

Review

A comparative analysis of the post-colonial culture and democratization processes in Kenya and Zimbabwe to 2012

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During the past four decades, no international political phenomenon has been more significant than the worldwide call and expansion of democratic governance. Holding elections in almost all of Africa has turned out to be a norm. Clearly observable has been a gradual evolution of democratic institutions and consolidation of democratic practices. The prospects for fostering democracy in Kenya and Zimbabwe have taken domestic and foreign - induced efforts. The basis of comparison between the two countries appears evident and tempting in a number of ways. Diagnoses of the causes of Kenya and Zimbabwe's ailments might vary spectacularly but human rights activists have accused the governments of bullying opponents in the name of preventing enemies of the state from destabilizing the nations. The presidency continued to acquire too much power. The fear that an iron grip was slowly being applied to the nations led to a steady stream of criticism of the governments with intellectuals, professionals and the churches being vocal in condemning what they felt was an erosion of human rights. A political culture which encapsulates violence, intimidation and detention of the opposition, manipulation of both the constitution and electoral processes in favour of incumbents ultimately leading towards the consolidation of dictatorial tendencies emerges from analyzing the trends of these two countries. Even though the political experiences have not all been the same, commonalities have existed.

Key words: Political culture, democracy, democratization, election, constitution.

INTRODUCTION

Kenya and Zimbabwe's authoritarian states appear geared for a tortuous regime change towards democratization. Even though the urge to democratize across Africa is far from uniform; Kenyan and Zimbabwean citizens have come out in full support of elections even when they are disappointed by the processes that will have evolved. According to the Freedom House Index,

Kenya was placed in the category of the countries which had moved from 'Not Free' to 'Partly Free'. 'Partly free' also arguably describes the position of Zimbabwe where some democratic attributes exist in the midst of democratic flaws where power is confined in the hands of well established elites.

Zimbabwe and Kenya have had elections, but have not

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managed to consolidate democracy by developing a robust set of those institutions that normally support a free society. While electoral competition seems a given, the citizens cannot be certain that the next electoral cycle will be fair and, critically, that those elected will leave power peacefully at some future date. Kenya and Zimbabwe's transitions to democracy, even though analysed within chronologically different historical contexts were primarily rooted in the countries' history of struggle against colonialism and post-colonial misrule. Maunganidze (2009) aptly observed that a new phenomenon that saw rival political parties 'uniting' after disputed elections to form an inclusive government in the interim and to implement structural political reforms was emerging in Africa. Kenya and Zimbabwe illustrate this emerging trend following arrangements they made in 2008. Consequently, Zimbabwe and Kenya have and are going through a transition towards democracy along a path whose character and profile have striking similarities. It is the focal concern of this study to draw historical analogies and parallels in the countries' political development trajectories.

Conceptualizing democracy

To understand the problems associated with achieving democracy in Africa, it is important to be clear on what is meant by democracy and how we determine if a country is democratic. For Ehnmark (1995) the biggest question is: Democracy –on whose terms? Worth noting is that even pre-colonial systems of governance in Africa had their own notions of democracy and human rights which were commensurate and in tandem with their socio-economic and political realities. New Afro-centric paradigms like 'home-grown' democracy have been coined to counter democratisation that takes place on the terms of the rich world. Political scientists especially from the Western world have broadly defined democracy to refer to a 'government chosen in open and fairly conducted elections, where citizens of the country are protected by a code of civil liberties and where election results are accepted as legitimate by all contestants' (Gordon and Gordon, 2013:95). For democratisation to succeed, it has to take place on the terms of the country itself. While the idea is plausible, the terms of many African countries have nurtured despotism instead of consolidated democracy where there is widespread acceptance of rules guaranteeing political participation, open competition, and human rights. According to Dahl (1971:9), the criteria essential for democracy include 'control over government decisions about policy constitutionality vested in elected officials, relatively free and fair elections, access to alternative sources of information that are not monopolized by the government and freedom of association.' What Africa needs, Mana (1995:24) argues, is participatory democracy where the leaders 'listen to the people, care about their problems, interests and visions and

about the way in which they want things to be run.' Apart from the distorted and cynical forms of democracy, whether African or Western, the struggle for the basic values of democracy, that is, respect for fundamental rights, respect for fundamental freedoms, has to be the same, always and everywhere, because there are basic values for all human beings. This study conceptualizes democracy within the frame-work of liberal or participatory terms which are neither disguised despotism nor systems of false consensus, but which envisage devolution of power to the citizenry to exercise civil, political, legal rights and freedoms among others.

A cola nut in the forest

A Cameroonian proverb says that if you pick a cola nut in the forest, look for the tree from which it fell. Inspired by this proverbial adage, any comparative consideration of political and constitutional developments in Kenya and Zimbabwe must commence with the change from colonial to sovereign status. Ranger (1985) acknowledges having come across a score of academic articles comparing Zimbabwe and Kenya. Michael Bratton also found the comparison between Kenya and Rhodesia academically appetising from multiple dimensions. The two countries are distinguishable from other colonial social structures by the presence of a relatively large class of settlers and a white national bourgeoisie (Bratton, 1981). Within the realm of colonialism, Parker (1972) notes that Kenya and Zimbabwe earned themselves labels like the 'White Man's Country' and 'Little White Island' respectively. Bratton's Kenyan comparison highlights white dominance of land and the key role played by land settlement in the neo-colonisation processes. According to Ranger (1985), these comparisons have had their own weaknesses, particularly that they have not been used to illuminate Zimbabwe's particular experience, structures and potentialities of change by means of a rigorous set of contrasts and parallels, but have instead been used to propose and predict alternative destinations or to pass judgement on Zimbabwe's leaders. What Ranger has considered as a weakness can as well be turned into a strength. In fact, he rescinds the earlier assertion to acknowledge how these comparisons have tended to situate the recent history of Zimbabwe in a fruitful way through Kenyan lenses. Changes in the global political environment tend to be dictating that considerations of national sovereignty should not shelter a country's internal political arrangements from outside observation or criticism hence the need for countries to benefit from each other's experiences.

Ranger (1985) confesses picking a rumour during the government of Bishop Abel Muzorewa that Muzorewa was employing academic experts on Kenyan decolonization to advise him how best to achieve the same admirable results in Zimbabwe. Weinrich (in Ranger,

1985) warned against the dangers of trying to model the agricultural sector of a free Zimbabwe on that of independent Kenya based on the similarities of the two countries' agricultural policies during the colonial period. Weinrich advised that all efforts in this direction be stifled from the beginning. Paul Mosley is credited by Ranger for giving a rigorous and well-founded comparison to have been made of the two countries. Mosley noted that up to the 1950s, the land policies of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia 'could be described, with differences of emphasis, as identical'. The Kenyan Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915, just like Zimbabwe's Land Apportionment Act of 1930 paved the way for the appropriation of African lands and the confinement of Africans into reserves. In the wake of this massive alienation of African lands came land hunger; George Nyandoro, one of the founders of the Southern Rhodesia National Congress (SRNC) said of the Native Land Husbandry Act that it was 'the best recruiter Congress ever had' (Bowman, 1973:49). Odinga concluded that in Kenya, 'resistance to government soil conservation measures and land consolidation gave the mass backing to the political movement' (Odinga 1967:107). It seems clear that in Rhodesia as in Kenya, the events of the 1930s made the colonial government to take the African peasantry much more seriously. Ranger (1985) has laboured on the Great Depression and the peasantry in the two countries where he underlines the distinction (amidst some similarities) which arose in the relationship of the state in both territories to the emergent African entrepreneurial group in the African communal areas. In Southern Rhodesia African protests over land were checked by the more repressive governmental controls that existed in the territory. In Kenya, where land had been the central political issue since the 1920s, it was the impact of land alienation upon the Kikuyu that set in train the protest that erupted finally in 1952 into the violence of Mau Mau resistance (Gertzel, 2008)

The radical change foreshadowed by the British acceptance of majority rule for Kenya and Zimbabwe at the Lancaster House Conference in 1960 and 1979 respectively was made in response to a growing African political consciousness. Metropolitan economic interests and corporate power had a critical influence upon the final settlement in both countries. Urban and rural violence in Kenya on one hand and the Rhodesian Front's failure to contain the war of liberation in Zimbabwe on the other hand made British imperialism aware that a way had to be found of restoring capitalist stability.

LANCASTER HOUSE CONFERENCES

At the Lancaster House Conference on Zimbabwe which began in September 1979, Lord Carrington succeeded in winning substantial compromises from the Patriotic Front

leaders –Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe. According to Astrow (1983), the Lancaster House Agreement was a success for Britain. Admittedly, even though Carrington displayed much diplomatic skill in arriving at a settlement, other factors for example Muzorewa's failure to stop the war, tremendous pressure put on the PF leaders by the Presidents of the Frontline states to compromise expedited the conclusion of the Agreement. The PF leadership itself was also eager to come to an agreement with Britain. A remark by Tongogara that, 'We just have to have a settlement. We can't go back empty-handed' shows that the nationalist leadership was determined to come to terms with British imperialism (Astrow, 1983). When the details of the final Agreement were disclosed, Astrow (1983:155) argues that it was crystal clear that the PF had made a series of compromises which guaranteed the status of the leadership of the new Zimbabwe but represented a set-back for Zimbabwean workers and peasants.

The Lancaster House Conference on Kenya ended in mid-February 1960 with a new constitutional settlement. Although the Chairman of the conference Iain Macleod denied having gone into the conference with a preconceived plan, he reiterated the need for a swift change in Kenya. When the colonial secretary outlined his constitutional proposals, he went on to secure compliance of the various main groups, 'which he did by a mixture of cajolery, charm, and in the case of Africans, a kind of blackmail' (Goldsworthy 1982:135). Macleod's constitution fell far short of the Africans' minimum demands. The plan as a whole was top-heavy with provisions designed to have a strong retarding effect on the rate of transfer of power. Though it presented an important breakthrough, it was not yet *uhuru*. In fact, it was more of a European offer with innumerable strings attached.

One can decipher that imperialist interests were guarded through the Lancaster House Agreements. To put it crudely, Britain acquired new colonies because the Agreements were a British success story. The extent of the compromise by the nationalist leaders can be measured by the sections of the Constitutions referring to the crucial land question. White power was further entrenched because in both countries some seats in their Parliaments were reserved for the settlers. According to Mamdani (1983:17) 'as imperialism withdrew physically, it left the system of oppression and exploitation intact under the supervision of new agents now in the form of the militant nationalists.

THE ANATOMY OF THE POST-COLONIAL STATES

Kenya achieved independence in 1963 with two major political parties, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). KANU won the first independent Kenya's elections and

promptly formed government with Jomo Kenyatta as the Prime Minister (Kenya Human Rights Commission, 1998). When Kenya became a republic in 1964, Kenyatta changed the constitution and became both Head of State and Head of Government. Soon, KADU crossed over from the opposition and joined government creating a *de jure* one party state that lasted till 1966. Following Kenya's historically indelible footsteps, upon gaining independence in 1980, ZANU-PF won elections and formed a government with Robert Mugabe as Prime Minister. The Prime Minister shortly afterwards assumed the executive presidency that entailed controlling both the state and the government. The case of Kenya and Zimbabwe shows that both countries followed a more or less similar governance path. The two countries' independent constitutions were amended to allow for this assumption of executive powers.

Internal dissent emerged within KANU over issues of policy, prompting the party to employ expulsion or forceful removal of some of its nationalist members. At the Limuru Conference of 1966 for instance, leaders allied to Jomo Kenyatta successfully managed to force out of KANU leaders allied to Jaramogi Oginga Odinga. The latter went on to found the Kenya People's Union (KPU) with Bildad Kaggia as his Vice-President. Constant change of the constitution to consolidate power in the presidency and harassment of the opposition including detention without trial was used to clamp down on the opposition and to make it difficult to question the president. However, Kenya remained a multi party state in principle although in practice this was not so. Until 1969, the mode of Kenyan politics was essentially that of a factional system focused upon the presidency, and based on the principles of patronage and clientage which required national leaders to sustain a local base if they wished to retain power at the centre. The course of Zimbabwe's history changed on December 22, 1987 when the country's major political parties, ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU signed a unity accord to end over five years of feuding which almost plunged the country into a civil war. However, internal dissent in ZANU-PF at different periods of time saw the birth of the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats (ZUD) under Margareth Dongo (a former freedom fighter) and later the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) led by Edgar Tekere, the former Secretary General of ZANU-PF. The violent and intolerant nature of the political culture was again shown by the shooting of a ZUM parliamentary candidate by suspected ZANU (PF) activists, who were identified, tried, convicted but released on presidential pardon. Throughout the 1990s, ZANU-PF just like KANU was essentially a machine to control and distribute patronage, and when necessary to mobilize electoral support. Mugabe could personally campaign for ZANU-PF candidates and paradoxically that factionalism in both Kenya and Zimbabwe resulted in a highly participant political system. Upon Kenyatta's death in August 1978, his long standing Vice President Daniel

arap Moi took over. Moi clamped on dissent and employed Kenyatta's tactic of inducement in order to buy support, and also organising presidential elections in which he was the sole presidential candidate. He had turned himself and KANU into the single most important centres of power in Kenya, and two remained so till early 1990s. In Zimbabwe, the ZANU-PF Central Committee meeting in September 1990 was a political watershed and a victory along the road of establishing a culture of democracy in Zimbabwe. The Committee rejected the one-party state. The admission of a multi-party system by Moi removed the last proponent of the one-party states with some degree of international influence. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003) intimates that the international and regional developments of the 1990s, including the crumbling of the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe, the retreat of apartheid in South Africa and the collapse of the dictatorial and one-party state regimes of Kaunda in Zambia and Banda in Malawi, Zimbabwe (and also Kenya) entered its own ambiguous and contradictory period of glasnost. The late Julius Nyerere, the original advocate of one -party statism had admitted that the system might be riddled with flaws, conceding that the multi-party system was not a mistaken idea for Tanzania, and by implication, for Africa.

Students, workers and the state

The pre-1990 unrest shifted into specific demands for the democratisation of the political system through the introduction of multi-partism. In both countries; universities were the barometers indicating that all was not well. Strikes and riots which were focused on government austerity measures escalated rapidly into widespread and strident demands for the end of single-party rule and for accountable political officials. Student disturbances resulted in the closure of Kenyatta University in 1986. Lecturers, academics and students were detained, and the government announced the unearthing of an underground movement called Mwakenya (Versi, 1991). In Kenya, students had long complained about poor study facilities, overcrowding and declining prospects for employment and protested against the alleged government involvement in the murder of Robert Ouko, a popular Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Moi government. In Zimbabwe, students attracted workers and the self-employed to join condemning the decline in living standards and increased government repression. The University of Zimbabwe was to be the hotbed of opposition politics and the barometer of change in the national psyche. According to Sithole, Tekere and ZUM's challenge to Mugabe and ZANU (PF) broke the myth of invincibility, at a critical hour when the country faced the real possibility of a one-party state (Sithole, 2000). To that end, ZUM politics led to the first closure of the University of Zimbabwe in October 1989. Subversion

charges under the Law and Order Maintenance Act were brought against radical student leader Arthur Mutambara and union chief Morgan Tsvangirai. Arguably, democracy could not exist in an environment where violence and fear dominated the political process. Shaken by the scope and intensity of protest and pressured by conditions outside the continent, Kenya and Zimbabwe's leaders were bound to move reluctantly to actual or promised reform.

EXTENDING THE FRONTIERS OF POWER

The centralization of power in the executive resulted in the increased power and authority of the central bureaucracy. The authoritarian character of the post-colonial state was perhaps most obviously demonstrated by the refusal to tolerate opposition except on terms laid down by the ruling party itself. Yet although each state introduced and used a wide variety of constitutional and political measures to control political opposition, they built almost functionally similar kinds of institutions. In Kenya, the president had deliberately chosen to use the provincial administration as his major agent of control as well as development. There was a move away from the formal use of traditional authority. The Zimbabwean Government also snubbed the chiefs who had associated with the Rhodesian Front government during the liberation struggle. The ZANU-PF bodies namely the Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) took over most of the functions that chiefs had embraced and monopolized. Makumbe and Compagnon (1998) strongly argues that the employment of VIDCOs and WADCOs was primarily conceived for purposes of creating a one party state through the 'ZANUnisation' of the rural communities.

In Kenya, the corrupt and repressive climate bred significant resentment and it was just a matter of time before the Moi regime was openly challenged. The murder in February 1990 of Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr. Robert Ouko, as Muyumbu (2009) put it, provided more fodder to the advocates of pluralism in Kenya. The pressure mounted by veteran oppositionists led by former Vice President Jaramogi Odinga soon gained momentum in early 1990 when two mainstream politicians Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia demanded the dissolution of parliament and the repealing of the 1982 constitutional amendment outlawing opposition parties (Section 2A); Kenya once again became a multiparty state. Moi pushed through a constitutional amendment giving security of tenure to the members of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) that he had appointed during the single party era. The state broadcasting media blacked out news about the opposition parties unless it was negative. Self-declared KANU zones emerged, where the Provincial Administrator effectively prohibited opposition politicians from addressing the people or even touring the

regions. The combination of intimidation, free money, a dubious ECK conducting both voter registration and the elections, a biased broadcasting corporation, the application of repressive laws against the opposition alone and the splintering of opposition groups was enough to ensure a KANU victory at the polls. Through electoral reforms, ZANU (PF) also mobilized other aspects of the state machinery which include a monopolistic access and use of publicly owned media to guarantee its stranglehold on power. Mugabe equally extended the tenure of the registrar general whose dubious machinations in voters' registration and the running of elections openly favoured ZANU-PF.

The cries for reform

As already stated, this shift towards reforms was brought about by both external and internal forces. Although the KANU government used state machinery to suppress the pro-reformists, it eventually gave in and allowed for some measure of reforms. The reforms were, however, accompanied by a number of phenomena that would go on to define Kenya's evolving political culture in a democratising environment. One of these was eruption of ethnically motivated clashes in opposition strongholds. The opposition itself splintered into many groups, mainly along ethnic lines, each jostling for power. To weaken further the disorganised opposition, the incumbent adopted the system by buying opponents back to his fold, leading to corruption motivated by the need to hold onto power. The incumbent also ensured control of the state media and blacking out of the opposition, manipulation of the election process in favour of the incumbent and consolidation of dictatorial tendencies. Realising how the existing environment was restricting political reform, pro-reform activists shifted focus to reform of Kenya's constitution. This development has long been and still remains on the national agendas of Zimbabwe and Kenya, much like their full democratisation. In Zimbabwe, there was denial of press freedom and harassment of journalists. The state media became the sole voice on the land and the electronic media was dominated by ZANU-PF jingles that vilified the party whilst denigrating the opposition parties especially the MDC. The major highlight of the media clampdown was the closure of *Daily News* and *Daily News on Sunday*, *The Tribune* and *The Weekly Times*. The media industry's downstream sectors like theatre and arts were suppressed.

In Zimbabwe, the Civil Society Organizations in the likes of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, ZimRights, Transparency International, Zimbabwe and Legal Resources Foundations supported advocacy on democracy and governance issues. The rallying cries for participatory politics, democracy and human rights doctrine witnessed the mushrooming of organisations involved in voter education

as well as election supervision and monitoring roles. The formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 shook Zimbabwe's political scene. Though labour-based, the opposition party indeed a loose coalition comprising labour, students, academics, commercial farmers, the urban dwellers and generally the disgruntled populace of Zimbabwe sent political shock waves. The civic organisations especially the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) helped remove voter apathy and improve voters' confidence after the historic "No" vote against a government sponsored Draft Constitution in 2000. The Zimbabwe Government retaliated by summoning its entire arsenal to demonise civil society organisations involved in democracy and governance issues as enemies of the state. The Public Order and Security Act (POSA), Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) and University of Zimbabwe Amendment Act, were passed to curtail the operations of the civil societies.

Essentially then, it can be argued that though there was some opening up of political space in Kenya just like it later happened in Zimbabwe through a series of governance reforms, these were to a large extent circumscribed and continued to be restricted by a number of elements arising out of a political culture based on ethnicisation of politics, violence and intimidation of opponents and their supporters, corruption in order to buy political support and manipulation of the electoral process. These remained the obstacles standing in the way of Kenya and Zimbabwe's democratisation in the wake of the wave of democracy.

Violence and election outcomes

In the history of Kenya and Zimbabwe, no election has been saved from the wrath of political violence mainly unleashed by the incumbent in office against opposition political parties. Activities like intimidation, killings and abductions have been witnessed during election times and in many cases this influenced the voting behaviour of the electorate. In the 1985 elections, violence was unleashed by ZANU-PF towards the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) supporters. Cases of killings and harassments rose especially in urban and peri-urban settings and these included the burning of houses (Ranger, 2005). As Sisk (2006) has noted, the strategic intent and political consequences of violent acts were designed in some way to affect the electoral processes which would witness the disruption of opposing forces. In the 1995 elections, there were gross violations of human rights as ZANU-PF moved towards consolidating its support base in the rural areas. Opposition rallies were disrupted and a government sponsored voter education programme influenced the rural illiterates to vote for ZANU-PF. The formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and its participation in the year

2000 parliamentary elections and the constitutional reform process ushered widespread violence. The condoning of large areas of rural constituencies from opposition politics made it difficult for the MDC to campaign. Violence also escalated due to ZANU-PF's use of the youth militia, the 'green bombers' who unleashed terror in the form of harassing and beating of all those believed to be opposition supporters (Raftopolous and Savage, 2005). The highly competitive 2002 presidential elections offered ZANU-PF the opportunity to reassert itself once again in the political landscape in the face of growing opposition to its system of governance. The parliamentary elections of 2005 were also marred by incidents of political violence. Threats were made that ZANU-PF was returning to war if it did not win. ZANU-PF's sustained harassment of the opposition was once again witnessed at a larger scale in the 2008 harmonised elections. The period after elections saw the added strength of dictatorial tendencies by both the Moi and Mugabe regimes.

The power-sharing deals

Efforts to save Kenya from self-destruction were brokered by Kofi Annan, the Ghanaian former head of the United Nations, in his capacity as the chairman of the African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities. In February 2008, Kenya's political adversaries, Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga aided by the African Union (AU) and its international partners, negotiated a historic power-sharing settlement to peacefully resolve the dispute over the results of the 2007 presidential elections; this was done under the framework of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation, which includes the political parties notably the Party of National Unity (PNU) headed by Kibaki, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) headed by Odinga and the Orange Democratic Movement-Kenya (ODM-K) headed by Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka. According to Kabukuru (2009:10), they concluded 'several agreements aimed at ending the violence, restoring fundamental rights and liberties, addressing the humanitarian crisis, promoting reconciliation, resolving the political crisis and tackling long-term issues affecting the nation'. On 17 April, 2008, the Grand Coalition Government whose aim was to address the root cause of the recurrent conflict in Kenya through the implementation of a coherent and far-reaching reform agenda was formed. With this in place, the coalition partners began intense lobbying for plum ministerial positions.

Similarly, following protracted inter-party negotiations, Zimbabwe's three main political parties ZANU-PF headed by Robert Mugabe, MDC-T headed by Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC headed by Arthur Mutambara signed a landmark power-sharing agreement on 15 September, 2008. The tripartite agreement commonly referred to as the Global Political Agreement (GPA) gave birth to the

Inclusive Government (IG) in mid-February 2009. The GPA was itself preceded by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the three protagonists on 21 July 2008. The MOU and the GPA were a culmination of a protracted dialogue process under the mediation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In the 11 March, 2007 events, the ZANU-PF regime brutally assaulted opposition political leaders (including Tsvangirai) and civic activists triggered the process (Masunungure, 2009). The SADC leadership convened an emergency Summit in Dar-es Salaam on 29 March, 2007 at which the then South African President Thabo Mbeki was mandated to facilitate dialogue between the opposition and the government.

Soon after the signing of the peace accords, Kibaki and Odinga in Kenya, then Mugabe, Tsvangirai and Mutambara in Zimbabwe rallied their respective MPs to push for relevant constitutional challenges that reflected a new premiership position earmarked for Odinga and Tsvangirai respectively. Presidents Kibaki and Mugabe emphasised the call for unity and consultations on important national issues. Prime Ministers Odinga and Tsvangirai delivered speeches which sounded like epitaphs on opposition politics. Odinga bellowed, 'There is no ODM or PNU minister. We are all government ministers' (Ibid).

Despite occasional open displays of disagreement among some cabinet members-the coalitions did not fall apart, as some sceptics had predicted. A collaborative spirit showed signs of strengthening, as the cabinet worked towards the improvement of service delivery to the people,

Initially, many people in Kenya and Zimbabwe thought that the coalitions would not last a year owing to the diverse shades of opinions and philosophies across the political divide. These fears were not far-fetched. Sensational power plays were well founded. Prime Minister Odinga and Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka in Kenya just like Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and the Vice Presidents were caught up in embarrassing public sideshows about who among them wielded more power after President. Although Kenya's Grand Coalition (GC) and Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement (GPA) or Inclusive Government (IG) confounded their critics, wrangles and contentions continued to revolve around power-sharing, corruption, portfolio balance and economic revival. As a result, some critics saw the coalitions as ushering in a new window of opportunity towards comprehensive democratic reform agendas in the two countries while others totally rejected it as betrayal of the principles of democratic governance.

Power-sharing or the consolidation of autocracy?

In the process of steering the reform agenda in Kenya, two commissions namely the Independent Review

Commission on the 2007 Elections (IREC) and the Commission of enquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) were established. Parliament also passed legislation to enable the implementation of the National Dialogue agreements. These included the Constitution of Kenya Review Act, which provided a roadmap for the preparation of a new constitution within 12 months, followed by the referendum and the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Act, which would establish a two-year commission to promote peace, justice, national unity, healing and reconciliation among the people of Kenya. The implementation of the recommendations made by the Independent Review Commission (IREC) on the 2007 elections saw the disbanding of the discredited Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) and setting in motion the legal process of crafting an Interim Independent Boundaries Commission (IIBC).

While some remarkable progress was realised, the pace of the reforms could have moved faster. In both Kenya and Zimbabwe, the premature focus on the 2012 elections distracted the countries from the more pressing priorities. In line with Article 7 of the Global Political Agreement (GPA), the Zimbabwean Government of National Unity (ZGNU) established the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) whose purpose, just like Kenya's CIPEV was to properly 'advise on measures necessary and practical to achieve national healing, cohesion and unity with respect to victims of pre- and post-independence violence' (Global Political Agreement 2008). The GNU appointed three ministers of state, John Nkomo (ZANU-PF), Sekai Holland (MDC-T) and Gibson Sibanda (MDC) to ONHRI to lay the foundation for a society characterised by mutual respect, tolerance, and development, where individuals would enjoy the freedoms enshrined in the constitution. Arguments to put in place an independent Truth and Reconciliation Commission as was done in South Africa, Rwanda and Australia and East Timor were floated. The power-sharing agreements appear to have offered little scope for dealing with past human rights abuses, and making only tentative mention of a mechanism to achieve national healing. In the face of the GPA, ZANU-PF continued to capitalise upon the existing legal framework to advance and guide illogical, deceptive, systematic over-representing, undeserving of its supporters, disregarding democratic political and instrumentality rationality. Masunungure (2009:6) argues that the guardians and custodians of ZANU-PF's revolutionary ideals are prepared to preserve the 'purity' of the regime and they instinctively reject its contamination via power sharing arrangements like the GPA.

Mugabe and his party continued to be the hegemonic player in the tripartite government. For instance, Mugabe went on to unilaterally appoint provincial governors, distribute ministries, appoint a new Attorney-General, re-appoint the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and in the process allocate to himself core ministerial

portfolios like defence, security, local government and agriculture. Besides being an indelible blot on the African Renaissance, Masunungure vehemently argues that the power-sharing deals and governments of national unity are retrogressive and are sending a bad message to the African citizenry that the ballot cannot change governments. Power-sharing failed to make headway in Liberia, Nigeria, Burundi, Sierra Leone, the DRC, Rwanda, among others.

In fact, despite Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki's and his Zimbabwean counterpart Robert Mugabe's manipulation of their respective elections, power-sharing deals legitimized them to take the highest seats in the government. The two cases show that structural reforms were very difficult to implement under power sharing. The Kenyan and Zimbabwean cases seem fraught with contradictions inherent in the political agendas of the leaders. While the rhetoric appears to be that unity would benefit everyone, the reality on the ground showed that the arrangements were largely benefitting those in power. At best, it furthers disagreement and pushes the countries on the verge of renewed tensions as leaders seek to outmanoeuvre or vilify each other.

The power sharing arrangements in Zimbabwe and Kenya were a response to failed elections. This raised the spectre that bad elections become back channels to power, undermining whatever steps towards democracy that may be underway. Varied interpretations obviously arose whereby the opposition viewed power-sharing as a leap into a broader democratic transition while the ruling party saw it more as an isolated compromise addressing the electoral stalemate. The bulk of the perpetrators of political violence after 2007 went unpunished and uninvestigated. In Kenya, the Human Rights Commission reported little progress on reconciliation, reforming the police, or disarming the militias that carried out the post-electoral violence. The result has been widespread resentment about impunity (McCrummen, 2009).

Conclusion

The study has compared and analysed the experiences and democratic performances of Kenya and Zimbabwe underscoring the traits of established political culture responsible for frustrating democratisation and analysing the outcomes of such traits using the political culture dimension. A scrutiny of the historical and structural similarities and differences defining the political culture that shaped the two countries' absorption of democracy largely pointed at the political culture characterised by elections that do not translate into democracy, criminalisation of the opposition, manipulation of the electoral process, control of the press and politicised armies among many other factors. Zimbabwe and Kenya followed a more or less similar governance path at independence, beginning as multi-party states before reverting to strong presidential systems. Upon the establishment of power-

sharing deals, the countries embarked on a number of governance reforms aimed at reversing dictatorships that had been built in the history of the two post-colonies. Though there was some opening up of political space through a series of governance reforms, these were to a large extent circumscribed and continued to be restricted by a number of elements arising out of a political culture based on militarism, uneven political field, violence and intimidation of opponents and their supporters.

Both situations however gave the impression that sufficient political will existed among the coalition partners to provide the two countries with a historic opportunity for peaceful transformation. Generally, the governments of national unity opened avenues for consensus building as the battered countries sought ways of moving out of crisis situations. Although power-sharing deals and resultant governments of national unity have not created full democracies in other countries, the democratic brokerage and the coalescence of deeply disagreeing members was a mark of hope in Kenya and Zimbabwe. One can comfortably speculate that the dark cloud of uncertainty hovering above Zimbabwe would always fizzle away in the face of Kenyan success.

Conflict of Interests

The author have not declared any conflict of interests.

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