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Full Length Research Paper

Opposition political parties' coalition in Zimbabwe: Challenges and possibilities

Mungwari Teddy¹ * and Ephraim Vhutuza²

¹Centre for Language & Communication Studies, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe

²Department of Film and Theatre Arts Studies, Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe.

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This paper discusses the prevalent view among ordinary Zimbabweans that only a grand coalition among select opposition political parties could potentially unseat the ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) from power in the upcoming 2018 general elections. The paper argues that the prospects for such a grand coalition are only possible if select parties coalesce around the major opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T). This article takes this argument as the starting point for a discussion of the role and character of opposition political parties and party systems in Zimbabwe and further considers aspects of the performance of individual parties to date and the extent to which they fall short of people's expectations, what in this paper constitutes possibilities and challenges in forging a formidable grand coalition given the magnitude of mistrust within and among them. The state-controlled daily, The Herald was examined to ascertain how it framed the coalition of opposition parties in Zimbabwe. Therefore, secondary data analysis and observation through the lenses of a qualitative approach, of the unfolding political environment in Zimbabwe was done. The Herald which is supposed to be a public newspaper is allegedly a mouthpiece of the ruling party ZANU PF. It was concluded that The Herald's representation of the coalition was propagandistic. It was also concluded that despite personality clashes, mistrust, infiltration, bloated ambitions among leaders and party egos, a grand coalition is possible and that this could possibly fare better than if individual parties contest ZANU PF individually.

Key words: Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T), Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), pre-electoral coalition, Zimbabwe, individual parties, memorandum of understanding, 2018 elections.

INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe's fragmented political opposition parties have failed to outpoll Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) in the country's successive elections

since 1980 save for 2008 when the then united Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) defeated ZANU PF in the first round of the presidential elections of March that year.

*Corresponding author. E-mail: teddymngwari1@gmail.com.

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Unfortunately, the opposition party could not garner the much needed 50% +1 vote needed to avoid a run-off. A coalition of opposition political parties is presumably seen as the only formidable force which appears to be the only hope for many longing for political change in Zimbabwe. President Mugabe's rule has been characterized by massive company closures, deteriorating public health facilities, increased poverty levels and high unemployment rate and weakening commodity prices among a plethora of other social and economic ills (Raftopoulos and Mlambo, 2009). Despite these socio-economic challenges, ZANU PF has remained in power and this has given political parties the impetus to think about the possibility of fronting a united grand coalition to challenge ZANU PF in the 2018 general elections.

ZANU PF, which has been in power since independence in 1980, is also grappling with growing fissures as hawkish politicians in two factions: Team Lacoste (allegedly fronting Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa) and G40 (alleged behind First Lady Grace Mugabe) angle to succeed President Robert Mugabe who will be 94 when Zimbabwe goes to the next elections in 2018. Opposition parties are eager to take advantage of this seemingly unstoppable factionalism and succession struggles within the ruling party, ZANU PF. Zimbabwe's opposition parties are currently in an attempt to unite to dislodge the ZANU PF government which has been in power for 37 years. The closest attempts towards a coalition so far has been the National Electoral Reform Agenda (NERA), a platform which has united over 20 opposition political parties in the country including the largest opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) led by Morgan Tsvangirai and the newly formed National People's Party (NPP) led by the former Vice President, Joice Mujuru. NERA is calling for electoral reforms that include the compilation of a new voters roll, cleansing the ZEC secretariat of ZANU PF aligned staff and the disbandment of militia that allegedly cause political violence. However, as if NERA is not enough, there is yet another grouping of mainly 13 smaller opposition political parties such as ZIPRA, Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn and others under the Coalition for Democrats (CODE). CODE is a group which is pushing for the grand coalition of Zimbabwe opposition parties to participate in the 2018 Elections. CODE wants to present a united front in order to push out ZANU PF and deal with the problems Zimbabwe is facing. The MDC-T has not been keen to be part of CODE.

Questions have been asked as to who will lead the coalition and Morgan Tsvangirai and Joice Mujuru's names should have been the likely contenders. Tsvangirai leads the biggest opposition in the country and he defeated President Robert Mugabe in a presidential election of March, 2008. He has been endorsed by both Didymus Mutasa of Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF) and Simba Makoni of Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn. According to the *Bulawayo24.com* online edition of the 19th of March, 2017, quoting the *Daily News* Mutasa in endorsing Morgan

Tsvangirai said: "For me, Tsvangirai is the natural leader of the coalition because of who he is... what the NERA is today stands for what Tsvangirai and the MDC-T built. The rest of us are latecomers in this game..." Mutasa's endorsement of Tsvangirai as the possible leader of the coalition was echoed by Simba Makoni who according to the same publication, said: "I am on record saying we need everyone and in the case of Tsvangirai, we all know the value that he adds, he has been in the opposition trenches this long." This paper also endorses Tsvangirai as the possible leader of the envisaged grand coalition to lead the opposition in the 2018 general elections.

On the other hand, Joice Mujuru commands some support from a large section of war veterans as a war veteran herself. She presumably has full support of war veterans seen as a vital cog in Mujuru's party as they are responsible for mobilisation and giving the party liberation war credentials that make it attractive to other opposition parties seeking a coalition. Mujuru is the torch-bearer and brand of National People's Party. A coalition of the opposition that includes genuine defectors from the ruling party and affiliates from the security sector as well as the war veterans tends to diminish the ruling party's imagery of indomitability and invincibility. It is under such circumstances that Mujuru's inclusion in a coalition of the opposition could turn the current political equilibrium in favour of the opposition which should present a single presidential candidate to the electorate in the 2018 elections.

However, she has been part of the ruling party, ZANU PF for a very long time including during the Gukurahundi era, Operation Murambatsvina and the violent 2008 presidential run-off. Her family is thought to have wealth across mining, farming, telecommunications and real estate, something she has denied. And to add to her blemishes, she did not voluntarily resign from ZANU PF. She was expelled from the party and some sections of the electorate still believe she could still be part of the ruling party had she not been expelled. To add to her woes, her party, ZimPF has since split and she now leads a new party, the National People's Party (NPP) which is a latecomer to national politics. Therefore, Morgan Tsvangirai seems to be a strong contender to lead the grand coalition if at all it comes to fruition before the 2018 general elections.

This paper examines the politics of opposition party coalitions in Zimbabwe by identifying faulty lines that have militated against opposition coalitions. Given the political context of an electoral authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe, the paper identifies measures that would help to improve the endurance, success and democratic quality of opposition coalition in Zimbabwe. This paper is informed by two factors. Firstly, the recent nascent attempts by opposition parties towards forging electoral coalitions ahead of the 2018 general election under NERA CODE. Secondly, it is influenced by the current state of fragmentation among opposition forces and the

democratic contingent in general (ZDI, 2016).

Pre-electoral coalitions

Kadima (2006:10) submits that a party coalition is “the coming together of a minimum of two political parties for a certain period, in pursuit of an agreed set of common goals to be reached by means of a common strategy, joint actions, the pooling of resources and the distribution of possible subsequent payoffs.” The National Democratic Institute and Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights (2015) define a coalition as:

“A temporary union between two or more groups, especially political parties, for the purpose of gaining more influence or power than the individual groups or parties can hope for to achieve on their own. By focusing on their common objectives and goals, all of the member groups can build their strength and get an advantage on issues of common interest. With a particular objective in mind-winning an election, passing a particular legislation, or forming a government-coalitions have a limited life span until the objectives are achieved”.

Browne (1982:2) postulates that a coalition is “a set of parliamentary political parties that: (a) agree to pursue a common goal or a common set of goals; (b) pool their resources in pursuit of this goal(s); (c) communicate and form binding commitments concerning their goals... (d) agree on the distribution of the pay-offs to be received on obtaining their goal”.

From the definitions, we argue in this article that there are pull and push factors motivating opposition parties to form alliances with the central strategic objective being the need to win power. The challenge may be that some members in some political parties in Zimbabwe, particularly those which are offshoots from the ruling party such as Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF) and National People’s Party (NPP) may be easily seen as ZANU PF creations. Such misgivings from the supporters from MDC-T have forced the MDC-T leader, Morgan Tsvangirai to embark on countrywide consultations to gauge their reaction towards a coalition with other parties.

When trying to compete against an entrenched competitive establishment like ZANU PF, opposition parties face an uphill battle. Howard and Roessler (2006) posit that there is a large degree of asymmetry between the ruling party and the opposition in competitive authoritarian electoral contests because in many developing countries, wealth is concentrated in the hands of government officials. In the case of Zimbabwe, it is difficult to separate government from the ruling ZANU PF party. Consequently, opposition political parties lack access to sufficient material resources to build a broad, nation-wide political party that is capable of mounting an effective challenge to the incumbent’s hold on power. The

more fragmented the opposition parties are, the more susceptible they are to government and ruling party manipulation, co-option and repression. According to Diamond (2002), an active and diverse civil society, though important for the consolidation of democracy as it checks the accountability and power of the government proves ineffectual when matched against an oppressive incumbent or ruling party seeking to guarantee re-election. Instead, opposition victory in a competitive authoritarian regime “requires a level of opposition mobilization, unity, skill, and heroism far beyond what would normally be required for victory in a democracy” (Diamond, 2002: 24). In short, what is important in competitive authoritarian regimes is how opposition leaders and civil society groups choose to organize in the electoral arena and their ability to create strategic coalitions that are resilient in the face of government force and fraud (Levitsky and Way, 2001).

The formation of an opposition coalition does not refer to the strength of the opposition *per se*, and it is not based merely on the degree of hostility to a leader or party in power (Howard and Roessler, 2006). Many authoritarian incumbents are deeply unpopular with the broader population, opposition movements and civil society groups ‘united’ in their agreement that the president must go. In Zimbabwe, the privately owned media and recently some war veterans and many other voices within the fractured ruling party, as well as political leaders within the region such as Julius Malema of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) have been calling on President Mugabe to go (News Day of 24 January, 2017). Yet, despite their lack of popular support, such incumbents often maintain their hold onto power because of the opposition elites’ inability to form organizational structures that effectively challenge government in the electoral arena. This paper asserts that what is important is the ability of these political parties to come together, not by giving up their own political parties and interests or by submitting to a charismatic leader, but in order to form a strategic coalition for the specific goal of winning an election.

Howard and Roessler (*ibid*: 371) postulate that “an opposition coalition can increase the probability of political liberalization in four ways.” First, it can take votes away from the ruling regime. When the opposition has joined together, an unpopular incumbent is less able to use repression and patronage to coerce and induce people to vote for him or her. Secondly, it can prevent incumbents from playing opposition parties and leaders against each other, thus making “divide and rule” a less effective strategy. Third, it can increase the perceived risks and costs of repression and manipulation. The police, army and bureaucrats may be less inclined to employ illegal practices to benefit the incumbent if they calculate that the opposition is sufficiently organized to mount a credible challenge to the ruling party since the authoritarian incumbent’s henchmen could face recriminations for their actions if the opposition wins. Finally, it can mobilize people to vote against the incumbent, as the electorate

has a sense that change is possible and they begin to view the opposition as an alternative governing coalition (Howard and Roessler, *ibid*).

In this paper and in the context of the foregoing discussion, we argue that the four ways may apply in advanced democracies not in Zimbabwe where the ruling regime has employed all forms of dirty strategies against the opposition and the electorate as was experienced in previous elections including the June run-off of 2008 (Raftopolous and Mlambo, 2009). The state apparatus was used by ZANU PF to ensure it remained in power through brutal violence, intimidation, harassment, torture, murder and disappearances among other means to both the electorate and opposition members. Security agents and youths were mainly used to perpetrate these heinous acts (Raftopoulos and Mlambo, 2009).

OPPOSITIONAL MOBILIZATION AND THE ECONOMIC FACTOR

In addition to the strategic choice of opposition leaders, widespread public mobilization can also play a crucial role in the opposition's ability to challenge the incumbent. Protests may weaken the legitimacy of the incumbent and provide signals to the electorate that the incumbent is vulnerable to defeat. Moreover, the more motivated and mobilized the electorate is, the more likely people are to vote in the elections, whereas a demoralized and apathetic citizenry will probably not bother participating in the electoral process. In cases of extreme high mobilization, sustained protests may force an autocratic incumbent to step down, as occurred in Indonesia in 1998 and Peru in 2000 (Howard and Roessler, 2006).

In this article it should be noted that Zimbabwe opposition and civil society have tried protests particularly in major cities in 2016 but the police have descended heavily on protesters using tear gas and water cannons. Most of the protests were initiated by Evan Mawarire, the founder of This Flag Movement which was followed by Tajamuka (both are social movements in Zimbabwe). More protests which were instigated by NERA followed in Harare, Gweru and Bulawayo. When the ruling party felt threatened by the wave of these sustained protests, police banned any form of demonstrations and this eventually put to rest protests in 2016. The arrest of the cleric Evan Mawarire at Harare International Airport on 01 February, 2017 and his denial of bail followed by his continued detention in the notorious "D" class at Chikurubi Maximum Prison till 9 February, 2017 might have been designed to cow and send chilling signals to oppositional formations in Zimbabwe.

One of the central findings of democratization literature is that economic crisis is often linked to regime transitions (Geddes, 1999; Haggard and Kaufman, 1995). The elections literature also supports this thesis that poor economic performance may lead to the ousting of

incumbent governments (Lewis-Back and Stegmaier, 1999). According to this argument, an economic crisis undermines support for an authoritarian regime, divides the ruling elites and creates opportunities for the opposition to mobilize. In short, a crisis may help to tilt the balance of power in favour of the oppositional formation and weaken the bargaining power of the incumbent. These conditions alone are however not enough to lead to authoritarian breakdown but need to be buttressed by opposition cohesion. Elite dis cohesion in ZANU PF, economic regression and opposition cohesion through coalitions are critical determinants in possible breakdown of the ruling party after 37 years in power. Economic decline undercuts the incumbent's legitimacy and shrinks his or her voting pool. While we agree that the foregoing arguments are true to a large extent, we also posit that this may more likely apply to established democracies. In a normal democracy, most of the ministers if not the entire cabinet should have long resigned due to economic failure and yet even in 2008 when inflation peaked at 231 million percent, the ruling party did not resign.

Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) (2016) argues that elite dis cohesion in ZANU PF, coupled with dis cohesion in the security apparatus of the state and economic crisis are ingredients for regime breakdown. The think tank has also argued that coupled with elite dis cohesion and economic regression, opposition cohesion is of paramount importance in authoritarian erosion and possible regime breakdown. In Zimbabwe, attempts to have opposition cohesion have mainly been motivated by prevailing conditions for regime breakdown and authoritarian erosion. These conditions are elite dis cohesion within ZANU PF mainly on the issue of succession and the economic spiral downward trend resulting in increasing levels of poverty. The current economic crisis undermines support for the regime, divides the ruling elite and creates opportunities for the opposition to mobilize.

ATTEMPTS AT POST-INDEPENDENCE COHESION IN ZIMBABWE

Nkiwane (1998) argues that first attempts towards opposition cohesion in post-independence Zimbabwe dates back to 1992 with the formation of the United Front which brought together the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) led by Edgar Tekere, the United African National Council (UANC) led by Abel Muzorewa, the Zimbabwe African National Union (Ndonga) led by Ndabaningi Sithole and the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe led by Ian Smith. However, the alliance could not hold due to the vast diversity of the parties. A second attempt towards a coalition was between UANC and ZUM where Tekere and Muzorewa were co-presidents but the coalition ended prematurely after the former pulled out (ZDI, 2016).

In 2008, there were endeavours to forge a coalition between the two MDC formations, MDC-T and MDC.

However, the coalition could not be consummated owing to disagreements over the distribution of seats between the parties particularly in urban areas. Again, in 2008, Simba Makoni contested as a presidential candidate instead of forging a coalition with Morgan Tsvangirai. In 2013, the MDC-T and Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn led by Simba Makoni also formed a coalition. Nonetheless, the coalition was burdened by lack of support from grassroots structures resulting in the coalition fielding two parliamentary candidates in Makoni Central and both lost because votes were split thereby giving ZANU PF an advantage. We argue that the ruling ZANU PF party fears the possibility of a grand coalition between MDC-T and other parties such as ZimPF and NPP. A grand coalition is feared most if it also ensures that the electorate particularly the youths and first time voters register to vote in 2018.

Nkiwane (ibid) states that opposition parties have always existed in Zimbabwe since the attainment of independence in 1980. However, in 1990, factions emerged in ZUM leading to the formation of the Democratic Party led by Emmanuel Magoche. Also in 1993, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Enock Dumbutshena launched the Forum Party for Zimbabwe. However, it is critical to note that these parties suffered serious challenges relating to fragmentation, poor funding and limited geographical representation as they were urban-centric (ZDI, 2016). This article argues that these challenges continue to be an albatross among the current oppositional formations. It is also argued that the overwhelming hand of the conflated state under ZANU PF, coupled with infiltration by state security agents assisted to scuttle attempts by regime opponents to coalesce. This was reported in the News Day of 30 March, 2016 under the headline, "ZANU PF Spies have infiltrated our party."

Mathisen and Svasand (2002: 2) assert that opposition parties in African states are highly fragmented and thus many countries are characterized by many small and weak political parties. In Zimbabwe, some of the small parties which usually mushroom towards election time are not genuine but may be created to destabilize the possibility of a grand coalition. The fragmented party system has in many instances strengthened the power of the incumbents and this is the reason why in this paper, we suggest a coalition of 'select' opposition parties and not a coalition of all the opposition parties. Others may not be genuine and after due diligence should be left out of the grand coalition. We believe the MDC-T is right in being cautious in joining CODE which is predominantly made up of small parties some without visible followers.

Rakner and Svasand (2002: 6) distinguish political party fragmentation into four types: (a) formal fragmentation: that is when a large number of parties are registered; (b) competitive fragmentation: fragmentation emerging "when more parties are able to nominate candidates in a number of constituencies"; (c) electoral fragmentation: which "occurs when votes are spread more evenly across a large

number of parties"; and (d) parliamentary fragmentation: appearing "when parliamentary seats are more evenly distributed across a number of parties".

From the aforementioned distinctions, it is clear that Zimbabwe is currently caught in competitive fragmentation where there are over 20 opposition political parties. As suggested earlier on in this paper, some of the small political parties could be a creation of the ruling party. Indeed, the number of political parties is not indicative of the quality of democracy and could actually be a drawback to democratisation. In this regard, Gentili (2005: 11) states that "the number of parties that appear with the opening to democratization is not a demonstration of increased participation, but rather of fragmentation and therefore weakness of the party systems." Howard and Roessler (ibid) argue that this fragmentation is beneficial to ruling parties as they consciously employ a "divide-and-rule" tactic to fragment and weaken the opposition.

ZDI (2016) notes that among other factors, opposition parties have also not been successful in ousting the incumbents in elections due to fragmentation and their failure to form a solid opposition coalition. For example, in 2008, the MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai polled 47, 9%, President Robert Mugabe 43, 2% and Simba Makoni 8, 3%. Mathematically, it means that had the opposition considered a single presidential candidate, the MDC-T's Morgan Tsvangirai would have polled more than the required 50% +1 to avoid a re-run.

This article argues that as Zimbabwe treads towards the 2018 general elections, it is unavoidable that there is need for solid and genuine opposition cohesion. Ghandi and Reuter (2008) note that authoritarian incumbents usually want the opposition divided since they consider the formation of coalitions as a threat. Therefore, incumbent regimes implicitly or explicitly prohibit certain types of opposition coalitions. We argue in this paper that ZANU PF may infiltrate the opposition as well as use the state-owned media to scuttle coalition talks among the opposition. To counter that, there is need for the opposition to issue joint statements, create joint electoral lists and more importantly, forward a single presidential candidate in 2018. The negotiation to decide on this single candidate presents the greatest challenge for opposition parties.

ZDI (2016) argue that the competitive fragmentation that has become synonymous with opposition parties in Zimbabwe has to be understood in the context of how the parties emerged. Most parties, if not all, emerge as a result of factionalism, a lack of trust and elite dis-cohesion within the opposition (Mungwari, 2016). This has been a recurring phenomenon in post-independence opposition in Zimbabwe. For instance, the MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai acrimoniously split in October 2005 resulting in the formation of the other MDC led by Welshman Ncube. The MDC-T further split in 2014 resulting in the emergence of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) led by Tendai Biti. The PDP party further split leading to the formation of

Renewal Democrats of Zimbabwe led by Elton Mangoma. On the other hand, Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF) once led by Joice Mujuru is a result of expulsions and brutal purging from ZANU PF after the 2014 congress. The ZimPF has since split with Joice Mujuru forming a new party, the National People's Party (NPP). These struggles within the major struggle have bred a culture of lack of trust in the opposition body politic thereby obfuscating efforts towards opposition cohesion as no party trusts the other with the reigns of the state, given the context of strong presidentialism in Zimbabwe.

Worse, if coalitions emerge in settings with a historical schism or conflict, other party members may see cross-party collaboration as a sign of weakness or a negation of fundamental party beliefs. Oyugi's (2006) assertion is that coalitions are mainly formed for purposes of seeking power, thus leading such coalitions may be referred to as 'opportunistic' or 'unprincipled' some among the opposition and most importantly the ruling party. Also against the background of personalization, a leader who is not accorded what they may deem a strategic and/or lucrative position may muddle any attempt towards the formation of a coalition. This has resulted in PDP splitting into Renewal Democrats. And when parties are constructed along personalities what follows may be a privation of ideological gravitas associated with such personalities. As a government in waiting, the role of the opposition is to provide policy alternatives particularly in the Zimbabwean context where government policies have been detrimental to socio-economic development (ZDI, 2016). The opposition should not oppose for the sake of opposing but must be rooted in clear ideological and policy alternatives that seek to provide answers to the existing societal challenges. This should also be the basis upon which opposition cohesion is founded rather than the need to seek political office. There is a general belief that ruling party's policies appear sound but the problem lies in implementation in the context of a cancerous culture of corruption within government and parastatals.

POTENTIAL FOR OPPOSITION COHESION IN ZIMBABWE

Given the general weaknesses of the opposition parties in Zimbabwe, the common consensus is that no single opposition party could possibly win an election alone given ZANU PF's monolithic nature owing to party-state conflation. Therefore, there is need to encourage opposition cohesion. But what kind of scenario would favour that set-up? There are internal and external issues the coalition will need to address to ensure that prevails.

First and foremost, the oppositional formation should agree on a sound and concrete coalition to increase its electoral competitiveness. There is thus urgent need for the opposition to close ranks, address issues of mistrust and enunciate an alternative policy programme that they

all embrace. We argue that the principle of forming a coalition may not be that difficult to arrive at but sustaining the coalition may prove insurmountable given the diversity and contradictions of the parties and individuals. We suggest that opposition cohesion should be predicated on broad ideological and policy alternatives rather than personalities. The coalition must transcend beyond an electoral pact seeking office and power to a coalition with answers that resonate with the people. The coalition should have policy alternatives and ideological congruency. This addresses the negative notion that coalitions are mainly built around opportunism and lack of principle.

Also, to be technically and intellectually competent is very critical because Zimbabwe is a competitive authoritarian regime. As put forward by Levitsky and Way (2010), competitive authoritarian regimes are understood as civilian regimes in which formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the private means of gaining power but in which fraud, civil liberties violations and abuse of state and media resources are so skewed the playing field cannot be labeled democratic. Such regimes are competitive in that democratic institutions are not merely a facade: opposition parties use them to seriously contest for power but they are authoritarian in that opposition forces are handicapped by highly uneven and sometimes dangerous playing field (ZDI, *ibid*). Competition is thus real but unfair.

Levitsky and Way (2001) also succinctly state that what is important in a competitive authoritarian regime is how opposition leaders and civil society groups organize themselves in the electoral periods and their ability to create strategic coalitions that are durable in the face of government and state repressive force and electoral fraud. We have argued earlier in this article that forging a coalition may not be that difficult but sustaining the coalition could be a challenge. The ruling regime in Zimbabwe has allegedly remained in power due to coercion and rigging of elections (Primorac, 2007). The opposition parties need to ensure that part of electoral reforms should address the issue of free and fair elections characterized by complete transparency on ballot boxes and the voting process itself. Polling agents and accredited observers local, regional and international need to scrutinize the ruling regime whose campaign particularly in rural areas instructs literate electorate to feign illiteracy so that specifically 'appointed' ZANU PF fraudsters vote on behalf of the literate electorate. Therefore, the issue of fraud in Zimbabwe is sophisticated in that traditional leaders such as headsmen and kraal heads are told to lead people in their constituencies in which the rural electorate are intimidated with lies that ZANU PF has cameras and complex mechanisms to detect which political party one has voted for (Primorac, *ibid*). It is alleged that ZANU PF deploys people who strategically position themselves fifty or so meters from voting ballots giving an impression to the rural electorate

that they are being watched from a distance and that the party will know who they would have voted for.

The grand coalition should then fight for voter mobilization, voter registration, obtaining a new and clean voters' roll, demilitarizing the elections and the electoral management body, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, demystifying the issue of fear particularly among the rural voters and massive registration drive for young and new voters. While opposition parties reflect on pre-election alliances and coalition for national cohesion, it is critical for them to learn from other African countries such as Kenya's lessons.

UHURU KENYATTA AND WILLIAM RUTO COALITION

Kadima and Owuor (2014) reckon that alliances and coalitions contribute to national cohesion in Kenya by bringing together polarized political parties and their ethnic groups and ensuring a more equitable sharing of national resources. They further argue that party alliances and coalitions tend to weaken smaller parties and the party system in favour of the larger parties. This is due to the fact that junior alliance and coalition partners are generally focused on short-term gains like appointments to lucrative posts, while the main parties focus on consolidating their parties and voting base precisely by poaching from their junior partners. Kadima and Owuor (*ibid*) observed that in the March 2013 elections an alliance between Kenyatta and Ruto resulted in more peaceful elections and improved inter-communal relations between two ethnic groups (Kikuyus and Kalenjin). This power-sharing is new in Kenya. In this paper, we note from Kenya's experience that the opposition parties in Zimbabwe who are contemplating to forge an grand pre-election coalition may have some lessons to learn for the success of both pre-election and post-election alliances (for more details see Kadima and Owuor (2014), article: "Kenya's decade of experiments with political party alliances and coalitions-motivations, impact and prospects").

ZANU PF'S FRAMING OF OPPOSITION COALITION

In clear contrast to the privately owned press' favourable coverage of coalition talks, The Herald of the 7th of January, 2017, in an opinion piece titled: "Coalition: When a rose by the same name smells different" casts a gloomy picture of the coalition talks among the opposition parties. This story was written by an anonymous writer in the name of Nathaniel Manheru, who is believed to be the Presidential spokesperson, George Charamba. Through his usual recondite writing and sophisticated jargon for the ordinary reader, he plays around with disparaging diction on the opposition parties' efforts to forge a coalition, implying the private press is blind to the realities about any possibility of a coalition. This is not surprising coming as it

does from a government mouth piece whose propaganda agenda is to scuttle coalition possibilities.

It is crucial to point out that ZANU PF and its anonymous state media columnists disingenuously encourage the understanding that forming a coalition is a sign of weakness among individual opposition parties. Nothing could be further from the truth and this could be a reflection of ZANU PF's fear of a pre-election coalition than honest assessment of the opposition's strengths and weaknesses. The desperation with which ZANU PF is dismissing the idea of a coalition of opposition parties shows the potency such a pact has. Apart from quantifying votes and increasing the opposition's chances of dislodging ZANU PF, a pre-election coalition demonstrates the leading opposition political parties' desire to govern with others. This is called the signaling-device theory. Opposition parties' desire for the formation of coalition before elections is a clear signal or a clear demonstration to the electorate that they would be able to govern the country in a stable coalition. Forming a stable coalition government is desirable after years of ZANU PF monopoly with its attendant clientelism, corruption, rent-seeking behaviour by government ministers and the culture of primitive wealth accumulation, unaccountability and impunity (Sachikonye, 2002). By drawing members from different political parties, a pre-election coalition provides a chance to heal national politics, inculcating tolerance and diffuse political polarisation introduced into Zimbabwe body politic by ZANU PF. Two political parties demonstrated this capability in Gweru in 2016, when the united ZimPF under Joice Mujuru and MDC-T held a joint rally and the two leaders Tsvangirai and Mujuru addressed the same gathering. This signaled a desire for unity and preparedness to work together for the good of the country.

The following headlines in the state-controlled daily, The Herald: "Mujuru Bikita West rally divides MDC-T"; "ZANU PF goes for broke in Bikita West by-election"; "Tsvangirai snubs Mujuru"; "Make Bikita West seat present for President"; and "Rude awakening for Mujuru party" were articles of 9, 11, 12, 19 and 23 of January, 2017, respectively. What comes out clear is that the government owned Herald is aimed at 'divide and rule' tactics and is specifically evidenced by the newspaper reports that divisions once again emerged in the MDC-T on whether Tsvangirai should address a joint rally with Joice Mujuru in Bikita to garner support for the latter's candidate for Bikita West by-elections, Kudakwashe Gopo. Clearly, the MDC-T did not wish to campaign for Gopo because when he was in ZANU PF, he had caused a reign of terror in Bikita West by-elections in 2001. Nonetheless, contrary to the same Herald reporter who authored the stories on the Bikita West by-elections, MDC-T's unwillingness to support ZimPF would not weaken coalition negotiations and it is not true that 'some of MDC-T officials wanted Mujuru's party to lose to cripple her bargaining power in the mooted coalition'. The Herald quotes ZANU PF

national political commissar, Saviour Kasukuwere, pouring out his propaganda:

“ZimPF is not a political party. It is a grouping of angry, expired politicians who are no longer relevant. They are also expecting a hand from an equally failed MDC. It is two teams trying to join each other and hope to make a difference. Above all, they are bed fellows trying an impossible marriage...”

This paper argues that political party leaders negotiating for a grand coalition should not be discouraged by press reports, particularly from the state controlled newspapers whose clear agenda is to frustrate the success of a coalition, which is the greatest fear of the ruling party, ZANU PF.

The Herald of 24 January carried another story titled: “MDC-T provinces reject Tsvangirai coalition bid”. The Herald’s representation is that MDC-T leader, Morgan Tsvangirai’s coalition consultations in Matabeleland have yielded nothing after party structures in the region rejected his proposals. The newspaper’s framing suits its sustained agenda to influence disharmony in order to escalate tribal and ethnic divisions by touching on political positions when the coalition is eventually consummated. The newspaper’s unnamed sources go on to say “... sources said the proposal included relegating Ms Thokozani Khupe from her current position as deputy president. ...If the coalition sails through, a number of people in our current shadow government will lose their positions and we are going to fight it. ...This coalition is useless and why should we be used by Mujuru who is testing opposition politics for the first time?” The Herald further claims that the party is facing serious revolt from the Khupe faction after indications that Tsvangirai now preferred Welshman Ncube in her stead. The newspaper also claims that Tsvangirai wants to consolidate his position against Khupe after his elevation of two other deputies, Nelson Chamisa and Elias Mudzuri.

BIOMETRIC VOTER REGISTRATION (BVR) CONSPIRACY THEORY

It was argued in this paper that one of the challenges confronting coalition is the controversial BVR kits. As pressure mounted in 2016 for ZEC to fulfill its constitutional obligation to carry out continuous voter registration, the electoral organization indicated intentions to start a programme of registering voters using biometric technology. This announcement was welcomed by opposition parties and civil society which have long protested that the old voters roll was shambolic and unreliable. When ZEC announced that the process of selecting service providers for implementing the BVR system was underway and that this process was supported by the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP); the opposition parties and civil society organizations welcomed this too believing the presence of a third party in the form of the UNDP as an important mechanism that would add some checks and balances in the selection process. They were concerned that a process in which ZANU PF government had exclusive control would be subject to bias in favour of the ruling party. Opposition parties are wary of service providers that the Zimbabwean government has worked with in the past on the voters roll. One of them is Nikuvu international project, an Israeli company that was implicated in the rigging of the 2013 elections (Magaisa, 2017). The involvement of UNDP in the selection process was therefore seen as a risk-mitigating mechanism. But, as this article has argued earlier, ZANU PF is uncomfortable with any move that will threaten its hold on power so it creates conspiracy theories which manifest through state media.

The Herald and other state media carried out articles and news items whose agenda were allegedly to create anarchy and confusion over the issue of BVR system, registration and voting. The government announced that it would be taking over the funding of the BVR system from the UNDP in the selection process of the service provider. In effect, as we argue in this paper, this would mean the removal of the mechanism which opposition parties were banking on to check and balance ZANU PF’s wide powers as the governing party. Whenever ZANU PF senses that its exclusive control of the electoral process is in danger of being diluted, it takes defensive measures to protect its territory and this has happened before (Magaisa, 2017). Back in 2013, as the nation prepared for the July 2013 elections, leaders of all parties, including President Mugabe, had agreed that funding of the elections would be sought from the UNDP. The opposition was comfortable with this arrangement as it meant getting the United Nations (UN) involved in the electoral process and therefore providing a facility for the UN and general international community to observe the elections. ZANU PF was aware of what this meant and arguably was hostile to UN or Western countries’ observation of elections. It therefore continued to work in the background to find ways to circumvent the agreement to work with the UNDP. They had to find money from somewhere and they got funding from telecommunications sector. With the UNDP removed from the process, ZANU PF had the exclusive control that it coveted, which meant the July 2013 election was held without the checks and balances that the opposition had anticipated the UNDP would provide. In this article we argue also that this is precisely what is happening with the BVR system. After initially selling a dummy to the opposition that it was the UNDP to provide support for the BVR system and to have a role in the selection process, the ZANU PF government is once again renegeing on that agreement.

The other development is the propaganda blitz that has been launched by state media, in particular, by The Herald

newspaper, against the BVR system. Erroneously conflating the biometric voter registration and biometric voting, which are two different things, The Herald publishes articles and editorial comments to that effect.

The Herald of 13 March 2017's Editorial Comment: "BVR, a luxury we cannot afford a danger to democracy" sets a clear agenda of propaganda. The newspaper also raises concerns that the biometric voting system might be hacked, citing recent cases of alleged hacking of the elections system in countries like the United States (US). We reckon in this article that there may have been teething challenges in the past in countries like Ghana and Kenya where the BVR system has been used but improvements will be realized with time where favourable reports can be achieved. We argue in this article that state media is a mouthpiece of ruling party officials setting the pace for ZEC, a body which is supposed to be independent according to the constitution. When a state controlled press editor says "Those mandated to come up with a clean voters roll can have paradigm shift by thinking outside the box, because it is still possible to do so at a cost that Zimbabwe can afford"; and ZEC chairperson Justice Rita Makarau keeps wavering on the electoral body's position on BVR then it presumably sends messages that ZANU PF unilaterally dictates the outcome of the voting processes. This has resulted in the controversy following the government's sudden decision to sideline the UNDP from assisting in the procurement of the BVR kits in which government now wants to fund the purchase of the equipment. The opposition alleges that the government is bending to hijack the process to rig the 2018 general elections. We argue that the state media reportage is bending on deception and conspiracy theory to confuse the public.

This article asserts that the electorate should not have fears that capturing a person's biometrics would intimidate the voter since a voter registration technology has nothing to do with what will happen on the voting day.

Given these foregoing scenarios, the opposition should not give ZANU PF chance to go back to Tobaiwa Mudede's voters' roll. It is this fear of the opposition parties they insist to engage ZEC which is elusive and stage demonstrations like what they intended to do on 23 March 2017 but was frustrated by the police ban of the NERA marching across the central district business. We assert in this paper that the opposition parties and civil society organizations should soldier on pressing for total electoral reforms which will ensure level playing field for free and fair elections in 2018 for the benefit of the nation.

CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated that the building of party alliances and coalitions in Zimbabwe is confronted with challenges such as disagreements, mistrust, uncertainty, infiltration, splits, personal egos, the issue of Biometric

Voter Registration kits, among other factors. On the hand, it shows that alliances and coalitions contribute to national cohesion in Zimbabwe by bringing together polarized political parties, demonstrated by signing of Memorandum of Understanding between political parties so far between MDC-T and MDC-N; and MDC-T and NPP, with possibility of more MoUs in the near future ahead of 2018 elections.

Political parties choose to enter pre-election alliances in order to avoid wasting their votes. By coming together, they increase their chances of winning elections and governing the country. Coalitions have the advantage of allowing partner political parties to combine their human, financial and material resources, broaden their base and their respective strengths and thus accomplish more than they could have achieved alone. However, coalitions have the recurrent disadvantage of being unstable, conflict-ridden and of being seen as undemocratic and lacking in transparency and accountability. Members may feel that their control over policies is restricted and that too many concessions end up compromising them while coalition matters take precedence over party priorities (Kadima, 2014: 21).

We conclude in this paper that Zimbabwe's possible opposition coalition is not only to be built around the MDC-T and Tsvangirai but that it should not be an end in itself. Major parties under both CODE and NERA should come together and form one grand coalition. It is encouraging to know that Tendai Biti who once declared that he would not work with Tsvangirai has made an impassioned plea to Tsvangirai to make up his mind on the grand coalition. According to the Daily News paper of 14 March, 2017, in a story headlined 'Biti appeals to Tsvangirai' the former finance Minister "made an impassioned plea to MDC President, Tsvangirai to move decisively on the mooted grand opposition alliance – warning that any further dithering on the matter would gift Zanu PF in next year's make- or break national polls." Biti did not refute distance himself from this story and what it means is that he indeed made that 'impassioned plea' for Tsvangirai to make up his mind. We agree with Biti's plea as we believe that only Tsvangirai as leader of the coalition stands the best chance of unseating the ruling party, ZANU PF from power.

More importantly, the end result of the pre-election alliance should cut across ideological divides. Thus, although there are challenges which may hamper the progress of coalition talks in Zimbabwean opposition political parties, Zimbabweans should remain hopeful of an opposition coalition in time for elections in 2018. Serious negotiations about a pre-election coalition are never conducted in the public domain. It should be recalled that both Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto have very huge egos but that did not stop them from forming a coalition that won the Kenyan elections in 2013. Zimbabweans should learn from this Kenyan model and learn to be patient as political parties talk among themselves away from the media. A hurriedly formulated coalition of all

parties is bound to fail. Careful due diligence should be done on each and every party especially the smaller parties that are known to be one man parties. What makes the coalition talks so long, difficult, and complex is generally not the lack of goodwill among elites, but the fact that the negotiations must appear the way they do in order to satisfy the members whose orientations are still largely attuned to the vocal, symbolic and ideological aspects characteristic of each respective political sub-culture. Even the ZimPF split ought not to dishearten political party leaders from continuing with negotiations. Media reports on the grand coalition from both the privately and state owned papers should not be used to gauge the success or failure of the coalition talks.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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Full Length Research Paper

Berbera basing politics: Understanding actors, interests, and animosities

Najah M. Adam

Department of Diplomacy and International Relations, EUCLID University, Gambia.

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The presence of forward forces in foreign soil is not a modern notion, but is thought-provoking when a small state projects its military might in multiple locations of a similar strategic importance. The United Arab Emirates' (UAE) base lease in Berbera is a case in point which attracted a reproach from the public, and politicians. The joint parliament sitting to approve the draft agreement further complicated the reproach, resulting in many stakeholders to argue that the approval process suffered insufficient consultation, citing ambiguity, and suspicion. Berbera basing politics is critical to Somaliland's national security, but gained little scholarly attention that can explain the rationale, and the underlying assumptions. This paper will, therefore, provide a qualitative assessment on impact of UAE's overseas defense posture on Somaliland's political direction. Specifically, it tends to analyze the structural architect of the basing politics including actors, interests, risks (animosities), and prophesy on scenarios for use. This paper uses secondary and primary sources to sketch out the key issues; it also employs relevant international relations theories: security dilemma, deterrence, defensive, proxy war, geopolitics, pre-emption, beggar-thy-neighbour, and safe-haven concepts to make sense on this matter.

Key words: National security, basing politics, interests, actors, animosity, deterrence, collective security, collective defense.

INTRODUCTION

Somaliland declared its independence in May 1991 in armed struggle, but with Somalis this time. Geographically, it borders with Ethiopia to the South, Djibouti to the West, Somalia to the East, and the Gulf of Aden to the North.

The Gulf of Aden is directly facing the southern part of Yemen with a coastline of 850,800 km. The population estimate of Somaliland is 4.5 million (Unrepresented

Nations and Peoples Organization, 2017) with an area of 137, 600 km² (Ministry of Planning, 2013). Historically, the Republic of Somaliland gained its independence in 1960 from Great Britain, and then united with what was then known as Italian Somaliland in July 1960. After the collapse of the Siyad Barre regime, Somaliland collected its remnant from the ash to establish a *de facto* state that manages its domestic and international affairs, enjoying a

E-mail: najah.adam@yahoo.com.

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relative peace, and stability as “an oasis of stability in a volatile region.”¹ Today, it enjoys a *de facto state* status under international law (Arieff, 2008), though it fulfills the entire statehood standards set out in the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States. In terms of its economy, the livestock plays the key driver where close to “65% of the population depend either directly or indirectly on livestock and livestock products for their livelihood (Ministry of Planning, 2013). In summary, it is a fourth-world country dying for employment, economic development, and international cooperation.

In the last two decades, Somaliland achieved tangible strides towards peace and security amidst a conflict prone region. In doing so, this tiny republic spends approximately half of its national budget in the different security and law enforcement departments (McGregor, 2014) to ensure law and order is maintained. Despite this investment in the security sector, the country suffered from several terrorist attacks waged by the Islamist militant group known as al-Shabaab. Consequently, Somaliland established a coastal guard unit with sundry of “boats to patrol more than 500 miles of coastline along the Gulf of Aden” (Langfitt, 2011) to secure its waters. While it is a very daunting task to tackle a sophisticated piracy with such limited resources, this unit made sure to secure its waters. Therefore, it is evident that such security measures had expanded the strategic importance of Somaliland to attract international investment, and the military base establishment.

METHODOLOGY

Since hosting foreign forward forces is complex and multifaceted axiom, which had a profound impact in both domestic and exterior political arenas. Hence, this paper conducted a thorough analysis on the establishment of Berbera Military Base. Moreover, the geographical interest of this study was confined within the Horn of African region certain particularly states, enjoying an established link with Somaliland, and the United Arab Emirates as well as other non-state actors ranging from civils society, media, and clan elders.

In doing so, this paper has employed both secondary and primary sources to sketch out the key issues on Berbera basing politics, including literature of relevant text books, academic papers, and close observation to the political development relating to the establishment of the military base. In addition, this paper relies on relevant international relations theories such as security dilemma, deterrence, defensive, proxy war, geopolitics, pre-emption, beggar-thy-neighbour, and safe-haven concepts to make sufficient sense on this matter.

UNDERSTANDING BASING POLITICS

Generally, presence of forward foreign forces appeals for domestic, regional, and international controversy, mainly stirred through media channels. Historically, presence of military bases in a foreign soil dates back to the ancient Greece and its city states, particularly during the era of Thucydides (c.460 B.C.–c.400 B.C.), who realized the relevance of military base in the military discipline and subsequently transcribed on its rudimentary stage (Harkavy, 1989). Modern historians trace the military bases back in the fifteenth century during which the European civilization attained an economic, political, and military advancements. In Europe, this period saw that the “commercial importance began to walk together with military issues, with basing access turning crucial to defend new lands for exploration” (Lersch and Sarti, 2014)”. This is a vibrant demonstration that military basing politics maintained its relevance in the contemporary international agenda. Currently, the USA alone maintains “approximately 800 of US military bases in the world” (Vine, 2015) on which it spends over millions of dollars a year. There also another more than “21,564 combat troops” (Hesse, 2015) in the neighboring Somalia, in the name of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Military installations operated by smaller states are less prospective in the history of military basing politics. Indeed, it is the powerful states that acquire military access rights in the soil of smaller states. However, the recent establishment of military bases by the United Arab Emirates, a relatively small state, in the Horn of Africa region, is a noble phenomenon but confrontational around in the political encircles. In most cases, establishment of military bases in a foreign soil is a very daunting task for defense personnel, and diplomatic corps, due to divergent security interests; Somaliland is not an exception. The United States, for instance, “found it difficult to perusal many of its erstwhile clients that their security interests are convergent with its own” (Harkavy, 1989), resulting in many of its negotiations to conclude rejection from the prospective accommodating states. In Somaliland, the confrontation toward the establishment of the military base lies with the opposition political operators and local inhabitants, albeit only to some degree.

Types of military bases are too diverse based on their security needs. However, scholars of defense and international relations agree that the establishment of military bases is directed towards attainment of national security objectives. These objectives are: collection of intelligence, supply chain support for certain operation, and communication needs. If communication, intelligence, and logistical operations is assumed to cut across the different types of military bases, then the “Naval and Airfield” bases are the most prominent foreign military presence (bases); it is the naval and airfield bases, which are the case in point to our discussion on

¹ Ali Mohamed, Somaliland: An oasis of stability in a volatile region May 2016,

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/280948-somaliland-an-oasis-of-stability-in-a-volatile-region> (Accessed on April 2, 2016).

Berbera basing politics.

Because of its strategic location, Somaliland contributes its share to the history of military basing literature, particularly during the Cold War. In the 1970s, the former Soviet Union (Federal Republic of Russia) established a military base in Berbera, which was a naval and aerial base. This base was aimed at protecting Russian interests in the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, and generally the Horn of Africa region. The United States leased this very military installation for comparable purpose when the diplomatic relation between Somalia and the Soviet Union severed to its lowest. Considering the perspective of hosting state, there are both merits and demerits, which are associated in providing access rights to foreign military installation. A protagonist argument to the foreign military base claims that the presence of sophisticated military will boost the attainment of national security objectives, thus leading to a global peace and security. This argument relies on offensive (deterrence) and defensive concepts in the realist tradition of international relations.

On the other hand, antagonistic interpretation to this subject does not rule out the national security factor; however, it posits that establishment of military bases lead to potential arms race, and security dilemma in the region, which are other international relations theories to explain the subject in discussion. Henceforward, this monography acknowledges these two arguments, and tends to establish an inclusive sense through careful analyses, observations, and discussions.

WHY BERBERA APPEALS FOR MILITARY BASES?

To appreciate the importance of Berbera military base for the Emirates, it is indispensable to look at the geographical and historical roots of this coastal town in harbouring foreign forward forces. But before delving further, we should understand the determinant factors regarding the characteristics of the location that can serve as a military base. As mentioned previously, the purpose of military installations supersedes historical characteristics, and social factors to finally determine the location of a military base that can fit the bill.

Firstly, when the establishment of the military base is designed to serve the purpose of training ground, firing live bullets, or executing regular movements of machines, then it is the lack of human traffic, availability of space, and quietness characteristics that determine the location of a military base; of course the basic communication infrastructure remain critical. Secondly, when the purpose of the base is geared towards a military intervention, then “the ability to rapidly and effectively “project” force became an increasingly important location criterion; so access to airfields, rail lines, interstate highways and ports grew in importance” (Harmon et al., 2014). Therefore, the strategic importance of Berbera for a

military base mirrors the latter factors.

Berbera is situated on the northwest coastline of Somaliland. More importantly, It geographically supersedes the other coastal towns in the region because it is a sheltered harbour towards the southern side of the Gulf of Aden. Berbera plays a commercial role, by providing portal services to wide range of Somali and non-Somali communities in the region. In addition, it remains strategic when it comes to commercial and oil shipping lanes. Such strategic location allows the great powers to monitor the sea traffic of the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, and the Horn of Africa; hence Berbera attracts the interest of foreign military forces to project their military might through naval and air military basing. This assertion is evident in the rationale of USSR naval and air military base, which was established in Berbera in the 1970s. According to experts, this military base was aimed “to control the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, and the Horn of Africa region... this airfield with the longest runway in Africa and a deep-water port was built specifically for [R]ussian military. [It] has been also featured an important communication and intelligence center (Анастасия, 2016). In less than 10 years, the ideological relationship between USSR and Somalia deteriorated due to WARSO’s unwarranted support to Ethiopia during Ethio-Somalia war in 1977. This military vacuum created by WARSAW Pact signalled as a sizeable opportunity to NATO camp, the US in this case. Similarly, the United States translated its strategic commercial, and security interests in this region in the form of forward military forces to control the shipping lanes that transcend in water of Berbera. In doing, the US Government rejuvenated a formerly severed relation with Somalia. In 1980, the United States, executing its Red Sea and Indian Ocean strategic interests, had “concluded military agreement with Somalia...gaining access to American naval and air forces” (Mangi, 1987). The agreement package included the repair and rehabilitation of the current oil terminal in Berbera as well as other structures in the port. In the same token, the US took over this military base to “project Western power in to the southern Red Sea and northwest Indian Ocean... to monitor the sea lanes along the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula and the east coast of Africa” (CIA, 1981)”. Since the Somali Republic collapsed, this strategic location was open to its historic interests, including that of smaller states, like United Arab Emirates.

EMIRATES’ EXPANSIONIST AGENDA

The federation of the United Arab Emirates was established in December 1971 stretching along the Persian Gulf, the Arabian section to be exact. This country contains a federation of 7 emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain and Fujairah, which is bordered by two other Arabian

neighbours in the north by the Persian Gulf, in the east by the Gulf of Oman and Oman and in the south and west by Saudi Arabia. In terms of land mass, the “total area of the UAE is about 83,600 km², of which 77 700 km² is the mainland surface area, where the population lives” (FAO, 2008); this is jaggedly 60% of Somaliland’s land mass. The population estimate is 9.3 M (WPR, 2017), which is double of Somaliland’s population. The movement to establish these Trucial States came to live at the beginning of 1968 when the United Kingdom communicated its plan to ending the protection agreement. Consequently, Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi “acted rapidly to establish closer ties with the emirates... then Ruler of the emirate of Dubai, Sheikh Zayed called for a federation that would include not only the seven emirates that made up the Trucial States, but also Qatar and Bahrain” (UAE, n.d), although the latter two states never embraced, and declined to join the federation movement.

The United Arab Emirates is not a middle power state, which can largely shape the politics of international security order. But its Union Defense Forces (UDF) are expanding in the Horn of Africa region: It has a defense army that is equipped with sophisticated modern machinery purchased from a variety of countries, mainly from the western countries; the US and the United Kingdom. Reacting to the international security system characterized by the fact of anarchy, this tiny nation exerted substantial effort to investing and developing powerful military capability to deter its adversaries, and preserve its national interests; both domestic and international. Favourable foreign investment terms, and open policy to international markets resulted a high per capita income, which contributed to enjoy spacious annual trade surplus; its exports exceed imports, which helps the country’s currency to strength. According to the World Bank, the United Arab Emirates managed to achieve a “sustained real GDP growth of over 6% per year in recent decades, with oil surpluses invested into the non-oil economy” (World Bank, 2016). This investment focused on military power, invest foreign countries, and implement its national security agendas. In 2011, for instance, the country spent approximately 5.5% of its GDP to armed wings, including the Air Force and Air Defense, and the Navy forces (CIA, 2011), among others. Normally, states establish military base to protect their foreign interests. This assertion holds special interest for this paper because of the UAE’s recent militarization in the Horn of Africa, especially its intention to establish a military base in Berbera.

Military basing politics is not an out dated axiom in the field of international relations, and its realpolitik variants. In fact, deploying military personnel in foreign soil evolved human the civilizations all the way down to the Greece, and its city states. Therefore, it is not a contemporary concept for discussion in any way. However, a tiny country like the UAE to project its military strength to outer region in another continent offers an

interesting point to discussion. In late 2016, the government of Somaliland and the UAE conversed over the possibility to forge security cooperation, which later led the UAE’s proposal to set up a second military base in Horn of African (Shafqat, 2017), Berbera, Somaliland. The purposes of stationing the UAE military personnel in Somaliland, and rest of the region are unprecedented.

Since military basing serves for both defensive and deterrence purposes, this response paper argues that the establishment of military base in Somaliland is serving both these purposes from Emirates standpoint. Moreover, it is believed that the establishment of a military base in Berbera is complex and multifaceted political and military reality that requires an exclusive analysis; therefore, it will examine the different actors and their interests by viewing from international relations position.

ACTORS AND INTEREST: WHAT IS IN IT?

It has been previously assumed that international relations exclusively deal with interaction between the states. However, the increasing interaction of global society to address contemporary issues invited other actors to the international politics. These new actors include media houses, non-governmental organizations, regional alliances, community elders, and political leadership. Because states and non-state actors navigate both domestic and global political issues, there are a set of common characteristics including “(a) autonomous capacity to determine their own purposes and interests; (b) capability to mobilize human and material resources to achieve these purposes and interests; (c) actions... to influence the state-to-state relations or the behavior of other nonstate actors in the global system” (Sekiguchi, 2009). They are classified as “official actors, social actors, political actors” (Shehata, 2012). This monograph tends to map out actors, and interest of Berbera military basing politics.

Somaliland, United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti are major official actors in the Berbera basing politics. We have political actors which are ranging from former or/and prominent politicians and the opposition parties. Similarly, there are also social actors involved such as media outlets and community elders. It should be noted that a proper analysis of these key actors in the basing politics is a puzzling question. For example, why non-middle power state is willing to project its military power beyond its regional blocks; what are the interests? Explaining the UAE’s increased interest to set up couple of military bases in Horn of Africa is another interesting question? Who else is concerned in the regions regarding this military base? Finally, can international relations theories illuminate on these puzzling questions?

To explain these dynamics, we should therefore utilize the following relevant IR theories to analyse and

comprehend the dynamics, interests, and actors of this argument. Relevant concepts in this case may include: Security dilemma, deterrence, proxy war, geopolitics, pre-emption, beggar thy neighbour, and safe-haven concepts.

Official actors

Somaliland (security, economy, political)

The decision to grant a military base is a process of trading-off between the national interest package against the territorial integrity of a portion of your soil.. In relation to this, there are multiple reasons to allow forward foreign forces, including economic package, political support, and common security agreement among others. The case of Berbera military base to host the UAE's second military forward force in the Horn of Africa, following Eretria, is a relevant subject to discuss. Why did Somaliland accept a foreign military base, while living in a region characterized by war, conflict, piracy, and insecurity? Perhaps, we need to look out the other military bases in the region, particularly in neighbouring Djibouti and Eretria to understand the overarching drive of military presence in the region.

Scholars consider Djibouti as a "prime military real estate on the planet" (Jeffrey, 2016) because of its location in the southern gateway to the Red Sea on the way to the Suez Canal, like Berbera. China's military presence in Djibouti is viewed as an economic energizer through "construction of free trade zone, promotion of China-Djibouti bank, construction of a railway line from Djibouti to Addis Ababa" (Igbino, 2016), among others. Moreover, China tends to "engage Somalia as part of its expanding number of African diplomatic partners" (Lanteigne, 2013) as well. Despite economic development package, the case in Eretria posits another interesting perspective: Eretria will use the presence of Emirates in its country "to expand its relationships beyond the region to break its isolation in the region" (Front, 2015).

Somaliland interest towards the military base in Berbera mirrors that of Djibouti and Eretria, in my view. Although Somaliland meets the Montevideo Convention, it is still struggling with political isolation preventing from participation of international political system, including diplomatic relations, business investment, and global security arrangements. Since national security is paramount to the survival of any state, unrecognized states like Somaliland endure the challenges of joining regional security forums, "declarations and treaties, [which are] frequently negotiated within the framework of the UN" (Barston, 2006). In this view, the lease agreement of the military base in Berbera with the UAE will, therefore, bridge this security vacuum in such a way that satisfies other economic, commercial, political, and military interests, but it always depends on the negotiation approach. In addition, smaller states strive to maintain their national security via a variety of sources to

avoid exploitation of regional or international powers. Furthermore, this military base agreement reflects this very security concept, thus diversifies its security guarantors. Although, the signed lease agreement remains confidential, its content which was presented to the Somaliland parliament for approval (News, 2017), indicates economic package, security cooperation, and development projects. Also, the recent statement of the Foreign Minister confirms a similar package. What about the Emirates?

United Arab Emirates (commercial, security)

Security and economic interests are two crucial factors to explaining the UAE's intention to build up a military base in Berbera in my view. It should be agreed that survival is the principal foreign goal for all states. The realist tradition of international relations is, therefore, best suited to expound this power politics agenda. The projection of the UAE's forward forces tends to realize this very survival objective. Put it simply, the establishment of military base in Berbera serves for both defensive and offensive purposes in line with its foreign policy goals. Regarding the Yemeni conflict, the UAE is fighting three wars: (1) They are backing the "internationally recognized government against Shia clans called the Houthis, (2) Another war is being fought against Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the Yemeni-based terrorist group (Knights, 2016), and (3) The final war is an attempt to gain strategic and economic route in the Indian Ocean and Horn of Africa. The former registers well in its FP goals to "eliminate terrorism in all its forms and diminish all its resources" (UAE, n.d) and to support the Sunni-led internationally recognized government. This very rationale raises several questions on how Berbera military facility might help in achieving the above objectives. Two possibilities are apparent to this question.

Firstly, this military base tends to facilitate the air, and naval strikes to the anti-peace elements in the south of Yemen. The division of labor between the leading powers (that is, UAE and KSA) warrants a critical consideration vis-à-vis this military base. The UAE forces are leading the military operations in the south and eastern parts of Yemen (Knights, 2016); this zonal operation is directly facing the Red Sea where Berbera city situates. Thus, this military facility will provide an ideal strategic location to embark such air and naval strikes to deter its adversaries, or perhaps an alternate base to Eretria. Secondly, there is a vital economic factor in the equation. Emirates are among the immediate beneficiaries of Strait of Hormuz to export its oil supplies. Largely controlled by Iran, Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, and is the world's most important oil passage. The UAE recently opened a "1.5 million bbl/d Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline...allowing crude oil shipments to circumvent Hormuz" (eia, 2012) on its way to Asian emerging markets, western Europe, and

America. Bad peace is always eviler than a war, the exacerbation of the Islands dispute in Hormuz between the UAE and Iran can lead to the closure of this strip, thus causing unbearable economic suffering to the UAE. Since the closure of Hormuz is economically nerve touching, Emiratis is forced to think beyond the horizon, in the study view. A safe passage to the Indian Ocean via Aden or Berbera remains under consideration to serves as an alternative root, but this alternative route requires a heavy security protection due to the insecure nature of this region. Hence, the military base in Berbera is best suited for these purposes, and able to secure commercial and economic interests in the water of India Ocean.

A final possibility is proxy war between the great powers, the United States and Russia. Although this assertion remains implicit, its conclusion is mainly inferred from two practical aspects: (1) the historical perspective, and (2) emergency of Russia as potential great power. This strategic location allows the great powers to monitor sea line traffic in the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, and Horn Africa; hence, Berbera attracts the interest of foreign military forces to project their military might through military basing. This very strategic importance brought the former Soviet Union (Russia) to establish a military base in Berbera in the 1970s, which was aimed at controlling the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, and the Horn of Africa region. Due to severance of relations between Somali and the Soviet Union, the military base was shut down. The closure of the military base in Berbera attracted the United States of America to use the facility for a similar purpose to monitor the sea lines along the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula and the east coast of Africa. Therefore, the strategic importance of this location remains critical to the great powers, particularly at this era where sources of global energy are substantially decaying.

Despite historical grounds, the tireless efforts of Russia to revive and restore its influence no the international order should be acknowledged. This potential re-emergency of Russia to shape global order is a distressing development to the West, especially that Russia will match the military and economic capabilities of the West in the next couple of decades. The US Defense Department believes that Russia “will continue to activate, guide, and direct identity networks, including foreign proxies, to further their own national interests” (JoE, 2016). In response, the US crafted a political and military strategy to deter Russia’s former influence to come back, including US objection to Russia in returning to strategic locations. Thus, it is safe to assume that US is pursuing a proxy with Russia in Berbera military base to deter in occupying this strategic location until counter evidence emergences.

Somalia (Legal, political)

Somalia is a legal actor to Berbera basing politics. It has

rejected this military base agreement both privately and in the public domain as well. First, it should be acknowledged that Somaliland retains the political and physical presence of its borders. In other words, Somaliland enforces its administrative authority to its territory, and has also accomplished to “collect taxes, provide some services, and has held several successful democratic elections ... [and] does not benefit from formal international status.”² However, Somalia continuously claims to retain the prerogative authority and the privilege over the jurisdictions of former Somalia landmass under the realm of international customary law. According to Ankara Communiqué released at the end of the meetings between Somali and Somaliland, 13 April 2013, calls to “consolidate a cooperation on security sector”³, which the establishment the UAE’s military base in Berbera can be inferred. Consequently, it is only this prerogative authority that makes Somalia to remain an active actor in politics of Berbera military base.

Ethiopia (national security, security dilemma)

Ethiopia is a concerned actor in the establishment of military base in Berbera. Geopolitics and security dilemma are two prominent international relations theories to further explain this concern in the study view. Firstly, the seven countries in the Horn of Africa region retain dissimilar military power capabilities, making the scholars to disagree with the exact qualifier of a regional power house. Nonetheless, in the affairs of Somaliland politics, it should be acknowledged that Ethiopia is a pivotal player due to its political, military, and economic collaboration. Currently, Somaliland enjoys commercial, political, and security agreements with the Federal Government of Ethiopia. Somaliland maintains diplomatic presence in Addis Ababa with some degree of diplomatic. Despite Ethiopia’s influence in the Somali stretch, it also projects its military strength to resolve the other regional security issues, serving as a relevant indicator to its “will to lead and influence the region” (Mulugeta, 2014). Since Ethiopia enjoys considerable geopolitics leverage, it is not therefore a surprise to learn Ethiopia is concerned about the proposed military base in Berbera devoid of its prior knowledge and consultation. Similarly, Ethiopia advanced a comparable concern when Emirates established its first military base in Eritrea, though the two political contexts are largely varying.

Secondly, this military bases creates a security dilemma to Ethiopia. What does the security dilemma signify in the realm of international relations? It is a security concept that explains that any security build-up of a state makes the rest of states in a region to compete, which can lead

² Chatham House, Conference Summary: Somaliland’s Place in the World, December 2011. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Africa/1211confsummary.pdf> (Accessed September on 25, 2016).

³ Ankara Communiqué on Somali talks

to a potential regional tension. When an international or regional system faces security dilemma, they are operating in a “condition in which efforts to improve national security have the effect of appearing to threaten other states, thereby provoking military countermoves”, these countermoves can possibly lead into “a net decrease in security for all states” (Griffiths et al., 2008). Any military build-up or additional layer of security arrangements made by a state provokes the rest in the region. When such security event transpires, states had no other choice but to communicate their concern in a diplomatic means. Also, it should be noted that Ethiopia’s diplomatic relations with Somaliland is more trustworthy in many ways, but tackling this security concern permanently remains obligatory to Somaliland. In this view, Somaliland should, therefore, acknowledge Ethiopia’s major concern towards the establishment of military base in Berbera as result of the new security cooperation between Somaliland and the UAE.

The strategic apprehension of Ethiopia cannot be explained solely by the present security development in the region, but we should dive in to the history. Ethiopia has a standing conflict with Egypt on the Nile upper stream waters, and had a historic skirmish with former Somalia. Whereas the latter, both sides employed a harsh propaganda machines by using “folk tales, idioms, poems and proverbs, invariably demonize the other ethnic group” (Mohamed, 2011). The United Arab Emirates and these two states are members of Arab League, which is bound by ties of religion, culture, and blood. Because of these historical and socio-cultural dynamics, Ethiopia’s reservation to an Arab military base in the region is vindicated, though its skeptics to Somaliland is lesser degree than the military facility in Eretria. Accordingly, the UAE’s military base in Berbera might seem a proxy war to Ethiopia where a credible threat is playing on the sound track. Granting that Arabian politics is very diverse, and compete for individual national security interests, nevertheless Ethiopian scholars are cynic about the recent military bases in the Horn. Among them is Zeray Hailemariam, who is arguing that this incursion “can lead into proxy war in the horn of Africa, which is directly security threat to Ethiopia under any circumstances” (Hailemariam, 2016).

In this regard, because of this security apprehension, Somaliland should coin carefully coded diplomatic efforts, and communication to reverse this doubt, in which worrying its major close ally in the region, and powerful neighbor.

Djibouti (Beggart-thy-neighbour)

This monography contemplates that Djibouti is the final state actor in the establishment of military base in Berbera. By contrast to Ethiopia’s apprehension, its concern can be explicitly traced in commercial perspective than security since French provides a “long term security

commitment and guarantee from outside adversaries” (Tertrais, 2009). The economic argument posits that there are two important aspects permitting Djibouti to appeal key international economic powers: Its location in the red sea, and facing the Indian Ocean; and relative peace and security. These two aspects that validate Djibouti as “one of the more important security beachheads in the developing world” which “matters greatly to global commerce and energy, due to its vicinity to the Mandeb Strait and the Suez-Aden canal” (Braude, n.d). Djibouti took these factors for granted. The coastal town of Berbera locates a similar strategic location, and enjoys a relative peace and security, breaking the chain of monopoly. There is also a political squabble between Djibouti and the UAE, which resulted a severed diplomatic relation.

The relations of two states severed to its lowest, leading the UAE to close its consulate and subsequently withdrawing its forces from Djibouti by May 2015; sensing a diplomatic humiliation. The UAE certainly did not confine its reaction just to leave the country, but has instigated successive retaliatory events in the region. The establishment of a military base in the neighboring, the oft-hostile Eretria, is an apparent diplomatic punitive measure. The confrontation shifted to economic sphere, where the UAE made “a retaliatory move as parts of its new economy war...[and] established a significant trade relations with the landlocked Ethiopia in an attempt to sway it from Djibouti’s port to use its new \$442 million investment platform of Berbera port (Mwaura and Muse, 2017). So far, there has never been an explicit retaliatory act from Djibouti, but its public diplomacy towards Berbera military base is felt inducing to Beggar thy neighbour policy approach.

Political actors

Oppositions groups (Political, involving war in Yemen)

Although very nascent, the political parties in Somaliland have thus far performed a critical function in the country which includes keeping the government in control, providing check and balance to the incumbent government. As commanded in the constitution, parties “play a vital role in the market place of political ideas and programmes” (SONSAF, 2011); these political programmes include tabling an alternative policy options once government undertakings are perceived contrary to the national interest. Berbera military base is another UAE-sponsored investment which is received a contrasting stand point between the government⁴, and UCID⁵ party on a side, and Waddani⁶ party on the other

⁴ The Government also implies the views of Kulmiye ruling party

⁵ UCID party is one of the three political parties in Somaliland which stands for Justice and welfare party

side. Since UCID shares a similar view with the government, the study shall move forward to discuss the dismissal of Waddani towards the military base. To understand Waddani's refutation on military base. First, it is imperative to acknowledge that Somaliland is going through a cycle of presidential election, scheduled on November, 2017. Thus, the interest of this opposition party is both implicit, and explicit in nature. It is so grim to infer a complete scene solely from its public political speeches. Nevertheless, these public speeches are expedient to understanding the explicit interests, expressing voluminous worries on possibility unintended results from the War in Yemen, should Somaliland intermingle the fire in Yemen. In this view, their primary interest is prevention of conflict. This assertion can ostensibly be warranted from the recent speeches made by its presidential candidate, and the party leader in numerous occasions.

Social actors

Social actors, such as business community, media outlets, and community leaders, among other, are deemed as other relevant actors in Berbera basing politics. In democratic states, media outlets are charged with the responsibility to produce news items and editorial notes on hot political, and social agendas that are making the headlines of the day. In this regard, the media outlets are interested in revealing the backend workings (discussions on the negotiations) in a real time to satisfy their customers, the public audience. Clan elders are among the social actors who made the news since the start of the Berbera basing politics, but their apprehension is dissimilar to the media passages because their concern rests on the potential social risks that come with foreign forces. It is worthy noting that other clan elders gave a welcoming expression to the military base in Berbera, citing social and economic opportunities. In communicating their concern, religious leaders, civil society members, and business actors are not forthcoming; they usually advance their apprehension through different means of communication, perhaps via the back-door channel than through public.

Others (UN, Traditional Donors)

United Nations

Somaliland situates a volatile region that has been ravaged by serious of insecurity, piracy, and terrorism incidents. In addition, the United Nations (UN) imposed an open-ended arms embargo on Somalia since 1992 to react to the ongoing conflict and deteriorating humanitarian situation. And Somaliland includes the

⁶ Waddani is one of the three political parties in Somaliland, which stands for Somaliland National Party

coverage of this UN resolution. Specifically, the UN resolution on arms embargo (2002) explicitly "prohibits the direct or indirect supply to Somalia of technical advice, financial and other assistance, and training related to military activities" (Council, 2002); this resolution has been extended to 15 November 2017⁹. Technically, the UAE's military base in Berbera contravenes this very UN Security Council resolution (UNSC). The UN monitoring group on Somalia and Eritrea will report to the UNSC, though the tone of the report will depend on UAE's maneuvering, and influence on the council.

Traditional donors

European Union, United Kingdom, United States, and many other European countries had been supporting Somaliland from many fronts since its inception; supports that are ranging from humanitarian to development to law enforcement trajectories, and are recently dubbed as the traditional donors as result of Turkish and Arabian involvement in the Somaliland politics. Although Andrew Allen, the UK deputy ambassador for Somalia, stated that the military base in Berbera "is not a UK issue" (Allen, 2017); however, since traditional donor were Somaliland friends during the tough times, they should be diplomatically engaged once such new security development emerges.

PROPHECY TO RISKS

The decision to grant an access right to a foreign military personnel leads to a profound impact to the country's future as well as foreign policy architect, and goals. In the study opinion, the military base agreement with United Arab Emirates is a relevant subject, which citizens, scholars, and politicians should converse about its potential unintended risks in a frank manner. Scholars in the realm of international affairs argue that "long-term presence of a country in a host state can result in political, environmental and social problems" (Lersch and Sarti, 2014)¹⁰. In this view of this claim, this paper tends to discourse some of these risks in the context of Somaliland in general, and Berbera port city in particular.

Security risk

Security is a risk factor that warrants attention. It is viewed that the UAE military base in Berbera will attract a response from some of the warring functions in Yemen,

⁹ UN Security Council. "Security Council Extends Arms Embargoes on Somalia and Eritrea" Adopting Resolution 2317 (2016). (2016) <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12584.doc.htm> (accessed April 7, 2017)

¹⁰ Further explanation "The establishment of foreign military bases and the international distribution of power" has been captured in page 96

particularly the Houthis, which can lead to a domestic insecurity. This concern is repeatedly advanced by Waddani opposition party and other independent politicians. It also poses regional security risk since the establishment of military base is an act that triggers an increased military build-up. Theoretically, the basing agreement poses a security dilemma to the neighbouring state(s), which is a “condition in which efforts to improve national security have the effect of appearing to threaten other states, thereby provoking military countermeasures” which can lead “a net decrease in security for all states” (Griffiths et al., 2008)¹¹. Any military build-up or additional layer of security arrangements made by a state provokes the rest of states in the region, by fact. It should be noted that Ethiopia’s diplomatic relations with Somaliland is more trustworthy in many ways, but security concern remains legitimate because the perceived common interest between Somaliland and Ethiopia is neither fixed nor uniform. We should, therefore, realize Ethiopia’s major concern towards the establishment of military base in Berbera, resulted by the new security cooperation between Somaliland and the United Arab Emirate.

Social risk

Sexual violence committed by foreign soldiers is a tormenting concern in areas where military bases are built and Berbera inhabitants are in no way different to living with this apprehension. Thus, the sexual violence alone does not induce this anxiety. The aftermath of sexual assault is devastating as well, resulting in a proud impact on victims’ physical, psychological, and social wellbeing. Consequently, the result of such acts may attract domestic and international spotlights, further causing unintended results to both parties in the agreement. The uproar caused by such in a US military base personnel in Japan is a case in point.

Political risk

When military base is negotiated during blistering political seasons, it creates a domestic political uproar immediately. In facts, some scholars in basing politics strongly argue that it “can bring political instability to the region in question” (Griffiths et al., 2008). Such instability emanates from two sources: Domestic, and regional. Put it simply, the domestic political subjects are currently feeling hard-hitting political pain due to the coming elections, which is scheduled to take place by end of 2017. Throughout this period, any military, political, and economic agreement that carries a sort of incentives raises an eyebrow. The opposition groups trust that

Berbera military base agreement will impose a foreign backed, undue incentive to the incumbent ruling party, which can lead to unnecessary domestic political unrest.

Environmental risk

A final risk that military base may pose in the host country is environmental deprecation. These environmental concerns include pollution and health hazards, which emanate from field exercises; including live firing and testing of conventional weapons both on the land and in the sea adversely impact living species. In other words, contamination of local inhabitant can lead to severe social tumults, which usually lead a “strain relations with the host country when its citizens are affected” (Myers, 2010). The military base in Berbera involves both naval and air operation that can lead adverse impact on oceanic and ground environment.

SCENARIOS FOR USE

As explained above, this military base will be used in any of the following four scenarios, depending on the circumstances:

1. In the long run, Berbera military base might be used to maintain the UAE’s military capability to intervention any contingency in the waters of red sea and Indian Ocean;
2. Conflict in Yemen explains the short run objective of this facility; thus, this base may serve to facilitate both air, and naval strikes to the anti-peace elements in the south of Yemen, the Houthis to be very specific to date;
3. This base may serve to secure an alternative route for Emirates’ products to Asia market in case Iran closes the Strait of Hormuz. The UAE is an immediate beneficiary of the Iran controlled Strait of Hormuz to export its oil supplies. Any exacerbation of ongoing dispute (mainly between UAE and Iran) can lead Iran to closure of the strip; thus, causing severe economic mishap to Emiratis. Since the closure of Hormuz is economically nerve-touching, Emiratis is forced think beyond the horizon. A safe passage to the Indian Ocean via the Red Sea is an obvious alternative for Emiratis, but requires a heavy security and protection due to the insecure nature of this region. Hence, establishment military base in Berbera is best suited for this purpose, and able to secure commercial and economic interests in the water of India Ocean.
4. Wide-ranging war with its adversaries in the region, including terrorists and pirates. As clearly stipulated in its foreign policy goals, the UAE is committed to “eliminate terrorism in all its forms and diminish all its resources” (UAE, n.d), and acts of piracy that are threat to global peace and security. Therefore, it is difficult to rule out the military base in Berbera would be used to achieve this foreign policy goal.

¹¹ Security dilemma can be further read in *International Relations: The Key Concepts, 2nd Ed.* P. 295

CONCLUSION

Berbera basing politics is a complex and multifaceted question in the field of international relations. What makes the subject more complex is the multiplicity of the involved actors as well as the diversity of interests pursued during the negotiation processes. Ensuring national security, avoidance of regional conflict, economic competition, political influence, and securing market development packages are among the immediate interests which are heavily protected by the predominant six actors are trying to protect. Somaliland and the UAE are the primary actors in Berbera basing politics game. Granting access right to foreign forward forces has a profound influence to the hosting country's foreign policy architecture since it poses political, environmental and social risks.

Based on those risks, Somaliland should: (a) Negotiate the terms of the basing agreement more carefully, and inclusively to circumvent domestic political and social pressures. In other words, Somaliland needs the negotiation process conclude slowly, and naturally; (b) Technical experts including environmentalist should be concluded in the negotiations started by senior politicians; (c) Involvement of military personnel is imperative and finally (d) For the sustainability purpose, the negotiating need to focus on trade agreement via investment, and penetration of Emirates market.

Military base entails negotiation of two states in the realm of international law through Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), or Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs). Although the framework of the agreement is customized to the context; however, the generic nature of SOFAs, including content, and its approval process mirrors the draft military base agreement that was recently presented to the houses of the parliament. Technically, Somaliland is part of the current Federal Republic of Somalia, but on the other hand, its as a sovereign state under international law as it fulfills the entire statehood standards and the criteria set out in the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States. This convention forms the basis of Somaliland cause to statehood, at least from international law perspective.

Establishment of military bases in a foreign soil is not a new phenomenon which its footprints can be traced back to ancient Greece and its city states. Politically, the presence of foreign forward forces pleases the attention of domestic, regional, and international controversies particularly when its connected to ongoing hostility, like the current situation in Yemen, for which the Emirates are planning to use for Berbera military base. Geographically, the location of Berbera supersedes the other coastal towns in the region since it is a sheltered harbour, with deep water. And, to satisfy the UAE's immediate and long-term interests, it is also facing the southern side of the Gulf of Aden, which is adding to its strategic

importance. Moreover, it is very close to the commercial, and oil shipping lanes, allowing the great powers to monitor the sea line traffic in the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, and Horn Africa. It is only this strategic signification that attracted USSR, USA, and now the Emirates.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

The political economy of recession in Nigeria's fourth republic

Monday E. Dickson^{1*} and Gerald E. Ezirim²

¹Department of Political Science, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus Nigeria.

²Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria.

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In recent times, an exceptionally large and virulent recession engulfed the Nigerian State that had for the previous two and half decades experienced sustained growth at unprecedented levels. The causes as well as sense of threat and uncertainty induced by the crisis have been differently interpreted, particularly from the macro-economic, leadership and strategic standpoints. This paper offers a political economy explanation of recession in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The study adopts the descriptive/qualitative research technique to probe the following questions: What are the factors responsible for the crisis? What is the relationship between the structure of the Nigerian State and recession? How may recession be checked? The paper argues that recession expresses the capitalist nature of the Nigeria State. Moreover, lack of political will of the successive governments to save, corruption, mismanagement and overdependence on oil earnings, among other, are the factors that instigated the recession. The study recommends substantial structural reforms that will overthrow the system that serves the narrow interests of the capitalists class rather than people. There is also the need to diversify the nation's economy, particularly investing on the non-oil sector such as manufacturing and agriculture production.

Key words: Nigeria, recession, gross domestic product, corruption, fourth republic, crude oil earnings.

INTRODUCTION

For more than three and half decades, barely would a year pass without reports of dire economic crisis in many countries of the world, particularly in the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, China, India, Brazil and Asian countries. The global economic crisis has been accompanied by recession of several magnitudes in the affected nations. Consequently, in the past decades, for instance, in the 1990s and early 2000s, recessions have occurred simultaneously in advanced economies several

times (Claessens and Kose, 2009). According to Mazurek and Mielcova (2013), the Asian financial crisis which began in July, 1997 in Thailand following the drop in the value of the Thai currency, and spread around Southeast Asia and Japan, with Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea being the most affected countries is the case in point. On a separate note, Goldstein (1998) and Turner (2011) asserts that "the causes of the crisis were financial-sector weakness in Asian emerging economies

E-mail: mondaysdickson@aksu.edu.ng

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with easy global liquidity conditions and mounting concerns about external-sector problems". This was, however, followed by the global financial crisis, sometimes referred to as 'Great Recession' which started in the United States of America during the summer of 2007 by a liquidity shortfall in the US banking system. As Mazurek and Mielcova (2013) further noted, "the trigger of the crisis was a collapse of US housing boom that led to the fall of large financial institutions or its bailout by national governments, and to large share drops around the world". Therefore, as Gurtner (2010) perceptively observed, "the causes of the global financial crisis are to be found in the financial and economic policies of the developed countries, primarily the United States".

Paradoxically, for the majority of the Third World countries (TWCs), particularly African nations, economic records in the early 1990s were worse than in the 1970s and 1980s. With very few exceptions, their difficulties have been intensified to a level where it is impossible to write off economic 'crisis' among these countries. Consequently, as Ihonvbere and Turner (1993) puts it, "there has been severe social, as well as economic crisis owing to political instability, widespread use of political power for individual gain", increasing incidence of corruption, as well as poor economic policy formulation, implementation and performance (Overseas Development Institute, 1982). Therefore, according to Rwelamila (2012), "the late 1990s and the early 2000s were periods of stagnating incomes, declining employment and deteriorating poverty for several Third World countries". At the core of the predicament was an inevitable economic decline, a drop in per capita income, among other problems, which culminated in the inability of many countries even to feed their people and meet other basic human needs (Thiboutot, 2004: 16).

In the later part of Nigeria's Fourth Republic, no phenomenon has been more central to the practice and understanding of politics than recession. In fact, economic recession and its cataclysmic effects has become the major subject of discussion and debates among scholars, writers, and diplomats within and beyond the shores of the nation. Interestingly, in the third quarter of 2016, the Federal Government made an open declaration that Nigerian economy was in recession. Specifically, the Minister of Finance, Mrs. Kemi Adeosun while speaking on the nation's economy and the implementation of the 2016 Appropriation Act explained this more poignantly by asserting that "technically, our (Nigeria's) economy for now is in recession because if you go into two quarters of negative growth, your economy can be said to be in recession. Thus, technically, Nigeria is in recession" (Adebayo, 2016; Inokotong and Salami, 2016). Similarly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) posit that the Nigerian State had in recent times plunged into its worst recession, and raised projections for the nations' economic growth by 0.8% in 2017 and 2.3% in 2018 (Noko, 2016; Ikeke, 2017).

Ever since the crisis erupted, an increasing number of scholars, writers, and practitioners have interpreted and commented on the subject differently, particularly from the macroeconomics, leadership and strategic standpoints. This paper, therefore, offers political economy explanation of economic recession in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The purpose is to unravel the causes or factors responsible for the crisis, analyzing its consequences and make recession prediction as well as policy prescriptions.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

Conceptual framework

Although the term "recession" or "economic recession" has been differently defined and interpreted, Claessens and Kose (2009; 2012), however, noted that there is general recognition that the term refers to a period of decline in economic activity. In practical terms, recession is a period of time when a nation's gross domestic product (GDP) declines for at least two consecutive quarters in a quarter-to-quarter comparison (Mazurek and Mielcova, 2013). This implies that if an economy grows by 2% in one quarter and then contracts by 0.5% in each of the next two quarters, it is deemed to be in recession. Although this definition, which was first suggested by Julius Shiskin (1974) is instructive, it has two weaknesses. First, the "two-quarters" rule is flawed. Judgement should be made based on monthly data of economic activity such as industrial production, employment, real income and wholesale and retail trade. Second, the focus on GDP alone is narrow. GDP figures themselves can be misleading owing to the fact that they are subject to large revisions (*The Economist*, 2008). Therefore, according to Claessens and Kose (2009), it is often better to consider a wider set of measures of economic activity to determine whether a country is indeed suffering a recession.

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), a prominent economic research organization in the United States put forward a working definition of what constitute a recession. The NBER (2010) defines a recession as when "a significant decline in economic activity spreads across the economy, lasting more than a few months to more than a year, normally visible in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, real personal income, employment (non-farm payrolls), industrial production and wholesale-retail sales". The NBER's definition has, been criticized along a number of lines. According to Knoop (2015: 14), the first problem with the definition is that a lag exists between getting data and making decisions. Output must be falling for at least "a few months" before the NBER will declare a recession. In practice, the economy has typically been in a recession for at least six months before it has been officially recognized as one by the NBER. For example, the recession that began in the United States in December 2007 was actually not recognized as such by

the NBER until December 2008, a full year after it began. This recognition lag might delay a policy response until it is too late to be effective. The second criticism is that the definition ignores growth recessions, or periods of positive but below-average growth. The problem here, according to Knoop (2015: 14) is that a period of growth that is below trend, or the long-run average GDP growth rate, is generally regarded as a recession by the public but not technically considered a recession by economists. For example, economists timed the end of the global financial crisis as occurring in June 2009, but the vast majority of the public considered the United States to be in recession until well into 2012 because of real GDP growth, while positive, was weaker than trend.

As argued by Tule et al. (2012), recession is a business cycle contraction where there is decline in certain macroeconomic indicators such as the GDP. As put by Leamer (2009), "GDP is the market value of all legitimately recognized final goods and services produced in the country in a given period of time, usually a year". It is one of the most comprehensive and closely watched economic statistics. In the United States, for instance, it is used severally by the White House and Congress to prepare the Federal budget; by the Federal Reserve to formulate monetary policy; by Wall Street as an indicator of economic activity; and by the business community to prepare forecasts of economic performance that provide the basis for production, investment, and employment planning (Pritzker et al., 2015). Therefore, GDP is one of the primary indicators used by economists to determine whether an economy is in a recession or not.

From the standpoint of Mazurek and Mielcova (2013), recessions are often described by adjectives such as 'strong', 'big' or 'severe'. They, however, identify four classes of recessions, namely, minor recession, major recession, severe recession and ultra-recession. According to them, minor recession refers to the mildest recession with smaller magnitude. This category typically last for only two or three quarters and mean quarterly GDP decline is up to about 1.5%. Examples are the recessions that occurred in USA between 1969 and 1970; Japan in 2001 and Sweden in 2008. Major recessions are economic events, often on the global scale. They lasted from 2 to 4 quarters with mean quarterly GDP growth rates decline between 1 and 3%. Severe recessions constitute a large-scale economic downturn and typically lasted for 1 to 2 years with mean quarterly GDP growth rates decline from 3 to 5%. The extreme recession category is ultra-recession in which GDP falls by 30% or more as compared to the levels prior to a recession and last for several years (Mazurek and Mielcova, 2013).

Theoretical framework

Ever before and after the two major global financial crisis, the Great Depression (1929-1933) and Great Recession

(2007-2009), a number of theories have existed that elucidated the thinking of early scholars and writers on the causes of economic fluctuations and recessions. These include the early agricultural theories such as the sunspot theory developed by Jevons (1884), the cobweb theory by Ezekial (1938) and the Malthusian theory (1798). Others are the early monetary theories espoused by Hawtrey (1913), the under consumption theory by John A. Hobson, the Marxist theory developed by Karl Marx, the profit margin theories and the early investment theories traced to Mitchell (1927) and Wicksell (1936), among others. For the purpose of this study, the underconsumption and the Marxist theories are germane. Hobson argues that the very unequal distribution of income and wealth in the capitalist countries made the poor not to consume much. This in turn forced capitalists to invest their capital abroad and to compete with others to control foreign market, thereby stifling the domestic economy and causing subsequent drop in the GDP (Russett et al., 2010: 203). Consequently, Hobson worried that growth in the production of goods within an economy would outpace the growth rate of consumption. Without adequate aggregate demand to absorb these goods, the resulting chronic overproduction would threaten future economic prosperity and create business cycles.

A pertinent question therefore, is: Why would consumption growth be unable to keep pace with production growth? Hobson's underconsumption model focused on the fact that households save a larger share of their income as their income rises. As aggregate income in a country increases over time, the average propensity to consume (consumption divided by income) falls and the gap between aggregate income and total consumption increases. For a while, this gap can be filled with higher levels of investment. However, over time, this increased investment will only aggravate the excess supply of goods and reduce the average propensity to consume even further. Increasingly, large excess supplies of goods will eventually necessitate cuts in production and a decrease in aggregate income. This recession leads to a rise in the average propensity to consume, eventually causing the problem of excess supply to disappear for a while. The Keynesian economics corroborate the above viewpoint by positing that unregulated private markets inevitably yield price movements that react back on the decisions of businesses, workers, and consumers to produce out-of-control price spirals. These periodically push the economy into inflations, recessions, or even depressions (Resnick and Wolff, 2011).

Similarly, the Marxist theory which focuses on the dynamics of capitalist economies rests on physical capital accumulation which spurred greater productivity, all in the relentless pursuit of more profit. According to Karl Marx, this accumulation, however, created greater wealth and income, albeit unequally shared between bourgeoisies or the capitalist class and the proletariats also known as the working class (Cypher and Dietz, 2009: 127). Obviously,

the capitalist class appropriated a disproportionate share of society's total income solely by their "virtue" of being the owners of the means of production while the disenfranchised working class would gain very little from what they laboured for. Marx's, therefore, theorized that excess capital accumulation over time would reduce the profitability of businesses, leading to periodic business failures and economic contractions. Marx and other Marxist scholars blamed the falling purchasing power of workers that results from the inequality inevitably created by capitalism. Thus, as the purchasing power of most of the population falls relative to the size of aggregate output, persistent and destabilizing excess supply will occur (Knoop, 2015).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study is basically descriptive and qualitative. The descriptive method tries to unravel the major elements and characteristics of recession in Nigeria, while qualitative method is used to gain a variety of insights so as to discover and identify decision problems and opportunities. The study relies heavily on the use of secondary sources, particularly documentary evidence, records from government agencies, interview reports, books, journal articles conference papers and other relevant materials derived from the Internet. The data were analysed qualitatively using the narrative analysis technique.

Nigeria's economy before and after the fourth republic

Before the discovery of oil in 1956, Nigeria's economy was essentially agrarian through which agricultural produce such as cash crops were exported, thus making the nation a major exporter in that respect. Olorunfemi and Adesina (cited in Akpan 2012) observed that "agriculture assumed the mainstay of Nigeria's economy in the decade spanning 1960 and 1970s, when it was nationally reckoned and utilized as the major income earner for both the people and the government". Thus, agricultural sector offered, amongst other things, vast opportunities and employed over seventy per cent of the Nigerian labour force; provided the basic food requirements for the country with the population of over one hundred and thirty million people; and provided raw materials for local industries. Moreover, exportation of the agricultural products helped Nigerian in taking giant strides towards her economic growth; thereby culminating in development of sites and structures particularly in the health and educational sector. In the view of Monye-Emina (2009), the role of agriculture can also be conceived in terms of its contributions to the process of economic development. Thirlwall (1999: 128) classified the contributions in terms of product, factor, market and foreign exchange.

However, following the discovery of crude oil in the late 1950s, petroleum production and export play a dominant role in Nigeria's economy and account for about 90% of the nation's gross earnings (Oduлару 2007). Put differently, upon the discovery of crude oil and its subsequent exportation, there was a boom on the economy of Nigeria as it accounted for over 90% (90%) of the country's foreign exchange earnings. Furthermore, the emergence of petroleum oil production in the 1970s significantly altered the structure of the Nigerian economy and consequently led to a new political-economic orientation as national wealth was expanded with new opportunities for rent-seeking behaviours (Akpan 2012). Evidently, between 1958 - when crude oil exploration and exploitation began and 1966, Nigeria earned N140 million from crude oil; 1967 to 1975, the General

Yakubu Gowon got about N11.03 billion; while the late General Murtala Mohammed/Olusegun Obasanjo military regime scooped about N25 billion from 1975-1979. In like manner, the civilian administration of President Shehu Shagari earned N36 billion oil money; Buhari, in his first coming as Military Head of State (1984-85), earned about N25 billion; General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, 1985 to 1993, N420 billion; the Ernest Shonekan/Abacha regime (1993-1998), N1.6 trillion; and General Abdulsalami Abubakar regime (1998-1999), N350 billion (Ndujihe, 2016).

The reality of the situation is that, despite the huge earnings since 1958, there has been little or no development as well as improvement on the welfare of the citizenry, especially the people of the oil-producing areas, whose environment – land, water and air, has been adversely contaminated and, in many cases, devastated and polluted. Consequently, the country's situation generally remains persistently precarious. The economy remains in dire need of reflection to boost consumer aggregate demand and overall productivity. The labour market remains a serious threat and external debt service remained high and unsustainable. The *Economic Report* entitled: *Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Economy and Opportunities beyond Politics* published by Coronation Capital asserts that: The Nigeria's economy before the beginning of the Fourth Republic was in a parlous state. Real incomes had been falling since 1979. The budget deficit was unsustainable. Inflation was high and at risk of escalating into a hyperinflationary spiral. Physical infrastructure was grossly inadequate and economic policy had been incoherent and contradictory for years. The country was in default on the vast majority of its external debt, accruing penalty interest at an alarming rate. Nigeria was internationally isolated, having been suspended from the Commonwealth in 1995, and senior government figures were subject to international sanctions. There were genuine fears in the international community that Nigeria was heading down the path taken by failed African States – becoming a West African Democratic Republic of Congo, or Somalia (*Economic Report* n.d).

The above viewpoint implies that Nigeria's economic growth during the period preceding the Fourth Republic was marred by a number of both internal and external as well as economic and political factors. However, Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999, ending a 16-year period of military rule. During the period, Nigeria emerged on the international stage as the largest economy in Africa. Evidently, in 1999, the US\$36bn Nigerian economy ranked 5th in Africa. By 2013, the economy had expanded to US\$522bn, and emerged as the largest economy in Africa, with a US\$122bn gap between her size and the second largest economy on the African continent. In that period also, the economy became more resilient, until recession sets-in in the second quarter of 2016 (Aig-Imoukhuede, n.d).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Several reasons, particularly internal and external factors have been identified as forces usually responsible for recession. The internal factors are as a result of conflict of ideas, misapplication of economic theory and regulatory negligence or policy inconsistency, desire to pursue development without due consideration of economic fundamentals, corruption, and structural as well as policy distortions (Wong, 1999; Corsetti et al., 1999). Other factors are the overheating of private sector and excessive investments in real-estate with non-commensurate returns. The external causes of recession have to do with factors that are exogenous to the economy over which policy makers have little or no control. These include

Table 1. Crude oil earnings by successive administration in Nigeria's fourth republic.

S/N	Period (in Years)	Leader (President)	Amount
1.	1999-2007	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	₦ 27 trillion
2.	2007-2010	Alhaji Umaru M. Yar'Adua	₦ 9 trillion
3.	2010-2015	Dr. Goodluck E. Johnathan	₦ 51 trillion
4.	2015-2016	President Muhammadu Buhari	₦ 6 trillion
	Total	=	₦ 93 trillion

Source: Ndujihe, 2016.

factors such as natural disaster, climate change, revolution, wars and international price shock for product from mono-economy. The neoclassical economists are of the view that State interference in the market, labour union, monopolies and technological shocks are external causes of recession. To another group, negative demand and supply shocks as well as deflationary macro-economic policies are the main causes of recession. The negative demand-side shocks that affect the aggregate demand works through a global economic slowdown that impacts major trading partners of a country.

In the case of Nigeria, when there is economic slowdown in US, China, India and EU, it could have negative impact on the demand of Nigerian crude oil from these countries. As a result, government's revenue and spending will drop, taxes will rise, disposable income will fall and aggregate demand will fall, adversely impacting the production of goods and services, thus triggering economic recession (Tule et al., 2012). Orode (2016) argued that the reasons why countries enter into a recession depend on the economic framework of that country. He identified high interest rates, increased inflation, and reduced real wages as factors which could be responsible for the cause of a recession in a nation's economy. For him, economic recession in Nigeria's could have been triggered by a dip in government revenues and/or a drop in consumer spending, and drop in oil prices. Similarly, as pointed out by Abdullahi (2016), the major factors responsible for the current economic recession in Nigeria are: falling oil price in the international market; inheritance of empty treasury from the former regime of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan; global economic slowdown; the burden of political transition; delay in signing and implementation of 2016 budget; poor revenues and declining earnings and insecurity and violence. From the standpoint of Ekong (2016: 23-24), issues that instigated Nigeria's economic recession are more of structural than monetary or fiscal. According to him, the causes are: unwillingness by the previous governments to save when the country was earning so much from its export; severe drop in the prices of crude oil; drastic drop in food production for domestic consumption as a result of insurgent activities of Boko Haram militants in the North Eastern part of the country; corruption occasioned by stealing and misappropriation of public assets, etc. These reasons, particularly the ones

relevant to the focus of this study deserve brief explanation.

The first is unwillingness of the previous government to save or what the erstwhile Minister of Finance Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala describe as zero political will of the immediate (President Goodluck Jonathan) administration to save for the rainy day (Aziken, 2016). With the return to civil rule in 1999, the nation's earning from crude oil had increased exponentially. Table 1 shows crude oil earnings by successive administration in the Fourth Republic.

From Table 1, it is clear that between 1999 and 2016, Nigeria had realised a total of ₦93 trillion (ninety three trillion naira) from the sales of crude oil. Out of this, President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration got about ₦27 trillion between May 1999 and May 2007. His successor, Umaru Yar' Adua, reaped about ₦9 trillion in his almost three-year rule before he passed on. President Goodluck Jonathan's administration in five years, between 2010 and 2015, earned about ₦51 trillion from petroleum resources. Between May 29, 2015 and 2016, the President Buhari's administration was able to earn just about ₦6 trillion from crude oil (Ndujihe 2016). Evidently, previous governments were unwilling to save, particularly when the country was earning so much from its export product. Consequently, Nigeria's saving culture, or rather lack of it, has been responsible for recession in Nigeria. This study notes that the system which encourages reckless spending has long been in place and the outcome is a recession.

The second reason is the nation's overdependence on oil resources as well as severe drop in oil price. As earlier indicated, since the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in Nigeria in 1956 and the subsequent oil boom of 1970s, oil has dominated the economy of the country. Oil accounts for more than 90% of the country's exports, 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 80% of government total revenues. As a result, the economy of the country has been substantially unstable, a consequence of the heavy dependence on oil revenue, and the volatility in prices (Amuche, 2016). The negative effect of overdependence on oil revenue is currently being felt with current recession. Like most of its oil-producing counterparts around the world, Nigeria's economy was hit hard by the recent global fall in oil price (Musawa, 2016). Consequently, in 2016, the country's second quarter GDP

Table 2. Nigeria's historical real GDP growth rate in the fourth republic.

S/N	Year	Growth rate (in %)
1	1999	0.52
2	2000	5.52
3	2001	6.67
4	2002	14.60
5	2003	9.50
6	2004	10.44
7	2005	7.01
8	2006	6.73
9	2007	7.32
10	2008	7.20
11	2009	8.35
12	2010	7.98
13	2011	7.36
14	2012	4.21
15	2013	5.49
16	2014	6.22
17	2015	2.79
18	2016	-1.51

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2016. Retrieved from: nairametrics.com/nigerias-gdp-growth-rate-1960-2015/ on April 13, 2017

fell by more than 2% after it had fallen by 0.4% in the first quarter.

From table 2, it is interesting to note that the last time the Nigerian economy grew below 1% was in 1999, a few months after the return of democracy in May, 1999. However, Nigeria's GDP, which measures the worth of the nations' economic activities crashed to its lowest between 2015 and 2016 culminating in the recession. Of note, the views that current recession in Nigeria is triggered by severe drop in oil price has been countered by Sanusi (2016) who argued that an economy cannot be in a recession, because of the collapse in oil price. According to him, a nation cannot be in recession, because a sector that is 15% of its GDP has declined". He attributed the cause of recession to the nation's insensitivity to reserve and misappropriation of money which should have been injected to the economy.

The third reason advanced by pundits as the cause of Nigeria's recession is massive corruption perpetrated under past leaders and occasioned by stealing and misappropriation or misallocation of public assets. According to Magu (cited in Obia, 2017), the economic recession is caused by corruption. About 90% of the cause of recession is corruption, because there was fund and people stole the funds and kept them where they cannot be reached. ...if a sizable part of the funds looted from the public treasury in Nigeria were recovered, the country would be out of recession within a short period. If we can

lay hands on this hidden wealth, we will not stay for more than three months in this recession. It is sufficient for us to get out of economic recession.

It is important to note that since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, major cases of corruption has been established against former State governors and other public officials. These include embezzlement of over N15 billion public funds by Abdullahi Adamu and 18 others; embezzlement of N52 billion by the former Gombe State Governor, Senator Danjuma Goje and four others; N9 billion fraud by Bukola Saraki; Criminal diversion of public funds in excess of N5 billion by former governor of Abia State, Orji Uzor Kalu and embezzlement of N1.3 billion by the former Taraba State Governor Rev. Jolly Nyame. The former Jigawa State Governor, Saminu Turaki was docked for allegedly stolen about N36 billion from the treasury over an eight- year period. Others are the Maina Pension Scam involving N195 billion; the kerosene subsidy scam in which kerosene, was supposed to be sold for N50 to consumer, but sold for between N100 and N120 per litre; the Police Pension Fund Fraud involving five people, including former Director of Police Pension Fund, Esai Dangabar, accused of misusing N32.8billion (Punch, 2015; Kanayor, n.d).

The most monumental and contentious corruption cases in recent times are the N255 million armoured car scandal involving former Aviation Minister, Stella Oduah; and the missing N20 billion Naira oil money monthly, where the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Lamido Sanusi, alleged that the NNPC failed to remit billions of naira in oil proceeds to the State. This caused a huge rift between the CBN governor and President Goodluck Jonathan, leading to the President suspending Mr. Sanusi from office and its subsequent retirement; \$2.1 billion (₦546 trillion) arms fund involving Sambo Dasuki; the alleged diversion by the former EFCC boss Ibrahim Lamorde of the sum of ₦1 trillion proceeds recovered by EFCC; ₦2.6 billion scam involving the former Director-General of NIMASA, Patrick Akpobolokemi; ₦6 billion bribe to christian leaders and illegal diversion of \$322 million (₦83.72 billion) Abacha's loot against ex-president Goodluck Jonathan and Ngozi Okono-Iweala (Tell, 2015; Olufemi et al., 2015; Greennews, 2016). This paper noted that corruption has far-reaching consequences on the overall development of the Nigerian nation.

Conclusion and policy recommendations

From the analysis of this study, it is crystal clear that issues that instigated recession in Nigeria's Fourth Republic are more of structural than of monetary or fiscal. The Nigeria State is a modern society in which the mode of production is capitalist oriented. Thus, as observed by the Marxist scholars, the unequal distribution of wealth and the quest by the capitalist class to control public assets have led to intensified rent-seeking behaviours among the elite and political class culminating in the emergence of class

structured society in which accumulation of wealth moved hand in hand with competition and the struggle for power. Moreover, the paper demonstrates how concrete aspects of Nigerian economic history, lack of political will of the successive governments, economic mismanagement and endemic corruption in the system and overdependence on oil, among other factors snowballed the nation's economy into present recession. Substantial structural reforms aimed at altering the course of the nation's economic system so that it serves the people rather than narrow interests of the capitalist class is a *desideratum*. There is also the need to diversify the nation's economy, particularly the development of agriculture and other non-oil sector exports.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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The background of the entire page is a vintage-style map of Africa, rendered in warm, sepia-toned colors. A magnifying glass is positioned over the continent of Africa, with its lens centered on the continent. The map shows various geographical features like rivers and coastlines. The overall aesthetic is historical and academic.

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