



Positing Scenarios for Post 2008 Elections in Zimbabwe: What Would Power Alternation Mean for Zimbabwe?

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Introduction

In the absence of an electoral outcome, the best we can do is to come up with what should be the post election agenda for Zimbabwe.



- Could this be the restoration of democracy or the consolidation of the 'local version' of democracy? and
- Is it a case of who governs or is it a case of being governed well?
- How do we explain the hesitancy in announcing electoral outcomes?
- Is it fear of power alternation or fear of the long awaited democratic transition? For the latter can take place without the former
- What sort of power alternation in Zimbabwe would result in a democratic transition?
- Would it be ideological alternation or just leadership alternation?

Introduction contd.

- Zimbabwean citizens yearn for what we can call deep democracy.
- The process is based on public conversation, hinges on tolerance, and is thus a product of social learning.
- The actions of people in Zimbabwe in this recent election must be viewed as a legitimate expression of active citizenship as well as the essence of democracy itself
- Is Zimbabwe a party state? Can we can begin to make the distinction between personal rule and party rule?
- Party rule broadens the network of beneficiaries even though it is still an exclusionary system whereas personal rule centres everything around the president.
- What is then the place of the political party?
- As in much of Southern Africa, the party tends to reign supreme, but contestation is increasingly emanating within the dominant parties

Major questions



- How do you hold such a precarious state of affairs together?
- How do you destroy the culture of conspiratorial politics and put back democratic elections in the driving seat?
- Did Zimbabwe ever undergo a political transition that allows for open contestation of power?
- Transitions from colonial rule to one-party rule to multiparty politics have indeed taken place but did they open up the political agora for equal competition?
- Can democratic transition take place where civil liberties are severely curtailed?
- How can a new party/leader handle the reformists in the ruling party?
- How is impunity to be dealt with?
- What will the blueprint for economic recovery be like? And what institutional designs will drive such changes?
- What about acknowledgement of the country's roots in the independence struggle?

What has to be done?

- The restoration of the rule of law
- The guaranteeing of civil and political rights on a non-partisan basis and
- Leveling the political and electoral playing field by designing credible institutions and cultivating the political will to do so.

The significance of power alternation in entrenching democratic behavior

- First, we must define power alternation so that we can apply it to our case
 - This entails making a distinction by identifying the locus of power: Is it with the presidency or is it with parliament?
 - **This is important for it determines when alternation matters
1. Presidential or leadership alternation –ties to party ideology-new leader within same party can change ideology
 2. Ideological alternation- where leadership change entails a change of the ideology of the former ruling party-involves total transfer of legislative and executive power to new actors

The value of power alternation to democracy



- Evidence has demonstrated that governance indicators in all dimensions are better when power alternation is frequent
- The more alternations there are, the less patronage there is, hence subversion of the rule of law becomes less attractive
- Strengthens new democracies threatened by weak institutions, old customs and elite/strong interests [**** pendulum democracies**]
- Routinised alternation hammers home the reality that new specific interests have to be watered down as they will be unsustainable when new actors come in
- Sends signals that rules of the game have changed and that hold on power is time bound
- Encourages competing parties to abide by the legal forms of competition and to accept transparent and equal rules
- There is a negative correlation between corruption and probability of turnover in the leadership
- If power alternation is essential for entrenchment of democracy then it is also indispensable for the rule of law to be established
- BUT it becomes problematic when staying on can be devised and sanctioned by the international community and not by the citizens
- However its value in teaching us to dialogue with our opponents, to tolerate diversity and learn the art of bargaining and compromising

Dialogue – the missing ingredient in Zim politics

Dialogue presupposes equality among partners seek agreement - should be without pre-conditions

However these will always exist in Zimbabwe—the liberation war rhetoric, the land issue and the politically brutalised opposition living in constant terror.

Is it possible then to even design a framework for dialogue? How will the cycle of violence be broken?

Is dialogue enough or is internationally mediated political negotiation a more promising option?

Participation central in successful dialogue: Only a public sphere that allows a high quality of discourse and high levels of participation would allow Zimbabwe to move from a position of 'what we know' and integrating it with 'how we live' or in this case, 'how we ought to live'

Democratisation through litigation has failed!

We thus ask, what has been the impact of all these developments on human security in the country?

HDI trends in Zimbabwe

Year	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004	Change mean	Change 1975-2004
HDI	0.548	0.576	0.643	0.659	0.591	0.525	0.491	0.576	0.057

Regional comparison of food shortages (percent saying at least once)



	1999- 2000	2002-2003	2005	Change
Botswana	49	51	48	-1
Lesotho	72	80	56	-16
Malawi	57	83	71	+14
Mali	43	53	42	-1
Namibia	66	43	53	-13
South Africa	53	37	40	-13
Zambia	74	78	72	-2
Zimbabwe	65	82	82	+17

Physical and mental health of Zimbabweans

Province	Physical health 1999	Physical health 2005	Mental Health 1999	Mental Health 2005
Harare	24	27	25	37
Bulawayo	8	30	11	33
Midlands	22	30	28	53
masvingo	27	22	16	38
Mashonaland East	30	29	27	41
Mashonaland West	19	40	28	57
Mashonaland Central	12	36	14	48
Matebeleland South	12	23	11	25
Matebeleland North	11	25	13	25
Manicaland	36	29	29	31

Question Wording: In the last month, how much of the time: Has your physical health reduced the amount of work you normally do inside or outside your home? Have you been so worried or anxious that you have felt tired, worn out, or exhausted? Many times/always ¹¹

Scenario 1

The 'staying power' formula of the incumbent president allows him to succeed

Scenario 2

**The coalition way- the new antidote for
post electoral conflicts**

Scenario 3

An 'appointed heir apparent'-ornamental president?

Scenario 4

An oppositional coalition emerges

Lessons learnt

1. Sanctions are less effective in this global village and never work in isolation. We need to question if 'Smart sanction' are really smart. All types, travel and financial, have failed. Even the EU's moratorium on bilateral ministerial contacts have failed. Only contacts that would spur political dialogue that would promote democracy, human rights, the rule of law and regional security for addressing humanitarian needs were exempted. If punitive tools are to be used, they must be combined but first, consultation must take place to exhaust all options and seal alternative loopholes if at all possible

2. Democratic change must be spurred by locals and international actors must intervene in a non-partisan manner. In Kenya, international dialogue was with both protagonists- in Zimbabwe it has always been one sided. If you sideline one side it is quite easy to frame interventions as being biased and harboring a sinister agenda.





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