits-all. SAPs were enforced on most Third World countries thus exposing the divisive and authoritarian character or nature of the SAPs. This prompted Ibhawoh (1999:158) to argue that the implementation of SAPs set the tone for authoritarian and human rights violations in the post-colonial states. The political consequences of adopting SAPs by several Third World nations included loss of state's socialist sovereignty to Western ideology that was propelling the notion of 'democracy' which was a catalyst for the capitalist mode of production in these countries. Under SAPs, the Third World countries were compelled to remove all state subsidies thereby exposing them to harsh exploitation by the so-called developed nations. The SAPs conveyed a strong political message that indicated the end of autonomy-governance in the Third World countries and Zimbabwe in this case. Other writers such as Farmer (2004), Harvey (2005), Wacquant (2009) and Wade (2003) point out that in several contexts where SAPs have been imposed, poverty levels have risen causing violent conflict due to impoverishment.

SAPs destroyed Zimbabwe's productive capacities, impoverished it and gutted and blotted out an otherwise pre-SAP economy (SAPRIN 2002: 20). It may be argued that the massive closure of companies that resulted from this led to increased poverty and unemployment thus instilling a sense of dissatisfaction in citizen over the state (Ismi 2004:14). There were clear indicators that a once economically stable country was deteriorating as it was hit by a recession (GDP falling by 8% Ismi 2004:14) in 1992 a year after being persuaded into SAPs on the illusion of a development path that was never to be. Never in the history of President Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe since 1980 had the economy exhibited such pathetic misery reflected by 35% - 50% unemployment resulting from the downscaling of the civil service by 1997 (Ismi 2004:14). It can also be argued that by 1999 the WB and IMF SAPs had created a seemingly irreversible poverty, which stirred anger amongst citizens who turned against the state. Almost 68% of the population was surviving on less than \$2 daily, a condition exacerbated by the collapse of

wages and salaries as well as the sky rocketing of food prices and other consumer prices leaving the majority living below the poverty line (Naiman and Watkins 1999:10). The argument may be sustained that for Zimbabwe, the WB and IMF SAPs served to make “the economy scream” by plunging it into levels never experienced before. Whilst writers would prefer using the phrases such as consequences of SAPs in Zimbabwe”, and “Effects of SAPs in Zimbabwe”, one may argue that se are indicators of a weakening state, a state battered and crippled by the WB and IMF SAPs. Clearly, the SAPs had a double effect on Zimbabwe; ravaging the citizens’ livelihoods while at the same time flaring-up political upheaval that forced the Mugabe regime to resort to the use of power to govern by adopting authoritarian methods of governance.

Zimbabwean`s social sector was destroyed by the neo-liberal plot to keep the free Zimbabwe under the global capitalist economy, as a result the state had to curtail non-profit expenditure by 46% (Ismi 2004:15). The effects of all this was noticed in the decline in health care expenditure that was at 6.4% in 1990 to 4.3% by 1996 and the per capita budget falling from US\$22 in 1990 to US\$11 by 1996 totally inadequate to contain prevention due to district and clinic per capita costs (Ismi 2004:15). The introduction of user fees as advised by SAPs forced the state to neglect the health needs of the rural, urban and poor as the quality of health care worsened by 30% (Ismi 2004:15). The implication of this was that the citizens began to view the government negatively (Ismi 2004:15). The indicators of a collapsed health delivery system were on the rise. There were rising cases of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, high child and infant mortality, and a drop in life expectancy from 61 to 48 (Naiman and Watkins 2002: 11).

Overall SAPs reversed all the gains Zimbabwe had made prior to their introduction (Naiman and Watkins 2002:11). The SAPs also led to the decline in education spending and the destruction of the education sector. The attainment of higher foreign currency to reduce debt as stressed in export-led growth remained a mirage as imports grew more than exports, raising the trade and current account deficits thus making Zimbabwe still having an increased debt (Ismi 2002: 15). This is the grimy picture of the pre-2000 Zimbabwe.

An objective analysis of SAPs shows how a once stable nation was gradually weakened by economic strategies disguised as ideological and economic and political motives. It can be stressed that the state – society relations cannot remain normal under circumstances in which

privatization and trade liberalisation were dictated at a pace and manner the WB and IMF did.

The same aspects may be used as indicators of the growing tension between the state and citizens or causes of bitter state – society relations in Zimbabwe in the 1990s. It can be argued that SAP destroyed the Zimbabwean manufacturing sector in a number of ways. Its output fell by 20% by 2000 due to high interest rates and the cost of foreign currency this had an effects of job security for the workers and the generality of citizens who silently became victims of Zimbabwe`s WB and IMF` SAPs induced illusionary industrial development (Ismi 2004:14 and SAPRIN 2002: 4, 42, 51). Between 1991 and 1996 the state was not in a position to cushion the majority of the citizens or redress the effects of a real GDP falling by 5,8% as well as private investment falling by 9% as private per capita consumption declining by 37% (Ismi 2004:14 and SAPRIN 2002:8). This echoes Laurell`s (2000) contention that SAPs crippled the manufacturing sector because they imposed a logic that favoured speculation instead of real production hence, they did more harm than good to Zimbabwe.

The SAPs unleashed a heavy blow on the agricultural sector crippling the once `bread basket` of Southern Africa. Ismi (2004: 14- 15) reported that the government was forced to withdraw subsidies on agricultural inputs and also reduced spending on vital infrastructure as the road and transport system. The author further notes that the cost of fertiliser rose above 300% within five years leading to a decline in yields. In addition unemployment rose to 90% as most people were employed in the agricultural sector or industry associated with agricultural outputs.

5. The ruthless nature of neoliberalism

The post 2000 Zimbabwean state is a reminder of how neoliberalism is ruthless. It may be appropriate to summarise the ruthlessness of neoliberalism that is found in literature.

The origins of neoliberalism can be traced from the 20th century and illustrated through the World War 11, the Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and the Soviet Union (Springer 2015).

Since then neoliberalism has not been divorced from its principle aim of being backed by ruthlessness (Roberts et al 2003). The emphasis of neoliberalism is first, individual rights in which it urges society to remove any personal barriers. Second, freeing the market to allow for individual self-reliance, and allow market forces to reign. Third, non-interventionist

of the state to allow for competitive markets, guarantee individual rights based on property rights (Hackworth 2007 and Harvey 2007). Springer (2015) maintains that neoliberalism is ruthless by nature and a cacophony of violence and conflict where there is prolonged dissonance between what it promises and what it delivers. Citizens express their anger and dissatisfaction over inequality, poverty, high cost of living, food shortages and the introduction of user fees through violent riots. It is important to note that neoliberalism breeds ruthlessness as the state is compelled to use violence as an instrument for preserving legitimacy, control and power over a discontent society. For Springer (2015), the state draws lines to separate society between those in support of neoliberalism and those against with the former treated as foe against the state.

Kebede (2005) argues that the failure of post 2000 Zimbabwe as a post-colonial state as well as being a victim of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) led to coercive tactics for survival and a struggle for ensuring domination. Bond (1998), Melber (2003), and Herbst (1992) note that the leadership spent the 1980s maintaining a left-wing discourse apparently in order to repress protest, mainly from the left. There is vast literature on post-2000 state in Zimbabwe as authoritarian and destructive (Bratton 2011), oppressive (Bratton and Masunungure 2007; Chigora, Guzura and Mutumburanzou 2011; Makaye and Dube 2014), an effective manipulator of the issue of race (Muzondidya 2010), radicalised state (Moyo and Yeros 2007) and a weak state (Makochekanwa and Kwaramba 2009 and 2010). What is common from the scholars listed above is the plethora of information on how citizens suffer under authoritarian rule by debating the post-2000 in Zimbabwe by adopting the human rights based approach biased in favour of liberal democracy (Davison and Purohit 2014).

6. The post 2000 Zimbabwe state: A product of neoliberal ruthlessness

6.1.1 An Authoritarian post 2000 Zimbabwean State

The post-2000 Zimbabwe is characterised by different state identities as unavoidable formations deliberately designed to resist neoliberalism head-on. With the emergence of land reform program (dubbed 3rd Chimurenga), the rise of a strong and vibrant opposition party, and the defeat of Mugabe in the 2000 draft constitution referendum. The ZANU PF regime felt the pressure to protect its political and governing interests

within the state. Therefore, the institutional design and engagements of the state erected defensive structures for the protection and sustenance of its ideological interests. In addition, the post-2000 Zimbabwean state operated on strict, defensive and protectionist measures upholding the interests of the ruling regime. Various reforms ranging from the media, law and development policies were embarked on to suit the interests and dictations of the ruling party. The post-2000 Zimbabwean state can best be described in three ways. Firstly, as an authoritarian state with the concentration of power by the ruling party; Secondly, as a greedy state by the accumulative politico-economic development decisions and strategies that sought to concentrate wealth in the hand of Zimbabweans [the party elites and party affiliates]. Finally, Zimbabwe as a sovereign state makes its own decisions without being influenced by western countries.

6.1.2 An Autocratic post 2000 Zimbabwean State

Autocracy rule is a well-known concept by various scholars and students in political science. It can be argued that, it is an expression of an individual's need to exert their good power by manipulating vulnerable institutions. According to Roberts (2003), leaders in autocratic states perpetuate fear for radical change among citizens with their speeches by constantly reminding them through the media. For them, the strong-armed government is the anchor of stability and how political change is likely to lead conflict and chaos. For example, President Robert Mugabe's rhetoric post-2000 on land expropriation from white farmers without compensation was justified as a necessary move to redress colonial ills. ZANU PF has always shown repeatedly that it wants Zimbabwe to be a one-party state (Chan, 2003).

Zimbabwe has also expressed itself as a competitive authoritarian regime (Ruhanya, 2015). The idea of competitive authoritarian regime is defined by Levitsky and Way (2010:5) as the "civilian regimes in which formal democratic institutions exist and are widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power, but in which incumbents' abuse of the state places them at a significant advantage vis-a-vis their opponents." The competitive nature of these regimes is witnessed in the allowance of opposition political parties to participate in fiercely contested elections against the ruling party, however, the platform of these contestations are always highly skewed (Ruhanya, 2015). For instance, the opposition party in the post 2000 Zimbabwean state was faced with intense violence, which resulted into the continuous arrests of opposition leaders. The

Zimbabwean elections since 2000 was criticised by opposition parties as unfair and fraudulent. Bratton (2013) explains that,

“The immediate point of reference -- and the precedent to be avoided -- is Zimbabwe’s disputed June 27, 2008, presidential election, when the country’s powerful security apparatus and captive electoral commission secured Mugabe’s path back to the presidency by overturning a first round victory by Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The illegitimacy of that hollow victory was evident even to ZANU-PF’s allies in the southern Africa region, who brokered a power-sharing deal in 2009 to give Tsvangirai the post of prime minister. But the resultant coalition government was far from inclusive, since the president retained control of all instruments of hard power, including the army, the police, and the courts. Top ZANU-PF and military officials supplemented their grip on formal state authority with windfall revenues seized from Zimbabwe’s vast diamond fields.”

The above outlines the preparedness of ZANU PF in consolidating power and its influence. Thus, competitive authoritarian regimes ensure the use of democratic institutions as a way of contesting political space, but employ calculated tactics to influence the results. Ruhanya (2015) points out that these regimes are not democratic even though “competition is allowed but the extent to which it is allowed is dependent on the incumbent who is both the referee and participant.” ZANU PF has always been the referee and the participant in Zimbabwean politics.

6.2 Consolidation of Power

Scholars often describe authoritarian state using various terms such as dictatorship, authoritarianism, despotism and autocracy. These terms refer to political system in which the outright decisions of the state and power are concentrated in the hands of the leader and the ruling elite (political party) with little or no reference to the decrees of the constitution (Przeworski et al. 2000; Levitsky and Way, 2010 ; Svobik, 2012). For example, President Mugabe led Zimbabwe since 1980 and his party ZANU PF has enjoyed the monopoly of power since then. Despite the continuous measures to consolidate power by the ruling party and Mugabe since 1980, the post-2000 witnessed the initiation of new repressive laws and brutal attacks of opposition parties by ZANU PF supporters, police and military, which often times were fatal. For

example, the MDC opposition leader was charged and tried for treason in a yearlong (2003-2004) court case in which he was later cleared in February 2004.

6.2.1. Authoritarian legalism (Law reforms and the enactment of repressive statutes)

In addition, as a measure to consolidate power within the state, the ZANU PF regime utilized their majority parliamentary influence to enact new laws. Laws such as Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and Public Order Security Act (POSA) of 2002 were enacted to ensure the control of media reports and public gatherings as measure of managing insurrections and protests against government decisions. These laws are still utilised and regarded as relevant even after the emergence of the new constitution that articulates on the “right to freedom of assembly provided for in section 21(1) as well as the right to freedom of movement, association and expression, amongst other fundamental rights” (The Zimbabwean, 2010). These statutes have been used to ban opposition rallies and undermine protests a violation of not only constitutional rights but also human rights.

6.2.2 Monopolization of the Media

The media in Zimbabwe has always been monopolized by the state. Ronning and Kupe (2000) point out that soon after the first election in Zimbabwe the media was captured and monopolized by the state and no alternative media platform was allowed to operate. The idea of alternative media has always been regarded as anti-progress. When Prof. Jonathan Moyo was made ‘minister of state in the president's office for information and publicity’ in 2001, he enacted ban on foreign journalists and ensured that local journalist abide to certain rules. These measures witnessed the ban of some newspapers such as The Daily News from 2003 to 2005. However when the ban was uplifted, there were stipulations for the papers to abide to certain frameworks stated by AIPPA (Mail & Guardian, 2005). Every journalist who reported any news that portrayed the country in a bad light was regarded a traitor. The state media was only used to counter the negative news published by international news (IOL, 2004). According to Freemuse (2001), the government of Zimbabwe did not only limit itself to banning alternative media, but also banned any music, which seemed to be opposing its

policies and bad governance. Propaganda music became dominant on radio stations and on the only national television station. The emergence of social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp led to the government banning any usage of social media platforms in a manner likely to cause despondency, incite violence, threaten citizens and cause unrest, will be arrested and dealt with accordingly in the national interest (POTRAZ, 2016).

6.3. Post 2000 Zimbabwe as a sovereign state

According to Baylis, Smith and Owen (2011), globalisation has a plethora of meaning, which outlines a deepened, widened and faster connection of the various social, cultural, economic and political networks that are increasingly weaving together a “global village”. Despite the increase in the interconnectedness in all these spheres, the realist notions remains relevant as states continue to ensure the protection of their borders and fully exercising their sovereignty. The concept of sovereignty, in the 21st century has however, faced various challenges, as the role of technologies has become dominant challenging the effective control and monopoly of the state in deciding and distributing information movement within and outside their jurisdiction. This has critically diminished the role of the state sovereignty as control, a key component and determinant of what constitutes sovereignty. Therefore, it is important to understand these factors in order to understand the justifications of sovereignty utilised by President Mugabe in defense of the various decisions which attracted the attention of the world and rendered ineffective reporting in the media for two decades.

Most importantly, the Human Rights Watch (2005) listed Zimbabwe together with Afghanistan and Iraq as countries that have consequently abused their sovereignty. It can be argued that sovereignty is used to protect illegal decisions, which exacerbate crimes against humanity in various countries (Ditshwanelo 2006). As such, political leaders have increasingly utilised sovereignty as a firewall to justify their decisions and actions. These sentiments resonate with post-2000 Zimbabwean environment.

Hammer (2008) states that the state-engineered displacements in Zimbabwe are not abnormalities, they have been a consistent practice and remain a possibility that continues to shape the rules and the making of the state in the country. One could assert that the decisions made by Mugabe and ZANU PF in the post-2000 era were geared towards

territorializing their interests such that the policy, law and media reforms were restructured to promote indigenous practices, protect local interests, and ensure “patriotic” values. This enhanced complete control of information, resources, space and the people which then became the basis of a solid justification to maintain the fact that Zimbabwe is indeed a sovereignty state. Hammer (2008) notes that territorializing practices are key in furthering the survival strategies of public institutions even though they are geared through pseudo politico-economic systems, public authorities can still raise revenue and fulfil their legitimate role of service provision, security and development drivers. Therefore, the Zimbabwean government has consistently triggered all sorts of practices to ensure their control through various cultural politics and influence in all political economies. This was done by meting out violent strategies on specific groups. For instance, the fast track land reform program witnessed the confiscation of white owned farmland. Hammer (2008) acknowledges that although these practices can be adopted by any form of authority beyond or outside the state, it is often the utilisation of overlapping strategies that reaches out through multiple forces of authority and competing structures that ensure complicit processes of sovereignty for sustenance through intractable and complex violent rule.

The concept of sovereignty stretches beyond the state. It is when we view this concept beyond or outside the state that we understand the depth of its reach. Sovereignty is not limited to being just a subject of government control or to be a tool for the government to justify its cause, but rather sovereignty is an extension of the citizen’s consent to the government to act in their interests. In this instance, one can consider how the concept of sovereignty has been utilized and justified in the case of Zimbabwe in the post-2000 era. Hammer (2008) justifies that the sentiments expressed by the government of Zimbabwe to consolidate power through sovereignty claims are not unique but rather are a clear expression of political strategies that are common and normal state making practice in colonial systems, contemporary times and in authoritarian regimes or liberal rule

The land reform programme of 2000 is an example that can be used to support that Zimbabwe is a sovereignty state. The government endorsed and legitimised an aggressive land reform program which commandeered radical land invasion and redistribution as a political vision to ensure macro-economic policies that guarantees successful and effective capitalist agriculture in the future (Hammer, 2008). The interest of engaging an intensive land reform program to non-white

Zimbabweans was first expressed by President Mugabe in 1997 and received critical international outrage that discouraged Mugabe's government to pursue the program. The cause however, remained relevant and important to ZANU PF and with the increasing demand and pressure from war veterans and the existence of a new strong opposition party, it served the interest of party well to satisfy the demands by confiscating and redistributing land without compensation. The effort was meant to redress the wrongs of the [past but the radicalisation of the process was met with gross violation of human rights and was opposed by various countries and organisations. As a result Zimbabwe was sanctioned. In response to the critics, Mugabe and ZANU PF justified their cause in the name of Sovereignty.

The famous speech by President Robert Mugabe at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg on 2 September 2002, "We have fought for our land, we have fought for our sovereignty, small as we are we have won our independence and we are prepared to shed our blood.... So, Blair keep your England, and let me keep my Zimbabwe". The speech exposed the definite posture of decision making and the anti-interference stamina which has been developed in guarding the interests of the state. As such, the international community was constantly reminded the state was building sovereignty and developing without any external influence.

The land distribution was done through a controlled, selective and clientele political process. This was simply a way of utilizing national resources in exchange for loyalty and as a result an endorsement to legitimize the cause as sovereign. Hammer (2008: 426) argues that land redistribution saw the majority of the land being allocated to the, "poor but politically loyal rural and urban residents, but without sufficient capital or equipment to invest in the land or any clarity on their land rights." Therefore, government relied on skewed strategies by enriching its loyalists in order to foster continuous testimonials that justify and sustain the sovereign justifications amidst acute economic downfalls.

7. Conclusion

Zimbabwe may have accepted the SAPs in good faith but the consequences were disastrous to the socio-economic conditions to a once shining example of a flourishing Southern African state. Little did Zimbabwe realise that 1991 was the beginning of what seems a ploy to undermine the state – society solidarity paving a way for a failed democracy take over in at the beginning of the new millennium. Thus,

the GFIs played a significant role since 1991 as forerunners in setting up Zimbabwe for repressive resistance to neoliberalism. Their economic structural adjustments programmes were core violators of human rights in independent Zimbabwe. From 2000 onwards, the GFIs continued to make the Zimbabwean “economy scream” louder whilst the government employed several attempts to defend its grip on power on one hand and force for a working economy under very depressing international pressure. The post 2000 Zimbabwean state’s resort to tough governmentalities which earned the country labels of bad governance. Zimbabwe remains one of the most controversial nations in Southern Africa. For most, it is painful and for others it is an ongoing ideological battle. The case of post 2000 Zimbabwean state should be viewed as a wake-up call to Africa to consider its position in the face of encroaching ideologies. A few recommendations may be advanced in this case. First, there is need for the revival of Afro-centrism/Afro-centric thinking if the continent should not remain a hostage to western ideas in this era of Globalisation for centuries to come. Second, African political theories need to rise from the basics set by thinkers such as Julius Kambage Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah and Kenneth Kaunda and Claud Ake. Third, African Social Scientists need to play a leading role in advocating for Africa’s acceptance or rejection of foreign ideologies. Fourth, there being not even one African ideology dominant in Africa or any part thereof, Africa remains a laboratory of western economic and political ideology experiments which Africans themselves need to avoid. Fifth, African Social and Economic Scientists may be encouraged and funded towards scientific interrogation of Neoliberalism’s suitability for Africa. So many ills emanating from Neoliberalism are noted in our societies but remain unchallenged or not debated strongly. Sixth, Neoliberalism-Africa’s natural resources nexus needs Afro-centric thinking to inspire Africa’s political and economic decisions.

8. References

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